

The Greater Germanic Reich: Education, Nazification, and the Creation of a New Dutch Identity
in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands

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Abstract

During the German occupation of the Netherlands during the Second World War, the Nazi occupiers attempted to use education as one part of their larger project to create a new, Germanic identity in the Netherlands. This effort was supported by the highest echelons of the German leadership in the Netherlands and the leadership of the Dutch Education Department. Together, the Nazis and their Dutch helpers began a series of changes to Dutch education aimed at bringing Dutch youth closer to the German Reich, with the ultimate aim of divorcing the Dutch from their previous, independent national identity and winning them over to the Germanic ideal.

This effort involved many different initiatives. In an effort to completely reorganize the Dutch educational establishment along more Germanic lines, the occupiers and their Dutch helpers attempted to gain control over private, confessional education and to reorganize public education through the lengthening of compulsory attendance requirements and the introduction of an eighth year of primary education. Moreover, the occupiers attempted to introduce new subjects, such as physical education, and increase the emphasis on other subjects, including historical instruction and German language instruction. Finally, the German occupiers also attempted to both foster the development of German International Schools in the Netherlands as well as to create new educational institutions (the NIVO and the *Reichsschulen*) designed to give instruction in an explicitly *völkisch*, Germanic sense, both of which aimed at educating the leaders of the future Greater Germanic Reich. These two institutions would also serve as models for the education of ordinary Dutch students in Dutch institutions.

The efforts of the Nazi occupiers were a failure, as their efforts were resisted by the majority of Netherlands and the changes instituted during the occupation were mostly reversed

after the return of democratic rule to the Netherlands in summer 1945. Nonetheless, the Nazis' efforts show the ultimate goals of the occupier as regarded the Netherlands and Europe more generally, should they have won the war. That goal included a European empire based on the racial ideal of a Germanic ruling class presiding over the subjugated peoples of Europe.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
Background - Pillarization and The School Struggle	25
<i>Reichskommissariat Nederlande</i>	33
Periodization of the Occupation.....	46
Chapter 2 - The Netherlands in Modern German Thought.....	55
Conclusion	79
Chapter 3 - Dutch Fascists, National Socialists, and their Educational Policies	82
Native Dutch Fascist and National Socialist Movements during the Inter-War Period	84
The NSB's Plans for Educational Reform	104
Jan van Dam and the Reform of the Dutch Education System.....	121
Conclusion	137
Chapter 4 - The Direct Path to the Greater Germanic Reich	142
Education in Nazi Germany.....	143
The <i>Deutsche Schulen in den Niederlanden</i> before the Nazi invasion	159
<i>Deutsche Schulen in den Niederlanden</i> after the Nazi invasion	172
<i>Nederlandsche instelling voor volksche opvoeding</i> (NIVO)	179
The <i>Reichsschulen</i>	185
Conclusion	196
Chapter 5 - The Indirect Path to Germanicization	199
Anti-Jewish Measures	201
The "Cleansing" of anti-German School Books	213
Increasing the Influence of the State and the Appointment Decrees	223
Physical Education.....	240
A Change in Course	243
German Language Instruction and an Eighth School Year	249
Stichting Nederlandsche Onderwijs Film	263
Conclusion	266
Chapter 6 - Changes in Historical Instruction.....	270
A New Historical Instruction	273
<i>Onze Voorouders</i>	279
<i>Over Volk en Vaderland</i>	287
<i>De Germaansche Nederlanden</i>	306
<i>Volk en Bodem</i>	319

A Nazi View of Dutch History	332
<i>Voorbije tijden: vaderlandsche geschiedenis voor de lagere school</i>	340
Conclusion	344
Chapter 7 - Chaos and Disorder in the Schools	348
The Authorized Representative of the <i>Reichskommissar</i> for Supervision of Peace and Order in the Schools	352
The Inspector of Education in General Service	361
Resistance at the Local Level	376
The Singing of Patriotic and Anti-German Songs	378
Political Demonstrations	385
The Harassment of NSB Members and Children	400
Conclusion	417
Chapter 8 - The End of Educational Reform	421
Forced Labor	422
The Loyalty Declaration	434
The April/May Strike	440
Forced Labor, continued	447
Van Dam and the End of Educational Reform	450
Conclusion	457
Bibliography	463
Archival Collections	464
Online Databases	465
Newspapers	465
Published Works	467
Vita.....	484

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Second World War was the deadliest conflict in human history. A clash of ideologies along with the implementation of total war led to the death of tens of millions of Europeans, to say nothing of the deaths in other theaters, over the course of almost six long years. Most of those deaths in Europe came as a result of the Nazis' brutal war of extermination against their "racial" and ideological enemies in Eastern Europe. In the lands that had previously made up Poland, the Baltic States, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union, the Germans attempted to create an empire that would last a thousand years. In doing so, Nazi Germany engaged in a genocidal campaign against the local inhabitants, murdering millions directly, while causing the deaths of millions more through conquest and occupation.

In waging their war of genocide across Eastern Europe, the Nazi leadership believed that there was a fundamental "racial" difference between the local populations that inhabited their conquests in the east and those that inhabited their conquests in Western Europe. The east was largely inhabited by Slavs, Jews, and other *Untermenschen*, while the west was populated by various types of the so-called Aryan race, even if, in the Nazis' racial mindset, the purity of Western Europeans' blood decreased as one moved further south. This fundamental difference in the Nazis' view of their subjugated peoples was translated into differing styles of both warfare and occupation across the European continent. By and large, while the conquered peoples of Eastern Europe were shown little, if any, mercy, in the West a more traditional style of military occupation was the norm. Or was it?

This work seeks to challenge the prevailing scholarly consensus that the occupation of Western Europe was in some way less radical than that of Eastern Europe by using the Nazis' occupation of the Netherlands and their efforts in the education sphere during that period as a

case study of the Nazis' goals for the future of European society. To be certain, the German occupation of the Netherlands during the Second World War was not marked by the same sort of all-encompassing violence that pervaded Nazi hegemony in Eastern Europe, at least not at first.¹ Rather, the Nazi occupiers did at the outset take a more lenient attitude toward the Dutch public, largely because they viewed the Dutch as their racial kin. As the occupation endured and the war turned against the Germans, this changed, and a more repressive style of governance emerged, but that is not the focus of this study. Rather, the focus is, mostly, limited to the first several years of Nazi occupation. That was the period during which the supposedly milder, less oppressive form of occupation reigned.

To a certain extent, this was certainly the case. During the first several years of German occupation, the Netherlands enjoyed relative relief from Nazi tyranny, at least as compared to the experience of subjugated peoples of Eastern Europe. With the exception of the Netherlands' Jewish community, most Netherlands were not slated for extermination, were not forced to perform slave labor, and did not have to worry about continued fighting threatening their lives. The military conquest of the Netherlands was quick, lasting only five days, and after that conquest ended, the Dutch could settle back into routines that were much more reminiscent of their pre-war lives than they were different.

Even though the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands was not marked by the all-encompassing, genocidal violence that characterized the German occupation of the east, in another, less obvious way, the German occupation of the Netherlands was still quite radical in its own right. Much as in the living spaces being carved out of the east through genocide, the Nazi leadership planned, not before the conquest, but quickly after it was achieved, to incorporate the

¹ Jennifer L Foray, "The 'Clean Wehrmacht' in the German-Occupied Netherlands, 1940-5," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 4 (2010): 768-87.

Netherlands into a larger post-war polity dominated by Germany. This polity had several names, including the *Greater Germanic Reich* and just the *Reich*. But whatever it was called, this future super-state would, it was planned, dominate the European continent from the North Sea to the Ural Mountains and encompass more than one hundred million Europeans that the Nazis believed made up the larger Germanic race, which was, in their twisted worldview, the purest branch of the larger Aryan racial family. In order to incorporate the Netherlands into this planned empire, however, the Nazis correctly understood that some sort of cultural shift would be necessary. The Dutch had a long history of independence, achieved after they managed to throw off the shackles of imperial hegemony in the mid-seventeenth century. Over the intervening three hundred years, the Dutch no longer viewed themselves as connected to Germany in the ways that the Low Countries had been in the Middle Ages when they were a constituent part of the Holy Roman Empire. The Netherlands was an independent state, with its own language and culture, with a history that was unique and which helped the Dutch define their own, independent cultural identity.

In order to effect the cultural shift that would be a necessary precursor to inclusion into the Greater Germanic Reich, the Nazis implemented a wide array of efforts in the Netherlands aimed at creating a new cultural identity. These included, among other examples, propaganda initiatives aimed at inculcating a racist, national socialist worldview, the recruitment for resettlement of Dutch civilians in the vast, newly depopulated expanses of Eastern Europe, the establishment of racially approved SS units, the elimination of Jewish and other allegedly unworthy individuals from Dutch society, and, the key focus of this study, a broad campaign of educational changes aimed at permanently fusing this new Germanic identity with the next generation of Dutch citizens.

The historiography of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands is surprisingly small when compared to most other aspects of historical study concerning National Socialism. In English language scholarship, there are only a handful of scholars who work (or worked) on any aspect of the German occupation of the Netherlands. When one ventures into the Dutch and German language scholarship, the field broadens significantly, but there is still much work to be done before the field is even remotely comparable to the volume of scholarship on other topics related to Nazism.

This project, which argues that the Nazis used education in the Netherlands in an attempt to foster a new national and cultural identity among the Dutch based on a racist, *völkisch*, and Germanic ideal, challenges the existing scholarship in three distinct ways. First, there are those works that attempt to focus on German administration of the Netherlands in some way or fashion and which usually discuss education policy, the Nazis' Germanic project, or both. Second are the works of a handful of scholars who focus on the Nazi occupiers' Germanic project. Finally, there are a few works that deal directly with education, or some facet thereof, during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. Above and beyond those three types of works which are discussed in more detail below, there is a larger set of works that deal with the Netherlands and the Second World War in some way not directly connected to this study, whether that is through close examination of topics not entirely connected to education, such as the police or the Holocaust, or works that deal with Nazi Empire on a larger scale, only part of which deals with the Netherlands.²

² A non-exhaustive list would include: Gerard Aalders, *Nazi Looting: The Plunder of Dutch Jewry During the Second World War*, trans. Arnold Pomerans and Erica Pomerans (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2004); Benien van Berkel, *Tobie Goedewaagen (1895-1980): een onverbeterlijke nationaalsocialist* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2013); J. J. van Bolhuis, *Onderdrukking en verzet: Nederland in oorlogstijd* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1955); Bart van der Boom and Peter Romijn, *The Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands: 1940 - 1945 - New Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers, 2012); Louis De Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956); Jeroen Dewulf, *Spirit of Resistance: Dutch Clandestine Literature*

Of all of the works that discuss the occupation of the Netherlands in the Second World War, by far the most expansive is Loe de Jong's *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. In its fourteen volumes, most of which are themselves split into two parts because of their size, de Jong covers almost every aspect of the Nazi occupation in some detail, including education.³ De Jong, who after the war became the director of the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation,⁴ was commissioned by the Dutch Education Ministry to write the work and

During the Nazi Occupation (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2010); Jennifer L. Foray, *Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Erik Hansen, "Fascism and Nazism in the Netherlands 1929-39," *European History Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1981): 355-85; Katja Happe, *Deutsche in den Niederlanden, 1918-1945: eine historische Untersuchung zu nationalen Identifikationsangeboten im Prozess der Konstruktion individueller Identitäten* (Siegen: Universität-GH Siegen, 2004); Chris van der Heijden, *Joodse NSB'ers: de Vergeten Geschiedenis van Villa Bouchina in Doetinchem* (Utrecht: Bk18, 2006); Barbara Henkes and Ad Knotter, *Themanummer De "Westforschung" en Nederland* (Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2005); G Hirschfeld, "Die Universität Leiden unter dem Nationalsozialismus," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 23, no. 4 (1997): 560-91; Dienne Hondius, *Return: Holocaust Survivors and Dutch Anti-Semitism*, trans. David Colmer (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003); Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); M. F. Lenaerts, *National Socialist Family Law: The Influence of National Socialism on Marriage and Divorce Law in Germany and the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015); Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008); Guus Meershoek, *Dienaren van het gezag: de Amsterdamse politie tijdens de bezetting* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1999); Bob Moore, *Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands, 1933-1940* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986); Bob Moore, *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940-1945* (New York: Hodder Education Publishers, 1997); Thomas Müller, *Imaginerter Westen: das Konzept des "deutschen Westraums" im völkischen Diskurs zwischen Politischer Romantik und Nationalsozialismus* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009); Dietrich Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism in Western Europe: German Nazis, Dutch and French Fascists, 1933-1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Jacob Presser, *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969); Peter Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd: besturen tijdens de Duitse bezetting* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2006); Benjamin Aaron Sijes, *De Februari-staking, 25-26 Febr. 1941*. ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954); Benjamin Aaron Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet: de gedwongen arbeid van Nederlanders in Duitsland 1940-1945*. ('s-Gravenhage: SDU, 1990); Robin te Slaa and Edwin Klijn, *De NSB: ontstaan en opkomst van de Nationaal Socialistische Beweging, 1931-1935* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Boom, 2009); Stephen Snelders, "National Socialism, Human Genetics and Eugenics in The Netherlands, 1940-1945," in *Scientific Research in World War II: What Scientists Did in the War*, by Ad Maas and Hans Hooimajers (London: Routledge, 2009), 109-20; C.J.F. Stuldreher, *Concentratiekampen: systeem en de praktijk in Nederland* (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1970); M.C. van den Toorn, *Dietsch en volksch: een verkenning van het taalgebruik der nationaal-socialisten in Nederland* (Groningen: Tjeenk Willink, 1975); K.H. Tusenius, *De kansen van het Nationaal Socialisme in Nederland: groei en neergang der N.S.B.* (Zutphen: Thieme, 1936); Ad van Liempt, *Hitler's Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews*, trans. S. J. Leinbach (Oxford: Berg, 2005); Adriaan Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, 5 vols. (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1988); Sytze van der Zee, *Voor Führer, volk en vaderland: de SS in Nederland* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A.W. Sijthoff, 1979).

³ Volume XIV is actually a compilation of critiques and discussions of the previous thirteen volumes composed by other scholars. Unfortunately, it does not go into educational policy at all. See Louis De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1969), XIV/247-249, 271-276.

⁴ Now the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam.

it has become the standard reference work for all things related to the Second World War in the Netherlands. His sections on education are generally accurate, but quite sparse. He covers in a mostly cursory manner the German Schools, the NIVO, and the *Reichsschulen* under the larger heading of “Germanization,” under which he also discusses attempts to give certain Dutch individuals, such as spouses of Germans, actual German citizenship.⁵ In his view, the efforts of the German occupiers in these three types of educational institution were essentially similar in nature to actual attempts to make certain Dutch individuals legally German. It is worth quoting him at length:

Obviously, the entire policy of the occupying forces can be seen as an attempt to make the Netherlands a German country, that is to say, a country that, apart from its language, would appear to be the spitting image of National Socialist Germany. In this sense, the entire aim that came from the SS sector can also be regarded as an attempt at de facto Germanization: after all, the SS wanted the Netherlands to merge into a Greater Germanic whole, which meant that the historically developed distinction between Dutch and Germans would fade and eventually disappear.⁶

On its face, de Jong’s statement is largely correct, but in its details, it slightly misses the point. He is certainly correct that the SS faction, which was the leading faction in the Netherlands, wanted to merge the Netherlands into the Greater Germanic whole. But the notion that this effort consisted of little more than Germanization is not quite correct. The German leadership did not view the Greater Germanic Reich as simply Germany with added territories. Rather, it was Germany plus other Germanic nations. That is, the Greater Germanic Reich was something bigger, something new, it was the combined sum of Germany and the other Germanic nations of Europe. Viewing the Nazis’ goals in the Netherlands as little more than Germanization thus actually contradicts the very goals high ranking Nazis discussed among themselves. For example, on this exact subject, specifically the two *Reichsschulen*, Seyss-Inquart noted to Himmler that the “curriculum would need to take more into account the history of the

⁵ *Verduitsing*. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/248-254.

⁶ *Ibid.*, V/245.

Netherlands and the nature of the Dutch people, but through the pan-Germanic point of view.”⁷

The goal at these institutions, much like at regular Dutch schools, was not to erase the “historically developed distinction” between Germany and the Netherlands, but on the contrary to emphasize the connections between the two countries, both in terms of their past and future. The Germans had no more wish to erase Dutch history and culture than they did to erase the history and culture of Austria or Bavaria in favor of Prussian culture. Thus, Germanization is not really the correct term, for its implications go too far. Rather, Germanicization, the act of making the Dutch Germanic, not German, fits the model more accurately.

The other two sections of de Jong’s magnum opus that discuss education focus on public and confessional education respectively.⁸ The sections on confessional education are based primarily on work done by J. H. C. de Pater in his work *Het Schoolverzet*, and so will be discussed below.⁹ The section on public education is dealt with in his larger chapter on *Gleichschaltung*, while the section on religious education is split between *Gleichschaltung* and a larger chapter on churches and artists. Between the two, the overwhelming majority focuses on confessional education, while his section on public education gets comparatively short shrift. He begins with a lengthy biography of Secretary-General of Education Jan van Dam, then speeds through the attempted changes to discuss how it was all entirely unsuccessful. For de Jong, van Dam, and to a lesser extent Noordijk and Terpstra, are the key players here. The Germans’ designs are ignored almost entirely, which means that he places altogether too little emphasis, in my view, on the similarities between van Dam’s designs and those of the German occupiers.

⁷ N. K. C. A. In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland: Documenten uit SS-archieven 1935-1945* (’s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 667.

⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/336-368, 725-742.

⁹ Ibid., V/725n.

In either case, the goal of educational “reform” as de Jong sees it is little more than nazification. To a certain extent, he is, of course, correct. Nazification was part of the goal of educational “reform,” but it was only the first part. De Jong misses entirely the second goal, the goal of Germanicization, of turning the Dutch population Germanic in order to bring them closer to the Reich. This is, however, not entirely surprising because the limited historiography of the Nazis’ Germanic project in Europe is much newer than de Jong’s masterpiece. The larger focus among historians of Nazi Germany on the creation of a new Germanic empire in Europe only came to the fore after de Jong’s final volume was published in the late 1980s, so he can hardly be faulted for not having correctly predicted the way that subsequent scholarship on the subject would develop.¹⁰

Along with De Jong’s *Het Koninkrijk*, there are several other standard works that offer an overview of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. One of the earliest was Werner Warmbrunn’s *The Dutch under German Occupation, 1940-1945*.¹¹ The first English language work on the occupation, Warmbrunn’s study predates De Jong’s by several years. Warmbrunn focuses his study on the upper echelons of the occupation and gives little attention to education in any form. What attention he does give to education is almost entirely limited to the universities, and then only as a consequence of how students and faculty participated in or were affected by the larger milestones of the occupation, such as the October 27, 1940, closure of Leiden University after the dismissal of Jewish civil servants and the effect on universities of the general conflagration surrounding the Loyalty Decree, forced labor, and the April/May Strike of

¹⁰ De Jong’s work has also been criticized for an over-reliance on the otherwise simplistic notion of “good” and “bad” when it comes to collaboration during the Second World War. Ironically, in de Jong’s view, van Dam was simply too weak to be either himself. Rather, he was used by both. See Bob Moore, “‘Goed En Fout’ or ‘Grijs Verleden’? Competing Perspectives on the History of the Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945,” *Dutch Crossing* 27, no. 2 (December 1, 2003): 155–168.

¹¹ Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

1943.¹² He does also devote three paragraphs to non-higher education in his section on “the nazification of public life” in his fourth chapter. The discussion is limited, however, to the Appointment Decrees, which he notes were failures, and a mere three sentences on the entire rest of the Germans’ efforts in the educational sphere:

The new Secretary-General [van Dam] also made some minor changes in the curriculum. German became the first foreign language, while French was relegated to an inferior place. More time was devoted to language, history, physical education, and vocational instruction, and a decree was passed, but not implemented, making the eighth year of elementary school compulsory.¹³

As a summary of the major efforts at educational “reform,” those three sentences are certainly adequate, but their paucity suggests that Warmbrunn was simply not interested in education, likely because he correctly understood the Nazis’ efforts in that realm as decidedly unsuccessful.

On the other hand, however, Warmbrunn does spend several pages discussing the ultimate designs of the German administration in the Netherlands. Interestingly, he does note that at least part of the impetus behind the planned annexation was “Hitler’s romantic-historical vision of a reconstitution of the Holy Roman Empire ... [a] vision of a ‘Holy Germanic Empire of the German Nation.’”¹⁴ He even references Hitler’s statement comparing the incorporation of the Netherlands into a Germanic Empire with the incorporation of Bavaria into Germany, but either misses or dismisses the point of Hitler’s comparison that the new creation would be something greater than Germany alone, for “in the final analysis, Hitler, if victorious, probably would have annexed the Netherlands.”¹⁵

The next major work to cover the German occupation of the Netherlands was Konrad Kwiet’s 1968 *Reichskommissariat Niederlande: Versuch und Scheitern nationalsozialistischer*

¹² Ibid., 146–53.

¹³ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴ Ibid., 24–25.

¹⁵ Ibid., 27.

Neuordnung.¹⁶ Kwiet's work, which focuses only on the first year or so of the occupation, was a major advance in the field, for it correctly displayed the competition between the various groups of the German leadership for ultimate control in the Netherlands.¹⁷ His work was also the first to take seriously the notion of various German leaders that the Netherlands was to be incorporated into a Greater Germanic Reich after the end of the war.¹⁸ This eventual possibility was, however, according to Kwiet, little more than a fantasy given the competing interests during the occupation, with various groups going about achieving this goal in different ways.¹⁹

Seyss-Inquart hoped to lead with a soft hand, given his instructions from Hitler, and so he proceeded by implementing unsuccessful policies, such as supporting the *Nederlandsche Unie*, that had little real chance of effectively winning the Dutch over to Nazism, let alone the Greater Germanic Reich.²⁰ On the other hand, the SS was more interested, in Kwiet's view, in creating a series of specifically SS oriented groups that aimed to consolidate power within the Netherlands squarely in the hands of the SS, and therefore Himmler and his deputy Rauter.²¹ This meant that the various efforts of Seyss-Inquart, especially those that sought to use specifically Dutch institutions, such as the *Nederlandsche Unie* or the NSB, as partners in the work of building up the Greater Germanic Reich, were countered by the efforts of the various SS organizations, especially the various Waffen-SS units that came out of the Netherlands. That many of the recruits for SS divisions had previously been affiliated with the *völkisch* wing of the NSB only exacerbated the tensions between the SS faction of the occupying regime and the native Dutch Nazi movement, creating distrust among those who should have otherwise been allies.

¹⁶ Konrad Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande: Versuch und Scheitern nationalsozialistischer Neuordnung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1968).

¹⁷ Ibid., 78–91. It should be noted that Kwiet's work came out the year prior to De Jong's first volume.

¹⁸ Ibid., 92–96.

¹⁹ Ibid., 153–54.

²⁰ Ibid., 96–109.

²¹ Ibid., 109–16.

In essence, then, while Kwiet acknowledges that the long-term goal of the occupiers was to incorporate the Netherlands into the Greater Germanic Reich, the competing power centers proved too worried about their own political bases to effectively implement a coherent strategy toward that end, which left permanent improvisation as the main characteristic of governance in the occupied Netherlands. Although he does not discuss education at all, Kwiet does, very briefly, make one other telling comment worth considering. In his discussion of the SS's goals during the early stages of the occupation, he notes, quoting a letter from Ulrich Greifelt to Himmler as evidence,²² that the goal of the SS, "more or less was to Germanize" the Dutch.²³ If nothing else, this suggests that Kwiet views the Germanic project in the Netherlands as little more than window dressing for the *real* goal of Germanization, despite characterizing the German goals in the rest of his study as "nazification" and "Germanicization."²⁴

N.K.C.A. in 't Veld takes up this very same question in his own work, discussed in more detail below, and notes that Greifelt's wording, which included "Germanization" as one of the SS's goals in the Netherlands, was likely an effort on Greifelt's part to secure for the SS a base of power in the Netherlands, which at that point, was still militarily resisting the German invasion.²⁵ After the *Reichskommissariat* had been founded, however, the SS's focus was squarely on *Germanicization*, a position that was formally authorized by Hitler with order 54/42 when, in August 1942, Himmler was given authority over all "Germanic-völkisch groups in Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands."²⁶ But as in 't Veld notes, this order was typical of Hitler's practice of granting a "formal allocation of power ... once those powers have

²² Kwiet misdated the letter to June 10, 1940, but it is actually dated June 11, 1940, and can be found in In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 493–96.

²³ Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 111–12.

²⁴ See e.g. Ibid., 93. *Nazifizierung* and *Germanisierung*.

²⁵ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 494n.

²⁶ Order 54/42, quoted in *ibid.*, 167–68.

in reality long since been usurped.”²⁷ In other words, Greifelt’s claim of “Germanization” as a goal in the Netherlands can be understood not as a set policy of the SS but as an attempt to grab power using the already existing authority of Himmler as the *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*. Such an understanding also fits perfectly within Kwiet’s larger argument that the multiple competing power centers within Nazi Germany—what Gerhard Hirschfeld would later term the “fundamental polycracy” of the Nazi regime²⁸—caused a large amount of confusion as to the actual policies that should be implemented in the Netherlands.

More than a decade would pass before the next general study of the German occupation in the Netherlands appeared in the form of Gerhard Hirschfeld’s 1984 *Fremdherrschaft und Kollaboration: Die Niederlande unter deutscher Besatzung 1940-1945*, which was translated into English in 1988 as *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940-1945*. Much like Kwiet, Hirschfeld pays little attention to the regime’s educational policy.²⁹ He does, however, have rather extensively drawn out thoughts on the question of the Nazis’ Greater Germanic project in the Netherlands, which he views as little more than propaganda for a more traditional, nationalist imperialism in which a victorious Germany would dominate the smaller Germanic nations after the war.³⁰

According to Hirschfeld, the only concrete plan the Nazis had for the future of the Netherlands was that it was to be nominally independent, in order to preserve the Dutch relationship with their colonies in the Far East, yet otherwise completely subservient to the

²⁷ Ibid., 168.

²⁸ Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation, 1940-1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (New York: Berg, 1988), 44.

²⁹ In fact, Hirschfeld’s closest mention of educational policy comes in the form of specifically mentioning Jan van Dam, but only as a member of the College of Secretaries-General. Both times the mention comes in the footnotes, and both times the author incorrectly labels van Dam a member of the NSB. Ibid., 133n, 152n; By 1997, he had noted and corrected this error. See Hirschfeld, “Die Universität Leiden unter dem Nationalsozialismus,” 570.

³⁰ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 27–35.

Reich. Economically, of course, the Germanic nations of North and Northwest Europe were to be tightly integrated with Germany, but politically, Hirschfeld argues that

the “blood-related peoples” of the West ... would have the “honour” of being integrated into a “Greater Germanic Reich” under the military, economic and political leadership of Germany. However, political integration presupposes at least a minimum of partnership; Hitler was neither prepared for, nor capable of, such a relationship. After the victorious campaign against France, he asserted that “success” could only be “maintained by the powers that had achieved them, thus by military force.” This was more than just a rejection of all political methods of achieving German claims to mastery. At the same time, it exposed Hitler’s “Germanic policy” for what is really was: well-calculated propaganda to conceal the fact that Hitler had no prospective programme for the reorganisation of Europe.³¹

At the same time, however, Hirschfeld grants that the SS did have a concrete idea of its plans and also notes that the SS was dominant in the latter two phases of the occupation, beginning in April 1943. Moreover, these phases “differed from the earlier stages in the radical consistency with which it [the SS conception of the occupation] was planned.”³² Hirschfeld then proceeds to recount how, in fact, the SS conception of the future of the Germanic Reich reached back at least to late 1941, and that SS supremacy was enshrined by order 54/42 in August 1942.³³ Hirschfeld’s basic argument, then, is essentially similar to Kwiet’s in that German domination in the Netherlands was hampered by political infighting between Seyss-Inquart, the SS faction, the German Nazi Party as represented by Commissioner-General Fritz Schmidt, and the two wings of the NSB. He differs from Kwiet in that he gives much less credence to the notion of a Greater Germanic Reich as a foundational principle guiding the occupation regime, but even then, backtracks on this view by allowing it a central place in the occupation’s ideological goals from late 1941.

The most important recent, general study to come out regarding the Netherlands under German occupation is Johannes Koll’s 2015 *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche*

³¹ Ibid., 31–32.

³² Ibid., 45.

³³ Ibid., 46–47.

Besatzungspolitik in den Niederlanden (1940-1945).³⁴ Part biography and part examination of Nazi policy in the Netherlands, Koll's work is the most substantial general inquiry into the German occupation since De Jong's *Het Koninkrijk* was completed almost twenty years prior. Unlike Hirschfeld and Kwiet, Koll does spend some time on the educational policy of the occupiers, but his discussion of the Nazis' Germanic project in the Netherlands is not given very much coverage.

On the question of education, Koll does not offer any advances beyond what previous authors had already argued, except that he is clear that the impetus for the many changes came directly from the top, that is from the *Reichskommissar* himself or his German subordinates.³⁵ While Koll notes that many of the "reforms" instituted by the Germans were also changes that van Dam had desired, Koll makes it clear that van Dam's desires only mattered when they were in concert with those of Seyss-Inquart and his German deputies, whether it was the reduction in clerical salaries, the appointment decrees, or the maintenance of "peace and order" in the schools. He does not go into enough detail to note those cases where van Dam's views won out, however.

A perfect example of this came with the reduction in clerical salaries in February 1941. Seyss-Inquart, reacting to recent anti-German preaching on the part of the Catholic Church, had wanted to dismiss all clerical teachers outright, but van Dam managed to persuade him otherwise noting the strain that would likely cause, which was somewhat ironic given van Dam's own previously stated position that clerical teachers should be dismissed. Either way, Seyss-Inquart

³⁴ Johannes Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in den Niederlanden (1940-1945)* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 509–14.

settled on a reduction in clerical salaries by a draconian forty per cent.³⁶ Similarly, Koll does not discuss in detail the introduction of German language instruction in primary education, but it too serves as an example of van Dam being able to push through his own specific designs, as van Dam was able to counter Schwarz's desire to introduce German language instruction in the third year of primary school, instead introducing the new subject in the seventh year.³⁷ But these are minor points in the grand scheme of things, as Koll is correct that in the overwhelming majority of cases, van Dam's successes were the result of the similarity of his own views with those of his German superiors. Indeed, this is one of the reasons van Dam was picked for the top post in the Education Department in the first place.³⁸

Regarding the Nazis' Germanic project, Koll notes that it was the preferred policy of the SS faction within the Nazi leadership, both in Berlin and in the Netherlands, although he also points out, like Kwiet and Hirschfeld, that Hitler's own thoughts were characteristically vague. He further notes that Seyss-Inquart could, generally, be counted on to further this policy within the Netherlands, and, in fact, this assurance was one of the reasons that Himmler supported his appointment to the position of *Reichskommissar*, a view Koll sees as further evidenced by the relatively cooperative relationship between the two men.³⁹ At the same time, like Kwiet and Hirschfeld, Koll notes that Seyss-Inquart was in a relatively weak position politically in the Netherlands, despite his legal supremacy. As a result, Seyss-Inquart spent his time trying to play the various power groups off each other, supporting whichever group seemed most likely to strengthen his own position at any given time.⁴⁰ So, while he was generally supportive of the SS

³⁶ NIOD 020/417; Peter Jan Knegtmans, P.G.G.M Schulten, and Jaap Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau: opkomst en val van de hoogleraren Schrieke, Snijder en Van Dam* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers AUP, 1996), 258.

³⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/344.

³⁸ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 250–51; Henk van Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest: fascisme in het onderwijs, 1940-1945* (Bergen, NL: Octavo, 1985), 17.

³⁹ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 114, 176.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 276–77.

faction's goal of creating a Greater Germanic Reich after the war, Seyss-Inquart's political double-dealing, especially early in the occupation before the ascendancy of the SS faction, was foundational to the larger dysfunction of the occupation regime more generally in the Netherlands.

Of the major works that focus on the nature of the occupation more generally, all agree that the ultimate fate of the Netherlands under Nazi leadership was to be some sort of incorporation of the country into the Reich, although the exact outlines of that relationship are not always agreed upon. De Jong and Warmbrunn both favored a simpler annexation model, while Kwiet, Hirschfeld, and Koll argue for a more complex understanding that focuses on the variegated power structure among the Nazi leadership, with the Germanic empire a preferred goal specifically of the SS faction. The latter three scholars also recognize that the SS faction was especially strong in the Netherlands, if not before the August 1942 order 54/42 granting Himmler authority over Germanic peoples in Europe, then certainly after it. Given the strength of the SS in the occupied countries, several scholars have focused explicitly on that particular facet of the occupation regime.

By far the most important, both within the general historiography and for this inquiry is N.K.C.A. in 't Veld's 1976 *De SS en Nederland: Documenten uit SS-archieven 1935-1945*. In 't Veld was the first scholar to take seriously the role of the SS in the Netherlands and its implications for the future of the country had the Germans won the war. The work itself covers nearly the entirety of the SS's activities in the occupied country, everything from the pre-war split within the NSB between the Mussert and *völkisch* factions, to the buildup of the various Dutch SS units and recruitment for military service in the Waffen-SS. Also important for this

study, in 't Veld's work also contains complete copies of 656 documents the author has pulled from the archives that offer the reader context for in 't Veld's analysis.

For in 't Veld, even within the SS, the view of a Greater Germanic Reich was not always clearly articulated. At different points, Rauter, and by extension probably Himmler, viewed the Dutch as essentially German, and so, to a certain extent, the very ideal of the Germanic project in the Netherlands was somewhat of a fantasy. There was no doubt that the future Germanic empire the SS wanted to create would look a lot like the present German Empire; its leading language would be German and Germans, if by nothing more than their making up more than three quarters of the population, would control the Germanic empire. Moreover, after the war ended, none of the leaders of the Nazi regime in the Netherlands stuck to the Germanic ideal. Seyss-Inquart and Rauter both spoke only of Germany at their trials and before their executions. Hitler and Himmler likely would have also said the same. In that sense, all of the notions of the Greater Germanic Reich were little more than, at best, a mirage of expected victory, and, at worst, nonsense.⁴¹

But nonsense still matters, especially when that nonsense is the basis of actual policy, as it was in the Netherlands. As in 't Veld notes directly:

The fact that in the history of mankind the driving ideologies consist mainly of unsustainable nonsense has never taken anything away from the fanaticism with which the supporters have tried to shape reality into their delusions. The different interpretations of collectively professed nonsense have their own interest and their own historical power. To say that these views are only idle slogans that cover the true strategic, economic, territorial or personal aspects of a struggle for power is all too simple.⁴²

Himmler and his SS subordinates very much believed in the idea of the Greater Germanic Reich, even if those ideas were not always clear in their own minds and even if the exact nature of the future Germanic empire changed over the course of the Second World War. Those ideas were,

⁴¹ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 160–62.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 162.

after all, always framed from the position of an eventual German victory, in which there would be plenty of time to iron out the differences between the various competing power centers within Germany and within the Netherlands. Furthermore, even if the differences between annexation into the German Reich and the creation of a Greater Germanic Reich were little more than variations on a theme, the proponents of each variation very much saw and placed importance on *their* variation. It would be, as in 't Veld notes, like glossing over the differences between Zwingli, Luther, and the Roman Catholic Church as minor disputes over insignificant doctrinal questions. The differences are important, however, for they “had major influence on the political thinking and actions of the German occupiers of the Netherlands.”⁴³

In essence then, in 't Veld argues that historians must take seriously the Germanic project in the Netherlands precisely because the German occupiers themselves took it seriously. The fact that the Germanic project existed more in the minds of the leaders of the occupation and their SS superiors in Berlin and that it was not always entirely different in its conception than a pure annexation of the Netherlands into the Reich is of little importance, especially because those beliefs informed policy in very real ways.

In 't Veld's work is also important for another development that is germane to this study. Of all of the authors who have written on the German occupation of the Netherlands, in 't Veld is the one who comes closest to what I argue is the correct understanding of their goals vis-à-vis nazification and Germanicization. He cogently argues that the purpose of the German occupation was the “nazification and Germanicization of the Netherlands,” and he correctly notes that those two actions are not one in the same.⁴⁴ Germanicization, not Germanization, was a second, further aspect of the ideological goals of the German occupiers, especially the SS faction of the

⁴³ Ibid., 162–63.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 154. “*Nazificatie en germanisatie.*”

German regime, and they differ in what the end product of the process looks like. Germanization is the attempt to turn non-Germans into Germans, which certainly was a regime policy in some areas, especially in the east. Germanicization, on the other hand, was limited to the Germanic peoples of North and Northwest Europe, and had the goal, not of turning those people German, but of reminding them of their ancestral connections to their past and their shared future with other Germanics, even if the idea was confused in the earliest days of the occupation.⁴⁵

More recently, Geraldine von Frijtag Drabbe Künzel has published several stimulating works on Dutch “pioneers” in Eastern Europe, one of the main policies that resulted from the Nazis’ Germanic project in the Netherlands.⁴⁶ The recruitment of Dutch farmers was meant to help repopulate those areas of Eastern Europe that were being depopulated through the Nazis’ program of genocide. Focusing as it does on the *Nederlandsche Oost-Compagnie* and the colonization of Eastern Europe, Künzel’s work does not overlap with this inquiry directly and is more in conversation with other works on the colonization of Eastern Europe.⁴⁷ It is, however, important as a representative of the latest scholarly work on the Nazis’ Germanic project and its direct effects on the Netherlands. The use of Dutch farmers to colonize the east was one facet of creating the Greater Germanic Empire and is evidence of the Nazi occupiers’ efforts to realize that end, even if that effort, too, ended in failure. Even if the Germanic project had been little more than a political ideal of the SS that was either entirely imaginary and used for propagandistic purposes (Hirschfeld) or limited in its effects because of the eternal power

⁴⁵ Ibid., 499–500, 521–25.

⁴⁶ Geraldine von Frijtag Drabbe Künzel, *Hitler’s Brudervolk: The Dutch and the Colonization of Occupied Eastern Europe, 1939-1945* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015); Geraldine von Frijtag Drabbe Künzel, “Germanic Brothers,” in *Racial Science in Hitler’s New Europe, 1938-1945*, by Rory Yeomans and Anton Weiss-Wendt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 83–107; Geraldine von Frijtag Drabbe Künzel, “‘Germanje’: Dutch Empire-Building in Nazi-Occupied Europe,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 240–257, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2017.1313521>.

⁴⁷ Especially the work of Shelley Baranowski, Donald Bloxham, Wendy Lower, and Jürgen Zimmerer.

struggle among the Nazi leadership in the Netherlands (Kwiet and Koll), the Germanic project had concrete effects on German policy, in this case through sending thousands of Netherlands east to help build the European New Order, some of whom would never actually make it home.

All of the previously discussed works touch on this inquiry in some way, mostly through their discussions, or disavowals, of the Nazis' Germanic project in the Netherlands. There have been, on the other hand, several works that have focused more or less on educational policy in the occupied Netherlands that are more directly related to this inquiry. The most important is J. H. C. de Pater's 1969 work *Het Schoolverzet*, which focuses on the Protestant School Resistance during the occupation.⁴⁸ De Pater's work is, by far, the most in-depth study of the Nazi occupiers' education policy in the occupied Netherlands to date, but its true focus is on confessional education, not public education, and then, it looks most closely at the efforts of the various resistance groups, especially the organized protestant commissions that aimed at defending their constitutional rights against encroachments by the German occupiers and their Dutch helpers. He also includes an especially useful study of the various school inspectorates.⁴⁹

De Pater's focus contrasts with this study in two ways. First, this inquiry is more interested in public education, although, like de Pater, it does occasionally stray into the other form of education (in this case, confessional education, in de Pater's case, public education) when appropriate, especially when it concerns the Appointment Decrees. Second, this inquiry is more interested in the Germans' designs for public education than in the resistance waged against those policies. In both ways, the current study is the mirror opposite of de Pater's work, as this inquiry is more interested in the Germans' designs, especially as they relate to the future of Europe after German victory, and their efforts to secure that future through public, rather than

⁴⁸ J. C. H. De Pater, *Het schoolverzet* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 258–372.

private, education. That being said, it must also be noted that, in many ways, the findings of both inquiries are similar. In both public and private education, the Nazis' efforts were complete failures, primarily as a result of resistance waged at the local level. On the other hand, de Pater also notes that Seyss-Inquart and Schwarz were supporters of the Greater Germanic ideal and mostly accepts that these beliefs were sincere and influenced policy, but he himself does not see much difference between the Germanic project in the Netherlands and more pedestrian nazification or Germanization.⁵⁰ In that way, this inquiry offers a fresher perspective on the Germans' designs, by taking seriously, in the vein of in 't Veld, the Nazis' Germanic ideal and its consequences for the educational sphere.

In addition to de Pater, four other works cover the educational sphere in the Netherlands during the Nazi occupation. Two deal exclusively with German educational institutions, that is the NIVO and the two *Reichsschulen*. The other two deal more with the Education Department and the person of Jan van Dam respectively. On the NIVO and the *Reichsschulen*, the more important work is David Barnouw's *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule: nationaal-socialistische onderwijsinstellingen in Nederland*.⁵¹ Barnouw's work is a close examination of the history of three specific schools, the NIVO Koningsheide and the two German-created *Reichsschulen*, which were meant to be the Germanic equivalent of the National-Political Educational Institutes created by the Nazis in Germany in the 1930s. The second work is a popular piece written by the journalist Paul van der Steen entitled *Keurkinderen: Hitlers elitescholen in Nederland*.⁵² Van der Steen relied heavily on Barnouw as well as unpublished notes by de Pater on the two *Reichsschulen* that de Pater assembled when he conducted his research for *Het Schoolverzet*. As

⁵⁰ Ibid., 101, 166–73.

⁵¹ David Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule: nationaal-socialistische onderwijsinstellingen in Nederland* ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1981).

⁵² Paul van der Steen, *Keurkinderen: Hitlers elitescholen in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2009).

a result, van der Steen does not offer much new material in terms of the larger questions I am interested in for this inquiry, although his research did lead him to some pertinent details regarding the daily life at the schools that are not included in Barnouw. In both cases, the authors recognize that these educational institutions were aimed at creating the future elite of the Greater Germanic Reich.⁵³ Because this is one area in which substantial research had already been conducted, I rely heavily on both works for that section of chapter four that touches upon these three institutions.

The final two works deal directly with the Department of Education, but in slightly different ways. The first is Hans Knippenberg and Willem van der Ham's *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg: 75 jaar Ministerie van Onderwijs (Kunsten) en Wetenschappen, 1918-1993*, which is an institutional history of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Arts, and Sciences.⁵⁴ Designed as a history of the ministry since the constitutional reforms of 1918, the work covers a much broader period than this inquiry. Moreover, it treats the German occupation as a sort of interregnum in the otherwise steady development of the Dutch state and educational apparatus over the previous three quarters of a century. Despite that, the work is most useful for its insights into the work inside of the department during the occupation, including issues of personnel, budget, and housing.⁵⁵ Knippenberg and van der Ham's work is, for example, the only work that gives significant focus to the work in the department after its move to Apeldoorn in early 1943, at which point officials there, including the leadership of the department, focused more on holding down the fort than on actual oversight and governance of the educational apparatus in

⁵³ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 20–28, 57; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 83–85, 120–22, 233–38.

⁵⁴ Hans Knippenberg and Willem van der Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg: 75 jaar Ministerie van Onderwijs (Kunsten) en Wetenschappen, 1918-1993* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1994).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 219–22, 242–44, 262–70.

the country.⁵⁶ Because the perspective of the authors is that of the overall changes in the ministry, they pay little attention to the overarching goals of the occupiers in their efforts to institute educational “reform.” The authors certainly do note that certain elements were inspired by the Germanic ideal, especially historical instruction which they briefly cover, but overall, these initiatives are subsumed under the larger, and more traditional, concept of pure nazification.⁵⁷

The final work on education is actually a collection of works by the Dutch scholar Peter Jan Knegtmans, who specializes in the history of the University of Amsterdam, among other topics, and so has written several chapters for larger publications on one of that institution’s most important scholars during the occupation, Jan van Dam.⁵⁸ Knegtmans’s works are most useful for his research into the academic and ideological thought of van Dam. Van Dam was, in Knegtmans’s view, first and foremost a scholar of language. His views on race were much less pronounced and he even regretted the growing influence of race within his field. Regardless, however, he welcomed the increased emphasis on Old Germanic languages, culture, and history that accompanied the Nazis’ “seizure of power” in Germany in 1933. This, combined with the otherwise apolitical van Dam’s amazement at the success of the Nazis’ governing style, especially compared with the failures of the Weimar government that van Dam witnessed in his youth as a lecturer at Bonn in the early 1920s, made him a sympathizer with the Nazi movement in Germany. At the same time, he was steadfastly opposed to the Dutch national socialist party, the NSB, which he considered to be a club for brutes and ruffians. This odd combination of

⁵⁶ Ibid., 281–85.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 222, 225–27, 246–49.

⁵⁸ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*; Peter Jan Knegtmans, “Jan van Dam und die Reform des Unterrichtswesens in den besetzten Niederlanden,” in *Griff nach dem Westen: die “Westforschung” der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, ed. Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and George Mölich (Münster; New York: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2003), 1091–1109 This work is actually a translation of the previously cited chapter.

political sympathies made van Dam an especially useful choice for the German occupiers to fill the role of Secretary-General, even though one of van Dam's colleagues at the University of Amsterdam, Geerto Snijder, had been the Germans' first choice.⁵⁹

As a result, when he became Secretary-General during the occupation, but before he grew disillusioned with the Nazi regime in the latter half of the war, van Dam pursued policies that, on the one hand, were clearly aimed at Germanicization, that is increasing the importance of the Germanic element and the place of the Dutch within that world in school instruction, but, at the same time, sometimes actually worked against the overtly racial elements of the Nazis' occupation policies.⁶⁰ In other words, for van Dam, the Germanic project was a cultural project, not a racial project, even if, for the SS leadership in both Germany and the Netherlands, race was the key element. Further, Knegtmans recognizes that van Dam was a politically weak character, but does not go so far as, for example de Jong, to argue that he was little more than a German lackey.⁶¹ Van Dam had clearly outlined policy initiatives, and in some cases, he was able to inhibit the efforts of the Germans, especially when it came to the imposition of forced labor among students and van Dam's protection of culturally significant Jewish Netherlands. In this way, van Dam was a good, but not exactly perfect, collaborator for the German occupiers. In those areas that he and his German superiors agreed, which was more often than not, van Dam proved to be an able administrator, despite his occasional relapses into "humanistic" tendencies.⁶²

In contrast to the works just discussed, this inquiry in most focused on the Germans' goals in the field of education during the occupation, especially in Dutch schools, which Schwarz

⁵⁹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 239–50, 304–8. Snijder consistently turned down offers to take on a more public role in the occupation regime.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 256, 274–77.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 254–62.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 282. Here, Knegtmans is quoting Schwarz.

called the indirect path to the Greater Germanic ideal, and to a slightly lesser extent, the German schools, otherwise known as the direct path to the Germanic Reich. Like in 't Veld, this study takes seriously the SS leadership's view of the Germanic element in the Netherlands. Although this goal was somewhat confused during the initial months of the occupation, as many scholars have noted, that does not take away from its development by the end of the 1940 into concrete policy, supported by Seyss-Inquart, at least to the extent that it did not interfere with his own personal base of power. This is especially true for the education realm because all of the important individuals in the upper echelons of the education sector were supporters of the Germanic project and hoped to further the Germanic ideal among Dutch youth. But before we can turn to that directly, a brief overview of the role of education in the modern Dutch state is necessary. Developments that occurred in the education field in the nineteenth and early twentieth century are indispensable for understanding the competing interests among Dutch collaborators as well as one of the primary reasons that the Germans' educational initiatives were very likely doomed to failure from the outset.

Background - Pillarization and The School Struggle

In contrast to its neighbors to the east, the history of the Netherlands over the course of the nineteenth century is one of relative disunity. At the same time that the German speaking states of Central Europe were slowly becoming more unified both economically and politically under Prussian leadership, the Netherlands, especially its northern half, found itself floundering. This process began when French Revolutionary armies invaded and set up a French puppet state in the 1790s in the Northern Netherlands, while the Southern Netherlands—present day Belgium—was incorporated directly into the French Empire. The Batavian Republic, as the French puppet state in the Northern Netherlands was initially known, brought an end to the

federal nature of the Seven United Provinces, replacing it with a centrally administered state along the French revolutionary model.⁶³ Along with this change came the separation of church and state and, as a result, state control over education, which had been, up to that point, under the purview of the churches. After the final defeat of Napoleonic armies, at the Vienna Congress the victorious allies decided to incorporate the northern and southern portions of the Low Countries into a single United Kingdom of the Netherlands, with the son of the last Dutch *Stadholder* taking the throne as King Willem I.

Willem's government would continue along the path of centralization but found few supporters in either the north or the south of the newly united nation. Further, Willem's government was overtly pro-Calvinist and worked to legalize much of the already persistent anti-Catholic discrimination in his new realm.⁶⁴ Unity proved short-lived, as the majority-Catholic southern half of the country pushed for independence from the majority-Protestant northern half, a goal which was achieved after the great European upheavals of 1830, when in 1831 Leopold I was proclaimed King of the Belgians by the Belgian National Congress, although the final settlement would wait until the 1839 Treaty of London.⁶⁵ Having lost its more industrialized southern half, the newly truncated Kingdom of the Netherlands found itself permanently in a position it had not been in for several hundred years—politically marginalized and militarily weak.⁶⁶ While the Netherlands, in any of its various political forms, had never been a large military power in its own right on the European continent, it had commanded much respect among the European great powers because of its immense economic strength. At its height, the

⁶³ E. H. Kossmann, *The Low Countries, 1780-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 96.

⁶⁴ Gerlof D. Homan, "Catholic Emancipation in the Netherlands," *The Catholic Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (1966): 201.

⁶⁵ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 151–54.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 160–64, 211–12.

county of Holland was one of the richest, most developed locales in the world, bankers and merchants in Amsterdam controlled a significant amount of world trade, and the ships of the United East Indian Company ruled the seas. But that was no more. Its status as an imperial power with colonies in the Far East and the Caribbean did continue to afford the Netherlands a certain respect among the European Great Powers into the twentieth century, but there was no mistaking the fact that the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic had long since passed.

This worrying military and geopolitical decline was mirrored by intense changes at home. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a flowering of cultural innovation in the Netherlands.⁶⁷ Political reforms instituted after 1848 gave the Netherlands a modern, liberal constitution, while the supremacy of Dutch liberalism was cemented during the parliamentary upheaval surrounding the resignation of Prime Minister Count van Zuylen van Nijeveldt in 1868. Socially, it was in the last decades of the nineteenth century that a particularly unique feature of Low Country society first emerged—pillarization.⁶⁸ Pillarization was the process by which the people of the Netherlands slowly, but surely, coalesced into at first three, and then four, major interest groups. The process began with the two major religious blocs—the Calvinist church on the one hand and Catholic church on the other.⁶⁹ The two religious blocs created large support networks designed to help their co-religionists in need. These networks included schools, hospitals, health insurance cooperatives, trade unions, professional organizations, public

⁶⁷ Paul Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 200–206.

⁶⁸ *Verzuiling*. The development of pillarization in the Netherlands is usually attributed to Abraham Kuyper, the founder of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Free University of Amsterdam and is essentially similar to the larger Christian-Democratic political-philosophical principle of Sphere Sovereignty. A similar system developed in Belgium and in South Africa, where, later in the twentieth century, it would further develop into the system of apartheid. For Kuyper's influence on apartheid, see Patrick Baskwell, "Kuyper and Apartheid: A Revisiting," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 62, no. 4 (October 2, 2006): 1269–90.

⁶⁹ Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 2-3, 197-198.

associations, and, of course, political parties to support it all.⁷⁰ A third pillar grew up around the more secular, liberal segment of the Dutch population, and as the country more fully industrialized toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the growing workers' movement coalesced into a nascent fourth, socialist pillar, although it was shut out of the political process until 1939.⁷¹ With universal male suffrage in 1917 and female suffrage three years later, this process of social stratification became firmly entrenched in the political arena as well. In theory, the pillars were the supports that held up the roof of Dutch society. In reality, the pillarization of the nation helped to create a series of stable governments controlled, by and large, through coalitions between the three established pillars. This resulted in a spirit of compromise among Dutch leaders in spite of often diametrically opposed interests claiming the status of immutable "truth" for their own positions.⁷² Unlikely as it is that a political scientist would design such a system, it was surprisingly effective at preventing instability and keeping the population content, at least to the extent that extremist, anti-democratic, and revolutionary ideologies such as fascism or communism never managed to gain much support among the populace as a whole.

This does not mean, however, that the Netherlands did not have social problems to work through on the domestic front. Chief among these was the issue of control over education, which had been simmering in the background ever since the French invasion a century prior. At the time, the revolutionary spirit of the age called for a decrease in the influence of religion in public life, and especially in the schools.⁷³ The Education Act of 1806 set up the basis for two types of

⁷⁰ The first modern, national political party in the Netherlands, the Anti-Revolutionary Party, was formed in support of the Protestant pillar. Ibid., 187.

⁷¹ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 620.

⁷² J. A. Kossmann-Putto and E. H. Kossmann, *The Low Countries: History of the Northern and Southern Netherlands* (Rekkem: Stichting Ons Erfdeel, 1997), 37–49; Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 2–3.

⁷³ John Valk, "Religion and the Schools: The Case of Utrecht.," *History of Education Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (1996): 161.

schools in the Netherlands.⁷⁴ The first were public, secular schools, mostly funded and supervised by the localities in which they were found. Although they were ostensibly neutral in matters of confession, there was no denying the overtly Protestant nature of many of the schools, especially in the Protestant-majority northern part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.⁷⁵ The second were the so-called “special schools,” which were private, confessional schools organized by the Catholic and Protestant churches.⁷⁶ But because the creation of these schools had to be approved by local authorities, the creation of specifically Catholic schools was considerably more difficult in the Protestant-majority north of the country.⁷⁷ Moreover, despite the guarantees in the 1815 constitution for state financial support of both Protestant and Catholic private confessional schools, the vast majority of the funds, which both blocs thought were insufficient, went to Protestant institutions, further exacerbating the north/south divide in the nation and contributing to the Belgian revolution in 1830. With the death of Willem I, and the ascension to the throne of his more tolerant son Willem II in 1840, minor concessions were made to Catholic communities.⁷⁸ For their part, the public schools were mostly seen, according to the educational theories that ruled the day, as poor relief, and to the extent that they instructed in religion, it tended to be of the Protestant variety, which generally pleased the Protestant elites of the period.⁷⁹ This began to change, however, with the ascendancy of the liberal state in 1848 which saw public schools take on an increasingly secular nature.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Michael J. Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands, 1800-1920: Demographic, Economic, and Social Transition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 269.

⁷⁵ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 96, 289–91.

⁷⁶ *Bijzondere scholen*.

⁷⁷ Homan, “Catholic Emancipation in the Netherlands,” 202.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁷⁹ Marjanne De Kwaasteniet, “Denominational Education and Contemporary Education Policy in the Netherlands,” *European Journal of Education* 20, no. 4 (1986): 372; Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands*, 271.

⁸⁰ De Kwaasteniet, “Denominational Education and Contemporary Education Policy in the Netherlands,” 372.

In 1848, as other parts of Europe were embroiled in revolution, Willem II calmly initiated the constitutional reforms that would keep revolution at bay.⁸¹ This new constitution, which was passed by both chambers of the States-General, was in many ways the founding document of the modern, liberal, democratic Dutch state. It was also a watershed moment in the development of both public and private, confessional education in the Netherlands.⁸² Among many reforms, it again guaranteed partial public financial support of confessional education and removed many of the obstacles facing Catholics in the establishment of their own private schools. Most of these constitutional reforms were implemented through the new Education Law of 1857, which also increased teacher pay and qualification requirements while calling for a supervisory regime to hold everyone accountable.⁸³ The further expansion of state funding for confessional schools, however, was not passed, being killed on amendment.⁸⁴ Twenty years later, however, the liberal/Catholic political alliance that had made many of the 1857 reforms possible broke down.⁸⁵ In its place was a liberal bloc, overtly secular in nature, on the one hand, and a conservative coalition with its base of support in the confessions on the other.⁸⁶ Despite this political realignment, however, the liberal state continued its encroachment upon the classroom with a new education law in 1878 that greatly increased the power of the central government over that of the local towns and provinces.⁸⁷ It did this by legislating further pay increases for teachers, even higher training requirements, and capital improvements to school buildings and grounds that were so expensive that many towns could no longer afford the costs, necessitating the financial intervention of liberal ministers in The Hague. This allowed the central government to

⁸¹ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 192.

⁸² Valk, "Religion and the Schools," 164.

⁸³ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 291–93, 302.

⁸⁴ Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands*, 272.

⁸⁵ Valk, "Religion and the Schools," 163–64; Homan, "Catholic Emancipation in the Netherlands," 210.

⁸⁶ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 3–4; Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 187.

⁸⁷ Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands*, 272.

increase its supervision of the schools and more firmly to enforce the secular nature of the schools that had been in place, in theory but not at all universally in practice, since the French invasion eighty years prior. The law further drew back some of the churches' gains as regarded the establishment of new private confessional schools, which now became nearly impossible to newly found. About a decade later, the political tide turned and the confessional coalition came into power and, in 1889, passed yet another education law that relaxed most of the restrictions on the confessional schools. Their establishment was no longer curtailed as it had been in 1878. Further, and for the schools themselves most importantly, the 1889 law allowed for increased state funding of confessional schools, up to about one third of their costs. This was, in every respect, a political defeat for the liberal parties, and one that led to an exodus of students from the public schools for confessional schools, further exacerbating the pillarization that was then beginning to stratify Dutch society.⁸⁸

The final blow came in 1900 with the introduction of compulsory, universal primary education. Long simmering in the background, the question of the state's role in education came crashing to the fore. The sides in what would come to be known as the School Struggle were split between a liberal/socialist camp that favored secular, public education completely free of religious indoctrination, and the two confessional pillars, which angled for full state financial support of their private confessional schools.⁸⁹ The impasse would finally be resolved, after decades of back and forth debate over the subject, during the Great War. While the rest of Europe was engaged in total war, the Netherlands remained neutral, preferring a more cautious approach of wait-and-see. A government of national unity was formed with the support of, but not including, the socialist party. With the great conflict raging to the south, the internal strife

⁸⁸ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 354; Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands*, 272–73.

⁸⁹ *Schoolstrijd*.

surrounding education took a back seat. At the same time, full democratization was gaining steam, with the increasingly important Social-Democratic Workers' Party demanding universal suffrage. In December 1917, the government promulgated constitutional reforms. In a political compromise of enormous proportions, the liberal/socialist camp, which was against public funding of confessional schools, traded their support for the former in exchange for the support of the confessional parties for universal manhood suffrage, followed three years later by universal adult suffrage.⁹⁰ And so, the century long struggle surrounding education that had begun with French invasion was ended through political compromise, with everyone winning. Except for the liberals, who, thanks to universal suffrage, saw their share of the electorate decline precipitously in favor of the socialist and confessional parties. This political compromise was put into law with the Primary School Law of 1920, which officially equalized both the status of and the state funding for public, secular schools and their private, religious counterparts, although the private confessional schools retained significant influence over their curriculum, with only minimum standards enforced by the central government.⁹¹

Although the Primary School Law of 1920 ended the "School Struggle," that was not the end of attempts to reform education. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, a not insignificant sector of the extreme right wing of Dutch politics was the inheritor of the liberal position of the nineteenth century. These individuals viewed the stratified nature of Dutch education as anathema to national unity and wanted, through various schemes, to do away with private, confessional education and put all schools under the purview of the state. For many of these individuals, Jan van Dam among them, the German invasion in May 1940 would offer a new

⁹⁰ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 554–55; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 5–7.

⁹¹ Incidentally, it was this same law that allowed for state financial support for the German Schools in the Netherlands discussed in the chapter four.

opportunity to reverse the gains made by the confessional blocs over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Luckily for these extremists, their new German overlords were of the very same mindset.

Reichskommissariat Niederlande

In the early morning of May 10, 1940, German troops invaded the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. Case Yellow, as the plans were known, was meant to knock the French Republic out of the war and set up the necessary conditions for the Wehrmacht to invade the United Kingdom. Against all odds, the Dutch resisted German advances as best they could. Out-manned, out-gunned, and lacking in the necessary training in modern warfare, the Dutch military was quickly overwhelmed by the Nazi war machine. Only three days after the invasion, on the advice of her ministers and military commanders, Queen Wilhelmina, her family, and government ministers fled to the safety of the United Kingdom, leaving the country in control of the Commander of the Dutch Armed Forces, General Henri Winkelman. That evening, German troops made it past the *Grebbeinie*—one of the flooded “water lines” the Dutch had erected to defend the country from foreign invasion—near Utrecht and moved into “Fortress Holland,” the heart of the country. At the same time, German troops advanced in the southwest of the country towards the major port city of Rotterdam. With German troops on the south bank of the Meuse River just south of Rotterdam and unable to overcome stiff resistance from the Dutch defenders on the north side of the river, Hitler ordered that resistance be crushed.

The following day, Luftwaffe bombers obliterated the medieval city center of Rotterdam. Eighty thousand Rotterdammers lost their homes, twenty-five hundred shops, twelve hundred factories, five hundred cafes, seventy schools, twenty-one churches, four hospitals, and two concert halls were either destroyed outright or went up in flames as a result of the bombing.

Initial estimates of lives lost ranged as high as thirty thousand individuals, although by the time the dust settled, somewhat less than one thousand actually died.⁹² Only hours after the news of the fate of Rotterdam reached the high command, the Germans issued an ultimatum regarding Utrecht, promising that should the Dutch military not surrender the fortifications surrounding the city, it too would suffer the “fate of Warsaw.” Faced with the threatened destruction of Utrecht and fearing the Germans would not stop there but continue on to the other major cities of the country, Winkelman ordered the complete surrender of the Dutch Armed Forces later that day.⁹³ Full Dutch resistance to the invasion had lasted only five days, although sporadic fighting continued in the southwestern province of Zeeland for a few days longer.

In the first few days of the occupation, a German military administration was put into place headed by General Alexander von Falkenhausen. Falkenhausen’s authority lasted about two weeks, however, as the Nazis decided to install a civilian administration, headed by the Austrian Nazi Arthur Seyss-Inquart, who was appointed on May 18 by Hitler to the position of *Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete*, a position he would actually assume on May 29.⁹⁴ It appears that the decision to install a civilian administration was made at the last minute, as pre-war plans for the occupation of Western Europe envisioned both a much longer struggle for control and the continued presence of the Dutch royal family and government. On the twentieth of May, Hitler discussed with Jodl a complete victory that would end in a peace treaty that would “return the territory that had been stolen from the German people 400 years prior.”⁹⁵ It was this anticipated peace, along with the absence of the Dutch

⁹² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, III/394-395.

⁹³ Ibid., III/400-402.

⁹⁴ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 121. Reich Commissar for the Occupied Dutch Territories.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 50.

government that allowed Hitler to use the threat of a political power vacuum in the Netherlands as an alibi vis-à-vis the Wehrmacht leadership in order to implement a civilian administration.⁹⁶ His alibi to the Wehrmacht was of little importance, however, as he had already drafted the order implementing the *Reichskommissariat* and naming Seyss-Inquart to the position of *Reichskommissar* two days prior.⁹⁷ And it should be noted, that the very name of the occupation regime again betrays the Germans plans, as Gerhard Hirschfeld has noted. The German term conveys a dual meaning of implicit connection to the *Reich* itself while also exposing the overtly temporary nature of the current form of governance - *kommissarisch* being a German term for *temporary*.⁹⁸ Like its counterparts in Northern and Eastern Europe, the *Reichskommissariat Niederlande* was to be eventually incorporated into a Greater Germanic Reich.

Arthur Seyss-Inquart was born in 1892 in the Moravian town Stannern, located inside a German *Sprachinsel* in what is the present-day Czech Republic, to Emil Seyss-Inquart, a school administrator, and Augusta Hirenbach.⁹⁹ Unusually, his sisters were brought up in the Evangelical church, per the tradition of his mother's family, while Arthur and his brothers followed his father's family and were baptized Catholic. In 1908, after his father's retirement, the family moved to the small town of Baden, near the imperial capital of Vienna. It was here that Arthur began running in more nationalistic, *völkisch*, and antisemitic circles.¹⁰⁰ After graduating from high school in 1910, the younger Seyss-Inquart began attending the University of Vienna to study law. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, the increasingly nationalist-minded Seyss-Inquart volunteered for Army service. His wartime service did not

⁹⁶ Ibid., 48–50.

⁹⁷ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete/ Verordeningenblad voor het bezette Nederlandsche Gebied* (Den Haag: Rijksuitgeverij, 1940), 1/1940.

⁹⁸ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 18, 62.

⁹⁹ Stannern, a German speaking language island inside of a larger Czech speaking territory, was located in what was then the Crown Lands of Moravia, which was administered by the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy.

¹⁰⁰ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 32.

hinder his personal or professional development, however, as he married in 1916 and eventually graduated with a doctorate in jurisprudence in 1917. In 1918, he was decommissioned from the Austrian army after a successful wartime service in which he was wounded several times.

His political activities in the 1920s are difficult to ascertain for lack of source material, but it is clear that he had begun drifting ever further to the extreme right wing of Austrian politics. By 1931, he had joined the *Steierischer Heimatschutz*—a right-wing, anti-democratic, antisemitic paramilitary organization that would be officially absorbed into the Austrian branch of the NSDAP in 1933.¹⁰¹ He would continue his political work throughout the 1930s, agitating principally for the incorporation of Austria into the German Reich. In these efforts, he was counted among the more moderate circle of the extreme right wing in that he preferred for the incorporation to be handled legally, without resort to street terror or revolutionary activities.¹⁰² After joining the Austrian *Staatsrat* in 1937, he was appointed, through the insistence of Hitler, to the position of interior minister in February 1938.¹⁰³ On March 11, 1938, again under pressure from Nazi Germany, Austrian president Miklas appointed Seyss-Inquart to the position of Chancellor. The very next day German tanks crossed the border into Austria. On March 13, Seyss-Inquart signed the legislative acts that effectively abolished the Austrian state and legally incorporated it into the German Reich. It was at this time that Seyss-Inquart, who had long since felt himself tied politically and emotionally to the Nazi party, officially joined the NSDAP and the SS, reaching the high rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer* by the eve of the German occupation of the Netherlands. After the *Anschluss*, Seyss-Inquart remained as the de-jure head of the newly renamed Ostmark as *Reichsstatthalter*, although he was forced to share power with a newly

¹⁰¹ Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 46–47. Styrian Homeland Security Association.

¹⁰² Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 34–39.

¹⁰³ The Austrian State Council.

appointed *Reichskommissar für die Ostmark*.¹⁰⁴ After the German invasion of Poland, he was briefly transferred to work there under Hans Frank, in a largely ceremonial role that he despised so much that he requested, via Himmler, to be sent to the front where he could truly be useful.¹⁰⁵ Despite his request, however, Hitler decided on May 17, 1940 (formally announced the following day), to transfer Seyss-Inquart to The Hague to take up the newly created position of *Reichskommissar* in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁶ In his farewell address in Krakow, Seyss-Inquart famously remarked that “in the east, we have a national socialist mission, over there in the west, we have a function. Therein lies something of a difference.”¹⁰⁷ This difference, as the course of the occupation would show, manifested itself in the racial make-up of the local population. In the east, the Nazis were dealing with Slavic “sub-humans,”¹⁰⁸ while the west was populated by their Germanic brethren.¹⁰⁹

The regime that Seyss-Inquart was to head was simply placed on top of the already existing Dutch governmental apparatus, forming a sort of “supervisory administration,” not entirely dissimilar to the occupation regime in Denmark.¹¹⁰ When the Queen and her ministers fled to England, the government left instructions to the permanent Secretaries-General—the highest ranking non-ministerial bureaucrats—of the various ministries to continue in their work as usual. At the summits of these ministries, the Germans installed their own functionaries to

¹⁰⁴ Reich Governor and Reich Commissioner for the Eastern March, respectively.

¹⁰⁵ In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 475; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 48–49.

¹⁰⁶ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 116.

¹⁰⁷ Cited in Norman Rich, *Hitler’s War Aims*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1973), 151; Vejas G. Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 171.

¹⁰⁸ *Untermenschen*.

¹⁰⁹ While Seyss-Inquart’s quote has been understood to show the difference between the brutal savagery of the Nazis in Eastern Europe as compared with the—perceived—mildness of the occupation in the west, scholars have recently begun to call that interpretation into question, noting that the violence in the west was in many ways comparable to that in the east, especially as the war dragged on and resistance increased. The fate of Europe’s Jews, in either case, was the same. The difference he referred to proved to be, at best, a nuance and largely based on the racial make-up of the local population. Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 120; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/58; Foray, “The ‘Clean Wehrmacht’ in the German-Occupied Netherlands, 1940-5.”

¹¹⁰ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 22.

oversee the work of the Dutch bureaucrats via a political and administrative organ known as the *Reichskommissariat*.¹¹¹ The German administration was split into five sections. A *Präsidialabteilung* was to look after questions of personnel, budgets for the departments of the *Reichskommissariat* itself (as opposed to the individual Dutch ministries), and all other issues that required the direct attention of Seyss-Inquart.¹¹² In addition to the *Präsidialabteilung*, there were four overarching departments known as *Generalkommissariate* that were installed on top of the existing Dutch ministries.¹¹³ In addition to these five top-level departments, Seyss-Inquart appointed special *Beauftragten* for each province, one each for the major cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and for certain institutions, such as the Netherlands Bank.¹¹⁴ Following the Nazis' vaunted leadership principle, these representatives acted as petty despots in their own administrative domains, reporting directly to the *Reichskommissar* himself. Finally, on top of the official occupation apparatus, various other organs of the *Reich* tried to establish branches to act as bases of political support in the Netherlands, including the German Foreign Office, the Office of the Four Year Plan, the Economic and Armaments offices, the SS, and the Nazi Party itself. Complicating matters significantly, many figures had dual roles that completely clouded the chain of command, allowing for the creation of petty kingdoms inside of the occupation regime itself. Far from being a smoothly operating machine, however, this political settlement left the various actors too much room to maneuver, and it would, in time, expose many of the principal figures responsible for cultural development and education policy as weak political operatives.

¹¹¹ The term *Reichskommissariat* had a dual meaning. On the one hand, it signified the entire occupied Netherlands while on the other hand it signified the administrative organ of German occupational authority specifically.

¹¹² Presidential Department.

¹¹³ Commissariats-General

¹¹⁴ Officially, *Commissioners* of the *Reichskommissar* for ...

Upon his appointment by Hitler, Seyss-Inquart was allowed to hand pick two of the deputies that would head the *Generalkommissariate*, while the other two were appointed by the Nazi leadership in Berlin. For his choices, Seyss-Inquart chose Hans Fischböck as the *Generalkommissar für Finanz und Wirtschaft*¹¹⁵ and Dr. Friedrich Wimmer for the position of *Generalkommissar für Verwaltung und Justiz*.¹¹⁶ Wimmer also had the distinction of being Seyss-Inquart's principal deputy whenever Seyss-Inquart was away from The Hague. Both men were old friends of Seyss-Inquart's from their time in Austrian politics and could be trusted to maintain political loyalty to him.¹¹⁷ Although he was head of the *Generalkommissariat* for Finance and Economy, Fischböck was seldom present in the Netherlands from 1942 onward, preferring to commute occasionally from Berlin.¹¹⁸ Moreover, his position was closely watched by his superiors in Berlin, as the economic health of the Netherlands was given high priority, first because of their status as "ethnic kin" and later because of the need for resource extraction in the name of the war effort. Further, because of his position overseeing finances and economic matters, he had little direct influence in the cultural sphere.¹¹⁹ Wimmer, on the other hand, was nearly constantly present in the Netherlands from his appointment in May 1940. This is moderately surprising because he had initially been unsure whether he desired to take up work in the Netherlands, as he felt at home in his previous post in the Bavarian city of Regensburg, where he was involved in local administration. Despite his reservations, Wimmer answered Seyss-Inquart's call to action and, for his trouble, found himself in a position of relative

¹¹⁵ Commissioner-General for Finance and the Economy.

¹¹⁶ Commissioner-General for Administration and Justice.

¹¹⁷ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 1506. See also Wimmer's autobiographical essay found on pages 462-464.

¹¹⁸ Friedrich Wimmer, *Zweites Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer*, interview by A. E. Cohen, August 29, 1947, in A. E. Cohen and J. C. H. Blom, *A.E. Cohen als geschiedschrijver van zijn tijd* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2005), Bijlagen, 39, <https://www.niod.nl/sites/niod.nl/files/NIODCohenWimmer.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ Friedrich Wimmer, *Erstes Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer*, interview by A. E. Cohen, August 28, 1947, in *ibid.*, Bijlagen, 12.

autonomy vis-à-vis occupation policy. Unlike his colleagues, Wimmer had only “weak” ministers in Berlin overseeing his work—he explicitly named Wilhelm Frick (Interior Ministry) and Bernhard Rust (Education Ministry) as such after the war—which left only his good friend Seyss-Inquart supervising his work, a veritable free hand given their close relationship.¹²⁰

At the same time, as a check on the power of Seyss-Inquart and to further his own designs on the Netherlands, Himmler installed *SS-Brigadeführer* Hanns Albin Rauter, yet another Austrian Nazi, as both *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer* for the Netherlands and *Generalkommissar für das Sicherheitswesen*.¹²¹ In this position Rauter was simultaneously subordinate to Seyss-Inquart as *Generalkommissar* and subordinate only to Himmler as the highest ranking SS officer in the Netherlands.¹²² As a result, Rauter’s external power base proved be a near constant source of conflict with Seyss-Inquart throughout the occupation and source of political support sufficient to make his office, and therefore also his control of police and SS forces in the Netherlands, practically autonomous from the *Reichskommissariat* itself.¹²³ Further, because of his position as the highest SS officer in the country, Rauter was in direct control of all SS efforts in that realm in the Netherlands.

At the same time, Martin Bormann, the future head of Reich Chancellery who was still at the time chief of staff to Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess, was able to install Dr. Fritz Schmidt, the only German Nazi at the upper echelons of the new administration, as the *Generalkommissar zur besonderen Verwendung*.¹²⁴ Schmidt was, among other things, to represent the interests of the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Higher SS and Police Leader and Commissioner-General for Security Matters, respectively. There is little evidence suggesting that Rauter and Seyss-Inquart were well acquainted prior to their work in the Netherlands, although they did know each other from their time in Austria. See Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 83.

¹²² Of course, technically, Seyss-Inquart, who was an *SS-Obergruppenführer* outranked Rauter in the SS as well, but Rauter’s position as HSSPF made him the highest SS officer in the country, regardless of rank. Rauter would later also be promoted to *SS-Obergruppenführer*.

¹²³ In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 1506–8.

¹²⁴ Commissioner-General for Special Assignments.

Nazi Party directly, a task he was more able to accomplish once he was appointed by Hess to the head of the NSDAP *Arbeitsbereich Niederlande*, the successor organization of the Nazi Party's Foreign Organization in the Netherlands, in October 1940.¹²⁵ His office was also primarily responsible for the forced coordination of Dutch society. In this role, Schmidt tended to support the interests of the otherwise weak Dutch Nazi Party, the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging*. This support of Dutch Nazis, whose goals for a Greater Netherlandic Empire were often at direct odds with their German overlords, would prove a constant source of conflict within the *Reichskommissariat*.¹²⁶ Additionally, Schmidt was responsible for public enlightenment and non-economic associations, but, importantly, excepted from this mandate were questions of education policy, which was to remain under the auspices of the education ministry.¹²⁷ Schmidt's influence in the Netherlands would thus be minimal. With his actions constrained by the leadership in Berlin, and his political position in the Netherlands deteriorating, he was killed in 1943 when he was thrown—or possibly jumped—from a train. While the exact circumstances remain unclear, rumors circulated at the time that he had actually been assassinated by the SS.¹²⁸

Given that the chain of command in the occupation regime resembled a wild web of interconnected and contradictory commitments with built-in conflicts rather than an orderly tree diagram with clearly defined roles—the characteristic fundamental polycracy of the Nazi system¹²⁹—it is unsurprising that Seyss-Inquart was not really able to rule single-handedly as he had hoped or his position theoretically allowed him. Technically, he was indeed the highest-ranking authority, having received his commission directly from and reporting directly to Hitler

¹²⁵ Area of Operations Netherlands.

¹²⁶ Jennifer L. Foray, "An Old Empire in a New Order: The Global Designs of the Dutch Nazi Party, 1931-1942," *European History Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2013): 27–52.

¹²⁷ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 4/1940.

¹²⁸ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 1506.

¹²⁹ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 44; Ian Kershaw, "'Working Towards the Führer.' Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 2 (1993): 113.

himself.¹³⁰ But this did not change his true position as a mid-level bureaucrat in the Nazi regime, leaving him constantly susceptible to the machinations of those higher up the Nazi totem pole and their various representatives in the Netherlands. His comparatively recent party membership and staunch Catholicism did not help his cause either; the latter aspect of his personality actually engendered mistrust in some circles.¹³¹ Seyss-Inquart's only recourse was to appeal directly to Hitler himself, an option that could not be used constantly and which, even when successful, betrayed his own weakness, for that option relied on Hitler siding with Seyss-Inquart over the likes of a Himmler, Göring, or Bormann. Even so, because of Rauter's close relationship to Himmler and Himmler's closeness to Hitler, it is likely that Rauter actually had more direct access to the Führer. Nor was this uncommon in Nazi occupied Europe, as Werner Best, the ambassador plenipotentiary in Denmark, noted after the war that the SS leaders were always the most powerful in their respective territories.¹³² For his part, Hitler never seemed to take much interest in the actual administration of the Netherlands and was otherwise reluctant to intervene between squabbling subordinates in such cases. This left Seyss-Inquart's best option for maintaining influence in playing (or pretending to play) the role of an honest broker between competing factions. This was a role that would appear to be amenable to the otherwise moderate Seyss-Inquart, but it turned out to be a role he was singularly unprepared to play.¹³³ By and large, however, Seyss-Inquart can be counted as belonging to the SS segment of the regime; he

¹³⁰ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 1/1940.

¹³¹ Friedrich Wimmer, "Erstes Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer," interview by A. E Cohen, August 28, 1947, in Cohen and Blom, *A.E. Cohen als geschiedschrijver van zijn tijd*, Bijlagen, 9; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 90.

¹³² Robert. Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen: Nationalsozialistische Neuordnung und Kriegswirtschaft* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), 74.

¹³³ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 25–27; Friedrich Wimmer, Erstes Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer, interview by A. E Cohen, August 28, 1947, in Cohen and Blom, *A.E. Cohen als geschiedschrijver van zijn tijd*, Bijlagen, 9. To be clear, Seyss-Inquart was "moderate" only when compared to some of his more fanatical colleagues.

himself was a member of the SS, and he definitely saw the future of the Netherlands, both out of personal persuasion and through the orders he received from Hitler, as a constituent part of the Greater Germanic Reich.¹³⁴ But, in order to protect his own base of power in the occupied country, he still tried to balance equally the political forces around him, whether Rauter, Schmidt, or the various wings of NSB.¹³⁵ The mutual antipathy between Seyss-Inquart and Rauter and between Seyss-Inquart and Schmidt, did not help his cause in the slightest.¹³⁶

For the most part, the organizational structure of the Dutch government remained intact, with the Germans only perching themselves at the summit, save for one major change in the cultural sphere. On November 25, 1940, the pre-war Dutch Ministry of Education, Arts, and Sciences, which had been situated under the auspices of the Commissariat-General for Administration and Justice was split into two departments under the *Reichskommissariat*: the Department of Education, Sciences, and Cultural Administration and the Department of People's Enlightenment and Arts, the latter designed to be a near-carbon copy of Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry in Berlin. This new department, which was meant to be a Dutch governmental equivalent to the *Hauptabteilung Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*¹³⁷ of Dr. Fritz Schmidt's *Generalkommissariat zur besonderen Verwendung*, was responsible for the press, radio, and film, non-academic literature, art and art installations, theater, architecture, and the fight against degenerate art.¹³⁸ Dr. Tobie Goedewaagen, an ardent, *völkisch* NSBer, was picked to lead the new Dutch propaganda department. Goedewaagen was a good choice for Seyss-Inquart's purposes, as Goedewaagen was supported by Geerto Snijder, one of the leading *Groot-Germaans*

¹³⁴ Künzel, "'Germanje,'" 243–44; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 94–95.

¹³⁵ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 160.

¹³⁶ Friedrich Wimmer, *Erstes Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer*, interview by A. E. Cohen, August 28, 1947, in Cohen and Blom, *A.E. Cohen als geschiedschrijver van zijn tijd*, Bijlagen, 21.

¹³⁷ Main Department for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda.

¹³⁸ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 211/1940; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 41–43. *Bekämpfung von Schund und Schmutz*

thinkers in the Dutch national socialist scene, although Snijder was not yet a member of the NSB.¹³⁹ Further, Goedewaagen himself, while close to Mussert (he had previously served as Mussert's deputy and spokesman and it was Mussert who first suggested Goedewaagen to Seyss-Inquart), was also more amenable to Greater Germanic thinking than the Dutch Nazi *Leider*.¹⁴⁰ He was a member of the NSB but was not seen as a "typical" representative of that group, which had a not entirely unjustified reputation as a collection of brutes, for Goedewaagen was well read and well spoken, a philosopher and aesthete.¹⁴¹

Under the purview of the other newly created department, the Department of Education, Science, and Cultural Administration, were all schools, public and private, adult education, teacher training, scholarly books and libraries, scientific publications and conferences, physical education, youth development and care, museums, memorials, and nature conservancy.¹⁴² Chosen to head this newly formed department was the Dutch Germanist professor Jan van Dam, who was appointed as Secretary-General of the Department by Seyss-Inquart shortly after its formation. Van Dam did not report directly to Wimmer, however, as his department was situated under the Main Department of Education and Churches, headed by Dr. Heinrich Schwarz, one of several sub-departments organized under Wimmer's *Generalkommissariat*.

Born in 1903 in Berlin, Schwarz was, like Hitler and many other Nazis, an aspiring artist, but unlike Hitler actually encountered some success, putting forth multiple artistic exhibitions of his own work both before and after, but not during, the Nazi period. Despite his artistic sensibilities, he ended up pursuing a legal education, receiving his doctorate in jurisprudence in 1931. After a short career in various legal roles, he joined the German Education Ministry in

¹³⁹ Greater Germanic.

¹⁴⁰ Leader.

¹⁴¹ Berkel, *Tobie Goedewaagen (1895-1980)*, 151.

¹⁴² Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 211/1940.

1934, then the SS in 1937, and finally the NSDAP proper in 1940. In 1939, he was drafted into the Wehrmacht, where he served briefly during the invasion of Poland. In 1940, he was recalled from the front and sent to the Netherlands to serve under Wimmer. Wimmer later claimed that Schwarz was only a middling bureaucrat, but he was chosen directly by Nazi leaders in Berlin for his position, at the explicit request of Seyss-Inquart for an education specialist to take up the role.¹⁴³ Although quite late to join the movement, Schwarz became a committed SS-man and was instrumental in the development and implementation of occupation policy in the education realm.¹⁴⁴ In this role, he was also a supporter of the Nazis' Germanic project in the Netherlands, noting repeatedly in his reports back to Berlin that his efforts in the education field were aimed at implanting the Germanic ideal into Dutch youth.¹⁴⁵ His reach extended to almost all areas of education policy in the Netherlands and he distinguished himself by his fierce opposition to the educational goals of the Dutch Nazis and the role of the confessions.¹⁴⁶ For example, it was Schwarz who was most influential on the German side in the effort to extend state control over confessional education, helping to provoke the Protestant School Resistance Movement in the process.¹⁴⁷ Together with his direct subordinate Jan van Dam, Heinrich Schwarz had more impact on Dutch education policy than any other individual functionary during the entire course of the occupation.

¹⁴³ Friedrich Wimmer, *Erstes Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer*, interview by A. E. Cohen, August 28, 1947, in Cohen and Blom, *A.E. Cohen als geschiedschrijver van zijn tijd*, Bijlagen, 18-21.

¹⁴⁴ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 18. Wimmer, also an SS-man, claimed that the role of the SS in the Netherlands was over-emphasized in post-war interviews, stating that the officials in his commissariat worked well together, regardless of affiliation. Schwarz's actions, however, betray a sympathy for many explicitly SS oriented goals, while subsequent scholarship has definitively shown the SS had much greater influence in the Netherlands than Wimmer allowed. Friedrich Wimmer, *Zweites Gespräch mit Dr. Friedrich Wimmer*, interview by A. E. Cohen, August 29, 1947, in Cohen and Blom, *A.E. Cohen als geschiedschrijver van zijn tijd*, Bijlagen, 21; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 556.

¹⁴⁵ NIOD 020/2047.

¹⁴⁶ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 182–84.

¹⁴⁷ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 18, 497–99.

Periodization of the Occupation

Historians traditionally break the German occupation of the Netherlands into four distinct phases. The first came directly after the installation of the *Reichskommissariat* and included a German focus on what Seyss-Inquart liked to refer to as “self-Nazification,” in which the occupiers tried to win the hearts and minds of the Dutch people for Nazism.¹⁴⁸ In his initial appeal to the Dutch people, dated May 25, 1940, Seyss-Inquart noted that he would do what he could to make sure that “Dutch people, who are close to the Germans by blood, do not fall into less favorable living conditions than are necessary” in order to win the war, and he hoped that both peoples would be able to “treat each other with respect.” It was an attempt by the new *Reichskommissar* to offer an outstretched hand by repeatedly noting the close relations between the German and Dutch peoples.¹⁴⁹ Seyss-Inquart did not say it at the time, although he would in his post-war trial, but this order to treat the Dutch well and use force only if absolutely necessary came directly from Hitler.¹⁵⁰ By and large, the repression apparatus was quite limited in nature during the early stages of the occupation, with the Nazis’ brutal methods being reserved mostly for Jewish people and those actively engaging in resistance. But anti-Jewish measures especially galvanized the Dutch populace until, in February 1941, the public engaged in a series of strike actions aimed at protesting the Germans’ street raids in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam.

The second phase began after the February Strike of 1941 and saw a more forceful effort at coordination that relied on the disbanding and reestablishment of institutions along Nazified lines.¹⁵¹ Although the tenor of the first two phases was different—the latter being more violent

¹⁴⁸ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 34–36; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 71–77; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 11–12.

¹⁴⁹ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 2/1940.

¹⁵⁰ Foray, “The ‘Clean Wehrmacht’ in the German-Occupied Netherlands, 1940-5,” 769n.

¹⁵¹ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 37–38; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 77–91; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 12–13.

and less accommodating of increasing resistance on the part of the Dutch populace—the ultimate goals of both phases were similar. This was period when the process of *Gleichschaltung*, the adoption of institutions of the Reich in the Netherlands or the creation of Dutch counterparts along with the coordination of public life along Nazi lines, was most intense. It was also during the first two phases of the occupation that the majority of the work aimed at creating a new Dutch, Germanic identity took place in the educational sphere. On the other hand, from the Dutch perspective the first two phases of the occupation were somewhat different. By and large, the initial phase, up until the February Strike, was marked by what Johannes Koll calls a “wait-and-see attitude” on the part of the populace, while the second phase, which began with the Germans showing their true colors through anti-Jewish repression, saw a slow but steady uptick in resistance activity in all of its forms among Dutch Gentiles.¹⁵²

The third phase of the occupation began in April 1943.¹⁵³ Because of resistance activity, which the German leadership blamed—not entirely incorrectly—on former Dutch military, the Germans attempted to recall all soldiers, who had been released after the initial capitulation of the Netherlands as a sign of German leniency, in order to send them to Germany as prisoners of war. The resulting strikes, known as the April/May Strike of 1943, marked the beginning of a much more repressive German regime and a corresponding uptick in resistance activity on the part of the occupied. It was, in effect, a negative feedback loop in which greater repression engendered greater resistance which caused even greater repression. This increasing repression marked the tenor of the occupation for the rest of the war.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 92.

¹⁵³ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 45; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 91–101; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 13.

¹⁵⁴ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 45–46.

The fourth and final phase began in September 1944 when the first Allied troops entered the southern provinces and liberated those portions of the population that lived south of the great rivers.¹⁵⁵ Fundamentally, for those portions of the country still under German rule, the nature of the occupation did not change, except that repression became even harsher as the “Germans now assumed they were occupying enemy territory.”¹⁵⁶ Shortly after the liberation of Maastricht in the far southeast of the country, Dutch railway workers struck in an effort to support of the Allied Market Garden operations to secure rivers bridges over the Rhine at Arnhem.¹⁵⁷ When the operation failed, the German reprisals against the Dutch populace included the imposition of a forced famine, known as the Hunger Winter, that led to the starvation of tens of thousands, including about twenty thousands who starved to death.¹⁵⁸ This final phase of the occupation would last until the last German troops were pushed out of the country by Allied troops on May 5, 1945.

When it comes to the educational sphere, these broader chronological categories still hold, but are not quite as useful. The February Strike of 1941 did not significantly alter the occupiers’ efforts in the education realm. The officials at the Education Department did not take part, while Dutch university students, along with many of their professors, had preceded the February Strike with their own strikes protesting anti-Jewish measures already in November 1940, which led to the closure of Leiden University, the oldest and most respected institute of higher education in the country.¹⁵⁹ Nor did the April/May Strike of 1943 significantly affect education. By that point, higher education had, for all intents and purposes, already come to a

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 52–54; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 102; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 14–17.

¹⁵⁶ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 14.

¹⁵⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, X/355.

¹⁵⁸ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 78–81; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 103–8.

¹⁵⁹ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 201, 252–54.

standstill, while primary and secondary education continued on as it mostly had.¹⁶⁰ Finally, the last major turning point, the beginning of the nine-month liberation of the nation by Allied troops did not, in and of itself, affect the education realm any more than it did the rest of Dutch society. The Education Department was still, for all intents and purposes, in disarray, and higher education was still at a standstill. In primary and secondary education, the failure of the German occupiers and their Dutch helpers to adequately enforce their decrees meant that most schools continued on as they always had, only encountering disruptions when the authorities came to investigate. By the later years in the occupation, these investigations become less and less frequent, as the officials in the Education Department become more and more detached from their work, which allowed most schools to continue on as they always had, ignoring the “reforms” that had been mandated from on high. Only at the very end of the occupation, as warfare engulfed the towns and villages of the country in the wake of the German retreat, was education significantly disrupted, as were all facets of life during those often-turbulent weeks.

Because the traditional periodization of the occupation does not fit the educational sector, this work will take a slightly different approach. Chapters Two and Three focus on the period before the occupation began. Chapter Two looks at German views of the Netherlands, reaching back into the nineteenth century and moving forward through the Nazi “seizure of power” in January 1933. Specifically, it discusses the ways in which various influential Germans viewed the Netherlands as a sort of lost territory of the German Reich as well as the growing field of Dutch Studies in German universities that was significantly, but not entirely, infiltrated by a *völkisch* understanding of the Dutch nation. Chapter Three looks at the Dutch side of this equation. It focuses first on the history of Dutch fascists and national socialist movements, with

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 276–78, 283–84.

particular emphasis on the largest and most successful group, the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (NSB). Many of these groups had surprisingly differing views on what the contours of the future relationship between the Netherlands and Nazi Germany would be. All believed that a close relationship would ensue as a result of German victory, and most supported a Greater Netherlandic ideology which saw a Nazi ruled Dutch state that encompassed not just the modern Netherlands, but also Flemish portions of Belgium and all of the former colonies of the Dutch Empire.¹⁶¹ In this view, the relationship between this new Dutch Nazi state and Nazi Germany would be one of equals, with Germany, by nature of its power and size, representing a *primus inter pares*. Alternatively, there was a small, but increasingly influential group that adhered much more closely to a *völkisch* view in which the Netherlands would be a junior partner, or even constituent part, of a larger Germanic Empire.¹⁶² Finally, the chapter covers the educational policy of both the NSB and the history, career, and educational policy of Jan van Dam, who was appointed by the Germans to lead the Dutch Education Department in late November 1940. In this latter section, I argue that the educational philosophy of the NSB was more in tune with the currents of Dutch history, especially the School Struggle, while van Dam's conceptions of reforms, which were favored by the German occupiers, were out of touch with the overwhelming majority of Netherlands, and were, as a result, doomed to failure almost from the moment of their initial implementation.

Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven form the heart of the inquiry. Chapter Four focuses on Schwarz's "direct route" toward the Greater Germanic Reich. In his reports back to the Office of the Deputy Führer/Party Chancellery, Schwarz emphasized that there were in essence two

¹⁶¹ A. A. De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland: voorgeschiedenis, ontstaan en ontwikkeling* (Den Haag: Kruseman, 1979), 54–55.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 121–27; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, II/292–293.

routes toward winning the Dutch over to the Germanic ideal.¹⁶³ The “direct route” went through German educational institutions in the Netherlands. The effort here was to increase the amount and quality of specifically German education in the country. This would, according to Schwarz, stand as an example for Netherlands, and their schools, to follow. These efforts spanned the entire occupation, beginning shortly after Schwarz came to the Netherlands and ending only in late 1944, as the war effort took all precedence from domestic initiatives.¹⁶⁴

Chapter Five looks at educational “reform” efforts in Dutch Schools, what Schwarz called the “indirect route” at winning over Dutch youth. Here the goal was to win Dutch students and parents over to the methods of national socialist Germany.¹⁶⁵ This included the introduction of new subjects, such as physical education and German language instruction, as well as a reorganization of Dutch schooling to decrease the influence of the churches while increasing the influence of the state. By and large, these efforts were a failure, for although the occupiers were successful in introducing new regulations, they encountered significant success on the ground, as Dutch teachers and school administrators often simply ignored the new laws.¹⁶⁶

Chapter Six continues the look at the indirect path, but focuses intently on attempted changes in historical instruction, which was viewed by the Germans and many of their collaborators as especially important for the creation of a new Dutch identity along Germanic lines.¹⁶⁷ Although the Germans and their Dutch helpers were not entirely successful in introducing a new historical curriculum into the schools, through a close reading of several textbooks created for use in Dutch education, it is easy to see that the occupiers’ overriding goal

¹⁶³ NIOD 020/2047.

¹⁶⁴ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 46–47, 54–55.

¹⁶⁵ NIOD 020/2047.

¹⁶⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 336–54.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 348; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 225–27; Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, 1/58.

in historical instruction was to inculcate a Germanic identity among Dutch youth to prepare them for the eventual incorporation of the Netherlands into a Greater Germanic Reich after the final Nazi victory in Europe. Much like those changes discussed in Chapter Five, the introduction of a new historical curriculum was hampered both by resistance at the local level and structural challenges, not the least of which was the pace of writing and publishing these works, the first of which only appeared in January 1943.¹⁶⁸

Chapter Seven sharpens the focus on the local level directly, looking at the ways that Dutch youth in the schools, as well as their teachers, reacted to German hegemony and how Netherlands viewed their Nazi and German oriented colleagues, whether teachers or students. Throughout the occupation, the government was concerned with maintaining “peace and order” in the schools, which it largely defined as the suppression of anti-Nazi teachers and punishment of anti-Nazi students.¹⁶⁹ Because the focus is on students themselves, and because the source material does not tell us what, exactly, students thought about, for example, the introduction of German language instruction or the censorship of school textbooks, the focus here necessarily remains on students’ (and to a lesser extent teachers’) outward displays of patriotic activity and harassment of their German-friendly and NSB colleagues. These actions, which were pervasive throughout the country, show a strong antipathy among young Netherlands for the German occupation regime. Moreover, even when it is impossible to determine the exact motives for harassment of NSB or German-oriented students, the mere fact that students often chose to focus on regime-friendly individuals shows a much wider understanding among students that any connection to Germany was perceived as negative. In such a climate, it would have been

¹⁶⁸ NA 2.14.37/698.

¹⁶⁹ NIOD 114a/5; NA 2.14.37/414; P.S.A. Goedbloed, “Regeling voor den Inspecteur van het onderwijs in algemeenen dienst,” *Nederlandsche Staatscourant*, September 2, 1941, Nr. 170/1941 edition.

exceedingly unlikely, and I argue nearly impossible, that students and teachers would have been, on the one hand, favorable or even indifferent to the various “reforms” their Nazi occupiers wanted to introduce, but, on the other, aggressively antagonistic towards the local representatives of those same occupiers. For this reason, despite a lack of direct evidence that explicitly states that Dutch youth were against the Nazis’ designs in the educational sector, their overall opinion of these efforts was very likely quite negative, even if that negative view was based only on its association with the German occupation.

Chapter Eight serves as a conclusion by focusing on the ignominious end of educational “reform” in the Netherlands. As the war turned against Germany in 1943 through defeat on the battlefield, the German authorities in the Netherlands, under pressure from their superiors in Berlin, turned to ever greater repression of the populace and extraction of resources to support the war effort. This turn of events set into motion a negative feedback loop in which greater repression led to greater resistance activities on the part of ordinary Netherlands, which then led to even greater repression. The downward spiral led the leading collaborator in the education realm, Jan van Dam, to question the value of the Nazis’ Germanic project and eventually resulted in the collapse of almost all efforts at educational “reform” for the rest of the war.

The efforts of the Germans and their Dutch collaborators in the Netherlands were a thoroughgoing failure. When the war ended and democratic rule was reestablished, almost all of the changes instituted by the occupation regime were reversed. But this inquiry is not as much about what succeeded during the occupation as it is about what the German occupiers *hoped* to accomplish. The goal was the establishment of a fundamentally new Greater Germanic Reich, and the Nazi administrators of the Netherlands during the Second World War correctly recognized that in order to make this Greater Germanic Reich succeed, they would need to win

the next generation for their Germanic project. This was the overarching goal in all of the actions the Germans took, regardless of whether their Dutch collaborators agreed with these efforts or not. It was a goal that meant bringing the Netherlands back into the Germanic fold from which it had strayed some three hundred years prior.

Chapter 2 - The Netherlands in Modern German Thought

When the end of the world comes, make your way to Holland. There everything happens fifty years late! -
Unknown, often attributed to Heinrich Heine

Some old-fashioned lords introduced the countryside, some fat mayors introduced the cities, the Princes of Orange introduced themselves and the people did not introduce themselves ... The people made cheese and butter, got coffee and sugar, and sprouted with the Baltic corn, took three thousand and a few hundred percent from pepper, plundered the east, pillaged the west, filled their bags with ducats and worried just as little about the administration as about the defense of the state. - L. Weinbarg, *Buch über Holland*, 1833¹

The Nazis were not the originators of the idea of a German-dominated state that encompassed the territory of the Low Countries. In fact, that idea predated the Nazi “seizure of power” by more than a century. The idea of a German super-state made up of the individuals that inhabit the current day Low Countries goes back at least to the Napoleonic period and the nineteenth century German nationalist thinkers who looked back to the French domination of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.² Over the course of the nineteenth century, German intellectuals such as Fichte, Arndt, List, Jahn, Riehl, Treitschke, and Langbehn all made important contributions to the concept of a German state that incorporated the Netherlands as a constituent part. The Nazis, with their Germanic project in the Netherlands, were very much the late inheritors of this legacy, as their efforts in the Netherlands represent the ideological fulfillment of this older German view of the Netherlands as little more than a breakaway province whose natural place is within a larger German(ic) state.

The views of German intellectuals toward the Netherlands cannot be divorced from the rise of the German nation over the course of the nineteenth century. As German-speaking Central Europe fought for liberation from French domination, integrated first economically and then politically, and eventually became the leading industrial and military power on the continent,

¹ Quoted in Ivo Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld van de geschiedenis der Nederlanden: een historiografische en bibliografische studie* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1978), 122.

² Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 64–66.

German historians and thinkers viewed the Netherlands through the lens of these developments. Especially critical for many of these thinkers was the Rhine river and the need for free use of that river for commerce. Control of the Rhine, whether by France or by the Netherlands, was often seen as a hindrance to German unity and the attainment of a future German state's rightful place in the world. At the same time, the narrative of an increase in German strength was correlated with an opposite narrative of Dutch decline. In the Early Modern period, the Dutch Republic had been a commercial and military power that obtained its independence and created a separate national identity, at that same time Germany was little more than a collection of small, mostly weak states. By the nineteenth century, however, the places of both nations had reversed such that any discussion of German views on the Netherlands must keep this larger political, economic, and military landscape in view.³

By the early twentieth century, German intellectual thought concerning the Netherlands had entered into the academy with the slow growth in Dutch Studies, or *Niederlandistik*, and the larger, interdisciplinary field of *Westforschung*, or “western research.” Neither of these new academic disciplines were overtly *völkisch* in their outlooks, but both had relatively large contingents of *völkisch* thinkers who took up their cause. Regardless of the political ideologies of the scholars involved, each helped contribute to a larger understanding within Germany of the Germans and Dutch as ethnically, culturally, geographically, historically, and linguistically related.

This chapter thus serves as an intellectual history of the precursors in German thought to the Nazis' eventual invasion of the Netherlands. In it, I argue that the Nazis were the inheritors of a long intellectual history which viewed the Netherlands as essentially German, or at least

³ Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 120–21.

Germanic. These thinkers, especially those infused with a *völkisch* understanding of the world, saw the Dutch as more similar to the Germans than dissimilar, and often argued that the true, rightful place of the Netherlands, whether for geographic, political, economic, or cultural reasons, was bound to its German neighbor in a single state. Although I do not mean to argue, in any way, that the intellectual and political leaders of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led, automatically, to the Nazis' Germanic project in the Netherlands, I do argue that the Nazi ideologues internalized many of the same arguments these earlier thinkers made regarding the place of the Dutch state within the larger European order. In this way, the Nazis' Germanic project in the Netherlands was a sort of culmination of a much longer strain of German history.

The conception of the Netherlands as a constituent part of the German nation dates back to the very beginning of German nationalism. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's 1808 *Addresses to the German Nation* represent the "central political-philosophical foundation of the German national idea."⁴ In his *Fourth Address to the German Nation*, Fichte argued:

The first and immediately obvious difference between the fortunes of the Germans and the other branches [i.e., the French] which grew from the same root is this: the former remained in the original dwelling places of the ancestral stock, whereas the latter emigrated to other places; the former retained and developed the original language of the ancestral stock, whereas the latter adopted a foreign language [i.e., Latin] and gradually reshaped it in a way of their own.⁵

The most important of these qualities was the retention of the ancestral language,⁶ "the importance of which lies solely in the fact that this language continues to be spoken, for men are formed by the language far more than language is formed by men."⁷ Later, in his Thirteenth Address, he notes that borders, that is

the first, original, and truly natural boundaries of States are beyond doubt their internal boundaries. Those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself, long before any human art begins; they understand each other and have the power of continuing to make

⁴ Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 68.

⁵ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. Reginald Foy Jones and George Henry Turnbull (London: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1922), 54.

⁶ *ursprüngliche Sprache*.

⁷ Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, 55.

themselves understood more and more clearly, they belong together and are by nature one and inseparable whole. ... From this internal boundary, which is drawn by the spiritual nature of man himself, the marking of the external boundary by dwelling-place results as a consequence; and in the natural view of things it is not because men dwell between certain mountains and rivers that they are a people, but, on the contrary, men dwell together—and, if their luck has so arranged it, are protected by rivers and mountains—because they were a people already by a law of nature which is much higher.⁸

It is, of course, unlikely that Fichte was addressing the Dutch along with the German nation. He certainly never explicitly states that the Netherlands and the Dutch people are part of the German nation he envisions, nor does he give a concrete idea of where, exactly, the “internal borders” are manifested in the natural world.⁹ But when one considers it, the Dutch do fit all of the qualities Fichte mentions. Like the Germans, the Dutch remained in their ancestral lands. Like German, the Dutch language was not heavily influenced by Latin. Dutch, like other West Germanic languages, exists in what was once a dialect continuum that stretched from the North Sea south and east into present-day Austria, only breaking down in the modern period through the standardization of Dutch and German into separate languages, although they retain a very limited mutual intelligibility even to this day. In Fichte’s time, this mutual intelligibility would have been much greater, that is, a Dutchman and a German, especially a German from what would become Northern Germany above the Uerdingen Line, very likely would have been able to “understand each other.”¹⁰

Although Fichte’s arguments about “truly natural boundaries” likely did not include the Low Countries, his student, Ernst Moritz Arndt was of a completely different mindset. Arndt argued that the true and correct borders of a future German national state should encompass all of the territories that were inhabited by Germanic language speakers, that is, in the south the border should stand “at the Alps of Italy and at the Ardennes of France ... in the west, the North

⁸ Ibid., 223–24.

⁹ Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 69.

¹⁰ H.W.H Niebaum, “Het Oostnederlandse taallandschap tot het begin van de 19e eeuw,” in *Handboek Nedersaksische Taal- en Letterkunde*, by Henk Bloemhoff et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2008), 53.

Sea encompasses [the border].”¹¹ According to Arndt, it was the wars of the French Revolution that “snatched away the magnificent lands around the Rhine, the Moselle, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, [the] original and ancient land of the German tongue, of German freedom and the national tribe.”¹² All too easily Germans had let these territories be lost to the future national state, as they were unaware of the territories’ value, meaning, and the importance.¹³ For Arndt, the value and meaning of these lands was self-evident, as

the long history of the Fatherland proves, that the Rhenish lands, Swabia, and Westphalia are the heart and core of the German people, that from there all of the best and most genuine that is German has begun ... Here the original Germany, formerly the center and the strength of the empire, is still the center of German life and German custom, here is an inexhaustible treasure of German custom, language, and history.¹⁴

The ultimate goal in Arndt’s writing is clear: “the two shores of the Rhine, and the surrounding lands and people must be as German as they once were; the stolen land and people must be reconquered to the Fatherland.”¹⁵

If the Rhine and our torn-off lands are regained by the help of God, and added to the German Reich, so it is desirable that the mighty German princes, Austria, and Prussia, especially Alsace, the Netherlands, and so much else of Habsburg and Burgundian heritage [are too].¹⁶

He would continue on this path for some time. In his 1815 work *Ueber Preussens Rheinische Mark und über Bundesfestungen* Arndt notes that “the Rhine delta is shielded by Holland and Belgium, which are nothing more than outposts of Germany, being a bastion of the same, and which must always stand or fall with Germany.” By 1831, Arndt was dedicating entire works specifically to the place of the Netherlands and surrounding territories in the future German national state. In his *Die Frage der Niederlande und die Rheinlande* he argues, just as

¹¹ Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Der Rhein, Teutschlands Strom aber nicht Teutschlands Gränze* (Leipzig: Rein, 1813), 43.

¹² Of the four named rivers, only the Moselle does not flow through the Low Countries directly, although it flows into the Rhine at Koblenz, which then flows through the Low Countries. The Meuse and Scheldt flow only through the Low Countries (and France), but not through any territory that has been under peacetime German administrative control in the last several centuries.

¹³ Arndt, *Der Rhein Teutschlands Strom aber nicht Teutschlands Gränze*, 37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 75–76. In the event that the reader questions whether Arndt really means the entire Rhenish lands, he states specifically that he meant the Rhenish lands “between Basel and Rotterdam.” *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 81–82.

before, that the Low Countries were once and should be again a part of a future Germany and that he was not alone in this thought either; rather, the political classes, the scientists, linguists, and historians were all said to be united in the idea that the people of the Low Countries were “almost more German than Germans.”¹⁷ To his credit, by this point in his life he was willing to allow that the people of the Low Countries were somewhat different from the Germans themselves, although he was not yet willing to admit that it really mattered:

We said: Of course, the Burgundian lands [i.e., the Low Countries] have become somewhat strange to us in more than one way, they have not felt themselves a part of Germany since long before the French period ... but they should and must become more German-like.¹⁸

Fichte and Arndt were two of the first German intellectuals to define Germany not only by physical borders but through the people that inhabited it—the Volk. Men like Fichte and Arndt “conceived of the volk in heroic terms ... [it] symbolized the desired unity beyond [the] contemporary reality” of dynastic states.¹⁹ In a very similar vein to these two thinkers was Friedrich Jahn. Jahn is best known as an early proponent of gymnastics and student fraternities. In both of these areas, Jahn would profoundly influence later generations of *völkisch* thinkers, who adopted almost wholesale many of Jahn’s beliefs about the importance of “Germanic unity” as exhibited through the youth and healthy bodies.²⁰ Like Arndt, however, Jahn also notes in his 1810 *Deutsches Volksthum*, that of the many German peoples, the four that were most different from the rest were the Swiss, Dutch, Prussians, and Austrians, suggesting that he, too, saw the Dutch as merely another variant of the German people.²¹ Recounting the importance of the “shameful Peace of Westphalia,” he further notes that “it was unlucky because the Dutch

¹⁷ Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Die Frage über die Niederlande und die Rheinlande* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1831), 13–14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12. The reader will note that in this phrasing, Arndt contradicts his own earlier work that argued that it was the French Revolutionary Wars that snatched these areas from Germanism.

¹⁹ George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: H. Fertig, 1998), 14–15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5, 116.

²¹ Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, *Deutsches Volksthum* (Lübeck: Niemann und Comp., 1810), 351.

Republic and the Swiss Confederacy completely removed themselves from us. The Rhine then ceased to be the old German *Schutzstrom* because at its source and mouth there lived in these lands of nature henceforth only German half-brothers.”²²

The view of the Netherlands as a[n errant] constituent part of Germany was not limited to romantic writers like Fichte, Arndt, and Jahn. Rather, it was more widespread among the German intelligentsia. In his 1841 *Das nationale System der politischen Oekonomie*, Friedrich List, who was certainly a German nationalist, but not usually counted among the romantic predecessors of later *völkisch* intellectuals, argues that “by spirit and custom, by the descent and language of their inhabitants, as through political connection and geographical location, Holland, Flanders, and Brabant were parts of the German Reich.”²³ Although he freely admits that the Dutch had made themselves an independent nationality by the time of his writing, he was not very happy about it, even if only from a utilitarian, economic, and power-political point of view:

If Charles V had thrown off the crown of Spain as one casts a stone that threatens to draw us into the abyss, what a different destiny would have arisen for the Dutch and the Germans! As Regent of the United Netherlands, as German Emperor, and as pilot of the Reformation, Charles possessed all of the material and spiritual resources to found the most powerful industrial and commercial empire, the largest naval and land power ever to exist—a naval power stretching from Dunkirk to Riga would have united all the sails under a single flag! ... If Holland, united with Belgium, with the drainage basin of the Rhine, and with Northern Germany, had built a national territory, it would have been difficult for England and France to succeed in weakening its naval power, its foreign commerce, and its internal industry in the manner that it happened. ... Holland, therefore, fell because a piece of the coast, inhabited by a small number of German fishermen, sailors, merchants, and ranchers, wished to form a national power for itself, and regarded the hinterlands, with which it constituted a whole, as a foreign land.²⁴

List does not limit himself to what could have been, either. He fully argues for a national unity between the Dutch and German peoples of his day:

However, from our national point of view, we say and assert that Holland is, according to its geographical position as well as its commercial and industrial relations and the descent and language of its inhabitants a German province that was separated from Germany in times of national discord, [and] without its reincorporation into the German confederation, Germany is comparable to a house whose door belongs to a stranger. Holland belongs as much to Germany as Brittany or Normandy belong to France, and as long as Holland wishes to form her own independent empire, Germany can only have as much power and

²² Ibid., 12–13. *Schutzstrom* is best translated as *protective current*.

²³ Friedrich List, *Das nationale System der politischen Oekonomie*, 2nd Edition (Jena: G. Fischer, 1910), 105.

²⁴ Ibid., 109, 112.

independence as France would have been able to achieve if those provinces had remained in English hands. ... Holland, as it has descended from its heights as a commercial power, because it—the mere part of a nation—wanted to allege itself as a whole, because it sought its advantages in the suppression and weakness of the productive forces of Germany, instead of basing its greatness on the prosperity of the hinterlands, upon which every riverine state stands or falls—because it sought to become great through separation from Germany instead of union with the same—Holland can only bloom again through the German Union and with the closest connection to the same.²⁵

List's work on political economy was written only one year after the Rhine Crisis of 1840, which saw French prime minister Adolphe Thiers threaten to invade the Rhineland in order to secure France's "natural borders" after a French diplomatic setback over France's support of Egypt's Muhammad Ali Pasha, who had attempted to carve out a personal empire within the Ottoman realms. The crisis awoke among German nationalists a renewal of anti-French resentment that had pervaded the earliest decades of the century.²⁶ Patriotic songs, such as *Die Wacht am Rhein* and the *Rheinlied*, were written by German poets to contest France's threats of hegemony over the Rhineland. But perhaps the most famous of all such songs was *Das Lied der Deutschen*, written in 1841 by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben. In the song, Hoffmann von Fallersleben includes in the territory over which Germany would prevail lands in the West "from the Meuse," which necessarily included large sections of the Dutch-speaking Low Countries. A few years later, the German poet Johan Wilhelm Wolff published a short poem in *De Broederhand* noting the close ethnic ties between the Germans and the Dutch-speaking Flemish:

Because German and Flemish are closely related
As close as right and left hand
And German is German, whether high or low
That rings from the Scheldt to the Danube and back.²⁷

The Rhine Crisis also spurred Wolfgang Menzel, a conservative historian of the age, to publish *Die westliche Grenzfrage*, which was originally incorrectly attributed to the elder Helmut

²⁵ Ibid., 519–21.

²⁶ Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 73.

²⁷ Quoted in Schöffner, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 123.

von Moltke.²⁸ In his 1841 essay, Menzel supports the notion that the language border is the only true, natural border, rather than the geographical borders that France had attempted to gain for centuries. He notes that the language border between French and German stretches from Calais mostly eastward to about Maastricht until turning back southwest to encompass large parts of what is today Eastern Belgium and the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.²⁹

Everything now west of the designated borderline speaks either Welsh or French; everything that lies to the east of it speaks German, and this language boundary has preserved itself, with hardly any noticeable changes, as far as the memory of history reaches, for over a thousand years. ... If one starts from the national point of view and makes the language the natural border of the nations, then the whole Rhine with its whole left and right bank belongs to us, because in the whole river area of the Rhine German has been spoken for fourteen centuries.³⁰

In the same issue of the *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schrift* that Menzel's essay appeared, a later essay by an author who gives his or her name only as E.D. argues that Holland had ripped itself away from Germany with its education and visions of gold and hegemony across the seas, and it had wisely raised its "provincial dialect [into] a written language."³¹ The following decades would see the language border that was so important to men like Fichte, Arndt, and Menzel put onto maps by cartographers like Johann Kutscheid, Heinrich Kiepert, and Richard Böckh. These men, using statistics, determined where, exactly, the line between the French west and south and the German north and east lay.³² The Netherlands were, of course, considered to be part of the "lower German language area."³³

The idea of the Low Countries as a German territory would only pick up momentum among German nationalists as the nineteenth century progressed and the *völkisch* movement

²⁸ Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 73–74. The theory, according the Müller, comes from the essay's signature, which contains only the letter M. The error was discovered many decades later by Rudolf Craemer.

²⁹ Wolfgang Menzel, "Die Westliche Grenzfrage," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schrift*, Zweites Heft (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1841), 29–30.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30, 68.

³¹ E. D., "Deutschland und die Schweiz," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schrift*, Zweites Heft (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1841), 74.

³² Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 79–92.

³³ *Ibid.*, 85, 88–89.

came into its own.³⁴ It was, in fact, Arndt's student Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl who could be called the intellectual father of the *völkisch* movement in Germany, for it was Riehl's ideas, more than any other individual of his age, that would be subsumed into the corpus of *völkisch* thought. Riehl was especially concerned with landscapes and the ordering of society, for it was in nature and a close connection with the land that society found its fullest expression. Naturally enough, this meant, for Riehl, that the ideal society was that of the Middle Ages, connected as it was to agriculture and working the soil. The social division of society into peasants and aristocracy was as natural as the division of the land between the forests and the fields. The question of the newer estates, the middle-class burgers and especially the workers, was more problematic for Riehl. The merchants and tradesmen of the middle classes were problematic for disrupting the idyll of the volk's connection to the land. But even they were afforded a place of honor within the volk if they could trace their heritage back to one of the small German hometowns. Similarly, workers who lived and worked in harmony with their employers could also find an honored place, in much the same way that the medieval guilds had operated with apprentices, journeymen, and masters all, at least theoretically, forming a sort of harmony among themselves. It was this sort of mental gymnastics that allowed Riehl to praise Robert Owen's utopian socialist settlement at New Lanark—in Riehl's eyes Owen was a sort of happy patriarch and the workers his children—while at the same time saving his disdain for the rootless proletariat of the large cities. These workers, unlike those who were connected to the land and thus the volk, were disconnected from the land and therefore an enemy to be destroyed.³⁵

Riehl, of course, also viewed the Netherlands as a constituent part of the German nation. In his 1854 work *Land und Leute*, Riehl notes that “the history of Holland is a piece of German

³⁴ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19–24.

history,” but that “Holland has a shorter memory than the German people.”³⁶ But it is in his 1869 *Wanderbuch* that the Netherlands receives its fullest treatment.³⁷ Quickly in the first chapter, Riehl gets to some of his most important points. Holland and Germany *are* different, and one can see this quickly as one crosses the border. He takes as his comparison the neighboring towns of Nijmegen and Kleve, which are:

hardly three miles apart, but in character of their people lie a world apart, although the villages of Prussian Geldern and Kleve are remarkably related to the neighboring Dutch villages. This state is explained by the fact that the original national character, as the peasant most faithfully preserves, was a common one, whereas the course of political culture culminating in the cities had torn Holland and Germany apart for three centuries.³⁸

But this separate political culture that the Dutch created for themselves was a result of German weakness. In the future, the German peoples would reunite into one giant state, including all its constituent parts:

It is therefore not necessary to think of a conquest of Holland and German Switzerland. A nation like Germany, once it has regained its full strength and health, will once again attract the formerly detached elements ethnographically and then politically. We are and will remain destined to become a federated people, and since the old federation is broken, I can only imagine a great German future in the form of a larger and more powerful new federation in which the *Nordbund*, the *Südbund*, German Austria, German Switzerland and Holland form the organic limbs.³⁹

Similar to the villages and people themselves, the Dutch language is, and is not at the same time, a German dialect, according to Riehl:

The Dutch language also leads us out to sea, legitimizing itself solely in the face of the sea. I want to be more explicit about this phrase, which sounds strange. It is a bone of contention between Germans and Dutchmen, whether the Dutch language still today can be regarded as a mere Low German dialect, albeit very independently pronounced and firmly established, or as its own national language, which has long since broken through the former barriers of a mere dialect. The literature, as a preliminary point the poetic, does not decide in favor of the Dutch. The fame and importance of the Dutch poets is rooted only in their narrower homeland, and they share the lot of dialect poets, who are studied abroad at most for ethnographic, cultural and linguistic interest, but who are not translated and read because they are poets [one] must read. Neither in poetry nor in the art of prose did Holland gain a place in world literature ... But

³⁶ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Land und Leute*, 3rd Edition (Stuttgart and Augsburg: J.G. Cotta'sche Verlag, 1856), 251–52.

³⁷ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Wanderbuch*, 2nd Edition (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1869). Riehl devotes the longest of the eight principal chapters to the Netherlands, which makes well more than a quarter of the entire work.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

across the ocean the Dutch language was attested by trade and shipping and colonialism, and by being spoken in the East Indies and in South Africa, and indeed new territory conquered recently.⁴⁰

Riehl's stated goal in his *Wanderbuch* was to "lose his way" as he traveled the countryside between the German and Dutch frontiers, for it is in these intermediary, otherwise uninteresting small towns and villages, places like Kleve, Geldern, Goch, and Kevelaer, "these regions of transition and apparent indifference that first teach us to recognize countries and peoples as organisms, connected with limbs; they are the first that open for us the correct understanding of the totality of the life of the volk."⁴¹ It was during these wanderings that Riehl recognized "how inseparable even today Holland has grown together with Lower Germany." But to even flesh out the full roster of connections between the two peoples and lands would require a full scale ethnographic, geographic, and cultural history of Northwestern Europe, including Belgium,

for one cannot fully show how German Holland is, if one does not at the same time show how German the greater part of Belgium must be considered even to this day. ... It is not nature that separates us, but politics. From the centers of both countries, it is easy for everyone to notice the difference that has been made over the centuries. On the periphery we find—and this is more difficult—the natural context. All true statesmanship should return to nature: the first stage of this journey is the lived experience of land and people through wandering.⁴²

Riehl's work on the relations between the Netherlands and Germany was meant to stress the close relationship between the Dutch and German peoples, and in it, a mostly complete *völkisch* view of that relationship is exhibited.⁴³ Through shared language, social customs, religion, and industry—Riehl even takes time out to discuss wooden shoes, that archetype of the Netherlands, and their cross-border use⁴⁴—the two countries are separated not in spirit but only in politics. But this is, in Riehl's view, an artificial construct, for the statesmen of the day,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁴¹ Ibid., 142.

⁴² Ibid., 143–44.

⁴³ Müller, *Imaginerter Westen*, 100.

⁴⁴ Riehl, *Wanderbuch*, 108–13.

whether in the Prussian capital of Berlin or the Dutch administrative capital of The Hague, did not conduct the right kind of politics. Divorced from nature as they were, these politicians could not see the forest but for the trees. But as Riehl opined, one day, in the future, that would all change, for the natural custom of the German people was federation, best conceived as an organism in which the various branches of the Germanic family are little more than limbs of a body.

In addition to his ethnographic work, Riehl was also important for his influence on educational reform. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, German educational reformers pushed for and succeeded in introducing the subject of *Heimatkunde* into German schools. Not easily translated, but vaguely meaning *local studies*, *Heimatkunde* called for education to emphasize the German people's connection to the earth as well as the notion that their customs came ipso facto from that very connection.⁴⁵ Although *Heimatkunde* did not always necessarily emphasize a *völkisch* view of the world,⁴⁶ in practice it often did.⁴⁷ Over the course of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the very idea of the *Heimat*, its glorification through historical societies, museums, and the study of local folklore, was made into a “mediator between the local place and the nation [that] ... in imperial Germany transformed into an actual representation of the nation.”⁴⁸ The idea of *Heimat* was an “invented memory” that transformed German towns into a state of timelessness, ever connected to the past. Responding to the rapidly changing society they saw around them, “Germans manufactured *Heimat* as a set of shared ideas about the immemorial heritage of the German people in local and national history, nature, and

⁴⁵ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 155.

⁴⁶ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 106–8, 150–53.

⁴⁷ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 155.

⁴⁸ Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 98.

folklore.”⁴⁹ And although the creation of this idea of *Heimat* and the push for its study in schools was not necessarily anti-modern,⁵⁰ it certainly did hark back to what many perceived to be a simpler time and age in a similar way to Riehl’s *völkisch* ideas during the mid-century, with its emphasis on the land and people who inhabited it. Like the physical education exalted by Father Jahn, *Heimatkunde* would become a central element to the educational and pedagogical philosophy of National Socialism in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

In the 1860s and 1870s, as the German nationalist dream of a German nation-state became a reality, little changed in the nationalist wing of German politics as regarded the place of the Netherlands. The towering figure of the age in the German historical discipline was Heinrich von Treitschke. Treitschke, like many other intellectuals before him, had much to say about the Netherlands. In his 1869 essay, *Die Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande*, Treitschke notes that the Netherlands:

This great power without land was and remains an anomaly; it fed on the misfortune of the neighboring peoples; it possessed only the rapidly dwindling vitality of a small state, not that happy gift of rejuvenating itself, with which great nations victoriously pass through all the storms of history. ... The country, which united the commerce of all the world in its hands, saw a natural enemy in every nation that awoke to strong self-confidence, but its most dangerous rivals were the two Protestant powers [Great Britain and Prussia]. Germany's weakness was Holland's strength; the position of the small state at the head of Protestant Central Europe immediately swayed as soon as an independent Protestant power rose up.⁵¹

As far as Treitschke was concerned, the Netherlands was an unnatural state that could only survive through the weakness of more natural states like Great Britain, France, and Germany. Its very status as an independent state in the first place had been as much a result of the chaos in Germany during the Thirty Years’ War as it had been its own drive for independence from Spain.⁵² Its second independence, this time from French hegemony in the wake of Napoleon,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 97–98.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 120–24.

⁵¹ Heinrich von Treitschke, *Historische und politische Aufsätze II*, 4th edition (Leipzig: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1871), 512–513.

⁵² Ibid., 416, 512.

was the result, not of Dutchmen liberating themselves—that was a fairy tale—but of Germans (and Russian “Cossacks”) doing the work for them.⁵³

But that was all in the past. The future held a different place for the Netherlands, according to Treitschke. The following year, in his famous work *Was fordern wir von Frankreich*, Treitschke laid bare his thoughts about the contemporary Dutch state:

It is not the object of this national policy to force every strip of German soil which we ever gave up in the days of our weakness, back again into our new Empire. ... We have no desire to interfere with the separate life of that branch of the German stock which has grown up in the Netherlands into a small independent nation. But we cannot permit a German people, thoroughly degraded and debased, to serve against Germany, before our eyes, as the vassal of a foreign power.⁵⁴

He stopped short of calling for outright annexation of the Netherlands, but it was clear that the Low Countries must, in his eyes, serve Germany’s interests, not those of other states. Moreover, his pamphlet began to sound similar to Arndt—whom he quoted regarding the Rhine being a German river but not Germany’s boundary⁵⁵—when Treitschke claimed that the new German state should have its “western frontier indicated to it by the language and manners and life of the rural population.”⁵⁶ He was, in this instance, discussing Alsace and Lorraine but it would not take long for Treitschke to set his eyes on the place of the Netherlands. This was, in fact, only a step along the path to Treitschke’s final destination: the incorporation of the Netherlands into the German Empire.

In a lecture given to his students at the University of Berlin sometime in the 1880s or early 1890s,⁵⁷ which was copied down and published in 1897, Treitschke could not have been clearer on his view of the Dutch people and their little nation:

⁵³ Ibid., 538–43.

⁵⁴ Heinrich von Treitschke, *What We Demand from France* (London: Macmillan, 1870), 21.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁷ Unfortunately, the collected volume of lectures does not date each individual lecture, noting only that they were copied down between 1882 and 1893. See Heinrich von Treitschke and Max Cornicelius, *Politik: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität zu Berlin von Heinrich von Treitschke*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1899), VI.

Holland was transformed from a tribe into a nation through a political struggle in which we unfortunately left it in the lurch and made its sailor's dialect with full consciousness a literary language. ... Thus, in the West a number of outposts [i.e., the Netherlands and Switzerland] of the empire have developed into independent states. That at least Holland once again returns to the old fatherland is [both] possible and urgently desired.⁵⁸

The culmination of a century of German thought regarding the place of the Netherlands, from Fichte through Arndt, Jahn, Menzel, Riehl, and Treitschke, can be found in the writing of the *völkisch*, nationalist German historian Julius Langbehn. All of the previously discussed intellectuals saw, for either reasons of language and culture or for reasons of state, the need for the Netherlands to be a part of Germany, but Germany was always to be the senior partner. Langbehn, in his work *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, turns the tables entirely and views the Netherlands, not as a breakaway German province needing reincorporation into Germany, but rather as the source of nearly all that is good and decent in the modern world. To be certain, Langbehn desires a union between Germany and the Netherlands, but he sees the benefit for Germany not in control of the Rhine or the North Sea coast, but in the infusion of all things Dutch and the advantages that would bring. Lying where the North Sea “kisses” Germany, Holland is a true *Heimat* of which to be proud, for it is a nation of farmers connected to the land, where earth and the smell of sludge permeates the life of the people. Even the capital was until recently little more than a village. “The Dutch are from a special batch; they are sea farmers, as the Greeks once were; therewith they are both closely related and at the same time foreign to the continental Lower Germans.”⁵⁹ The conservatism of Northern Germans would do well with an injection of Dutch liberalism. But this was a specific German type of liberalism that included “the fight for ancient rights ... [which are] individual and not doctrinaire, national and not party-political.” A combination of Dutch liberalism and Prussian conservatism would “lead to true

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1:128.

⁵⁹ Von einem Deutschen, *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Leipzig: C. L. Hirschfeld Verlag, 1890), 141–142. Langbehn originally wrote the work anonymously.

freedom.” Furthermore, the Dutch, more than any other branch of the German family tree, have succeeded in state-craft and commercial activity precisely because they understand freedom in the correct way—the preservation of their *völkisch* character.⁶⁰

Not only that, but the Dutch had already had an immeasurable impact upon Prussia, according to Langbehn. In the olden days, Prussia was partially settled by Dutchmen, and this showed even in Langbehn’s time. The Prussian royal house was partially of Dutch origin; even Frederick-William the Great Elector was partially educated in Holland, and he brought back Dutch technology with him to Berlin. The Great Elector was a constant testament to the “lasting connection to the ethnically related Lower German states.”⁶¹ King Frederick-William I also had a deep connection to the Netherlands. His favorite city, Potsdam, “the most Prussian of all Prussian cities,” was built in a Dutch style, and even its name was, according to Langbehn, a tribute to Amsterdam.⁶² What was true of Potsdam, was also true of many other northern German cities, including Hamburg, Danzig, Dresden, and Magdeburg; even Berlin once had canals just like Amsterdam. “All of northern Germany is filled with a spirit that was directly descended from, or closely related to the Netherlands.”⁶³

In his work, Langbehn exhibits a love affair with the Dutch people and their state, and like any true love, he hopes that the relationship will end in marriage. This marriage between Prussia and the Netherlands was necessary for “such a marriage would carry long-lasting and beautiful fruits. Orange blood is the wedding jewelry; the tried and true saying ‘Oranje boven’ would be with a—political—wedding between Germany and the sea, the appropriate wedding

⁶⁰ Ibid., 144.

⁶¹ Ibid., 142.

⁶² Langbehn dismisses the then current (and likely correct) belief that the name *Potsdam* stems from Slavic origins.

⁶³ Von einem Deutschen, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 143.

jewelry.”⁶⁴ If, as Langbehn desired, Prussia were to return to the soil as farmers, then they might as well also submit to “Dutchification.”⁶⁵ Just as the royal house has been, so too should the German volk be “Dutchified.” Even better yet, “Germany could best put an end to Holland’s fears of annexation, by letting it be annexed by Holland.”⁶⁶

Although Langbehn was, by far, the most enthusiastic of German intellectuals, whether *völkisch*-minded or not, regarding the relationship between the Netherlands and Germany, he was by no means the last. Toward the end of the century, *völkisch* thinkers adopted the concept of *Lebensraum* from the German academic Friedrich Ratzel. Ratzel’s views of the nation-state do not fit squarely into the *völkisch* mold. Like many previous thinkers, Ratzel viewed the nation-state as needing space to grow and succeed. Those states without such room were destined to fail. In this need for space to grow and thrive, Ratzel also argued, like his more *völkisch* colleagues, that nations were living organisms, but for Ratzel, the most important element of any volk was that it was spatially contained, ethnicity and character were nice, but not necessary.⁶⁷ As nations grow, their living space must also grow for the nation to remain healthy. On the radical-nationalist wing of German politics, Ratzel’s ideas about the need for expansion in living space were most vociferously championed by the Pan-German League. The League was most heavily focused on Germany’s eastern borderlands, where Slavs often outnumbered Germans, and, after the First World War, the large numbers of Germans who lived in the successor states

⁶⁴ Ibid., 144. *Oranje boven*—“Orange on top”—is a traditional Dutch adage that refers back to the Prince’s Flag used during the Dutch Revolt, with its Orange-White-Blue tricolor design. It is also the first line of a traditional folk song with the lyrics: *Oranje boven, oranje boven, Leve de koning(in)!* Translated into English, the lyrics read: *Orange on top, orange on top, Long live the King (or Queen)*. In either case, the phrase is meant to extol the reigning House of Orange-Nassau.

⁶⁵ *Verholländerung*.

⁶⁶ Von einem Deutschen, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 146.

⁶⁷ Mark Bassin, “Imperialism and the Nation State in Friedrich Ratzel’s Political Geography,” *Progress in Human Geography* 11, no. 4 (September 1, 1987): 477–82.

of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. But the League members did occasionally also turn their attention to Germany's western borders.⁶⁸

Pan-German League member and former German General Staff officer Friedrich von Bernhardi notes in his 1911 *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg* that:

The German Empire has suffered great losses of territory in the storms and struggles of the past. The Germany of today, considered geographically, is a mutilated torso of the old dominions of the Emperors; it comprises only a fraction of the German peoples. A large number of German fellow-countrymen have been incorporated into other States, or live in political independence, like the Dutch, who have developed into a separate nationality, but in language and national customs cannot deny their German ancestry. Germany has been robbed of her natural boundaries; even the source and mouth of the most characteristically German river, the much-lauded German Rhine, lie outside the German territory.⁶⁹

Perhaps the most direct threat against the independence of the Netherlands (and Belgium) by a League member came from Heinrich Class's 1913 work *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär*. In it he goes on at length about the future decision the two small states would have to make regarding a coming European war. Of course, he believed, they would make "the same mistake" that Hannover, Electoral Hessen, and Nassau made in the 1866 conflict between Prussia and Austria, that is take the wrong side, but "they cannot be surprised, if the consequences [incorporation into the German Reich] are the same."⁷⁰ But Class did not base his opinions only on the ethnic relations between the people of the Low Countries and Germany, in fact, he disregarded that aspect entirely, arguing that the independence of these peoples and the cultures they had developed would be a detriment to Germany's future.⁷¹ Rather, it was pure strategic calculus that led Class, for the Rhine river must be in German hands. He thus determined that Germany should offer the Low Countries the free choice of either siding with the Reich or against it:

⁶⁸ Künzel, *Hitler's Brudervolk*, 27–30.

⁶⁹ Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*, 6th edition (Stuttgart and Berlin: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1913), 82.

⁷⁰ Daniel Frymann, *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär - politische Wahrheiten und Notwendigkeiten*, 4th edition (Leipzig: Dieterich'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913), 154. Class originally wrote the work under the pseudonym Daniel Frymann.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 154–55.

If they [Belgium and the Netherlands] decide for us, accepting reason at the last moment, they save their state independence in the sense in which the individual states of the German Reich possess it; If they strike for the other side, they will be annexed.⁷²

Of course, their colonies would also suffer the same fate, with the administration of those distant lands falling to the bureaucrats in Berlin.⁷³

Thus, already by the beginning of the First World War, there was a long-standing history in Germany of viewing the Netherlands as a sort of lost child ready to be returned to its Germanic family. The reasons for this generally came from either the ethnic, *völkisch* point of view or from questions of pure strategic calculus, but either way, they were relatively common views in German nationalist circles.⁷⁴ Officially, the Netherlands remained neutral during the Great War, but that did not keep German planners from including the Dutch into their hoped-for post-war settlement. Although it was to remain independent, German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg argued early in the war, when German victories were still fresh in recent memory, that the Netherlands must remain politically independent, yet completely dependent in all other ways upon the German Reich, including a customs union and the stationing of German troops at key points, such as the mouth of the Scheldt River in the Province of Zeeland. Belgium, for its part, was to become “economically a German province,” with some areas to be annexed to the Reich directly.⁷⁵ Of course, these plans for the Low Countries were never realized as the war effort turned against Germany and forced its surrender to the Allies in November 1918.

Defeat in war would not remove Germans’ interests in the Low Countries, however.

After the end of the First World War, two largely new developments emerged in the academic

⁷² Ibid., 155.

⁷³ Ibid., 155–56.

⁷⁴ Alternatively, similar beliefs were difficult to find across Germany’s western border in the Netherlands itself until the interwar period.

⁷⁵ Theodor Bethmann-Hollweg, “Denkschrift September 9, 1914,” in *Deutsche Quellen zur Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges*, by Wolf Dieter Bihl (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), 61–62, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=980.

world—the academic subject of Dutch Studies and the larger, interdisciplinary field of *Westforschung*. Both of these developments marked a sharper concentration among academics and independent scholars regarding the relationship of the Netherlands and its people to Germany specifically and the relations between the peoples and nations of Western Europe and the western German borderlands more generally. Research in both Dutch Studies and the *Westforschung* included, but was by no means limited to, *völkisch* thinkers, although several of the *völkisch* thinkers who worked in these areas would go on to participate in cultural projects in occupied Western Europe during the Second World War.

The study of the Low Countries, as an academic discipline, had its roots in the pre-war period; it was only following the end of the Great War that the study of the politics, ethnography, geography, history, and culture of the Low Countries—subsumed under the name *Niederlandistik*—would actually become established, albeit not firmly. Johannes Frank began the modern study of the Netherlands in German universities in the late nineteenth century, but focused mostly on language, publishing works such as a modern Dutch dictionary and a grammar book. He was followed at Bonn, after his death, by Theodor Frings, who was promoted to Ordinarius in 1919, although Frings moved on to Leipzig in 1923. Dutch Studies was not picked up again by a Professor Ordinarius at Bonn until 1964. The only other Professor of Dutch Studies in Germany was located at Frankfurt am Main in the person of M.J. van der Meer, a Dutchman. Van der Meer was appointed Professor Extraordinarius in 1920 and then in 1921 became head of Holland Institute, but never attained the rank for Ordinarius before his death in 1931, shortly after which the Holland Institute dissolved. Otherwise, there were no professors of

Netherlandistic in all Germany, although lecturers could be found at Berlin, Hamburg, Münster, Göttingen, Kiel, and Cologne.⁷⁶

At Cologne, there were actually two lecturers, Dr. Edda Tille-Hankamer and Dr. Karl Menne. After Tille-Hankamer left Cologne for a position at Wellesley in the mid-1920s, and in an effort to increase his own standing, Menne, along with his friends—the lawyer Franz Schönberg and Robert Paul Oszwald, who worked for the Prussian archive in Potsdam—agitated for the creation of an institute similar to the Holland Institute at Frankfurt. The result was the *Deutsch-Niederländische Institut*.⁷⁷ Proposed originally in 1927, it was only opened in 1931 through the financial support of the university, the city of Cologne (the university there was a public university governed, in part, by the city), and the Dutch government. According to the original founders, the purpose of the institute was to be overtly political. As Schönberg put it to the Rector of the University of Cologne in 1927:

As a North Sea-Baltic state, it [Prussia] is called upon to seek the state unification of the entire Germanic cultural area encircled by the Germanic Mediterranean [the North and Baltic Seas] under the leadership of mainland Germany. Of all the continental Germanics, only the Dutch have developed their own written language deviating from the common German written language and have thereby separated themselves from the rest of Germandom. Today it is idle to bemoan this fact. It must be accepted as fact. The Dutch, of all Germanic peoples most closely related to and direct neighbors to the Germans, represent the bridge leading from Germandom to the Germanic nation. If Prussia, if Germany wants to politically unite the Germanic cultural sphere under its leadership, then the approach to and alignment of the Dutch nation must begin.⁷⁸

Because of opposition on the part of the Dutch government, the original desire to include a research focus on the Flemish portions of Belgium was dropped from the program, while opposition from anti-*völkisch* participants in the venture, not the least of whom was the then Mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, an explicitly *völkisch* orientation was also avoided.

⁷⁶ Marta Baerlecken and Ulrich Tiedau, “Das Deutsch-Niederländische Forschungsinstitut an der Universität Köln 1931–1945 und der Aufbau des Faches Niederlandistik in der frühen Bundesrepublik,” in *Griff nach dem Westen: die “Westforschung” der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)* (Münster: Waxmann, 2003), 855–56.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 856–57.

⁷⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 857–58.

Nonetheless, from the very beginning of the institute, two groups of scholars coalesced there, one of which was led by Menne and disseminated an ardently *völkisch*-oriented research program.⁷⁹ Menne came down with an illness in the mid-1930s and passed away in 1936. He was replaced by Dr. Franz Petri. Petri was really the more successful scholar and managed to assemble around him a larger cohort of students and like-minded thinkers receptive to his *völkisch* understanding of Dutch and Belgian history.⁸⁰

Over the life of the institute, the *völkisch* tendencies of the faculty would wax and wane as scholars joined and left the institute. By 1937, the Nazi government started to exert more control over the activities of the institute, forcing the chair to resign because of his “non-Aryan” wife. Although the newly installed director, Dr. Hans Kaufmann, was sympathetic to the non-*völkisch* side, the appointment of Petri to the position of managing director more or less balanced the two groups out. With the appointment of Dr. Walter von Stokar to a professorship in Ancient History at Cologne, the affairs of the institute became even more closely watched. Stokar, who was trained as an apothecary, gained his position at Cologne due to his close contacts with SS functionaries in Berlin.⁸¹ His professorship at Cologne was not directly tied to the institute, but because he himself was interested in the Netherlands, he involved himself with the activities of the institute, much to the chagrin of the non-*völkisch* group of scholars resident there.⁸²

With the outbreak of the war in Poland, the institute briefly closed when its rooms were turned into a hospital for wounded soldiers. By the time that the institute reopened, the focus was placed on preparing appropriate experts for their future roles as occupiers in the Low Countries,

⁷⁹ Ibid., 855–58. The other group was made up of scholars who did not support a *völkisch*, racist research agenda, which Baelecken names the “Adenauer circle.”

⁸⁰ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 101–6.

⁸¹ Stokar, who had no formal training in history, was heavily involved with the *SS-Ahnenerbe*, which likely explains how he was able to obtain the appointment at Cologne.

⁸² Baelecken and Tiedau, “Das Deutsch-Niederländische Forschungsinstitut an der Universität Köln 1931–1945 und der Aufbau des Faches Niederlandistik in der frühen Bundesrepublik,” 859–67.

even though the invasion had not yet taken place. Several months later, when the Germans did invade the Low Countries, the largest portion of the *völkisch* group were installed in Belgium as occupiers. Petri, for example, was responsible for university education and cultural nazification in occupied Belgium under the military government that was formed there. Back in Cologne, Dr. von Stokar was tasked with leading the institute, until he too was sent to the Netherlands for occupation work, where he worked in Wimmer's *Generalkommissariat*.⁸³

Although the institute at Cologne was the only specifically academic organization that focused exclusively on Netherlandistic, it was part of a much wider network of scholars and independent researchers who focused on the Western borderlands of Germany, subsumed under the title *Westforschung*. The *Westforschung* did not focus exclusively on the Netherlands, nor was it limited to particular research methods. Rather, it was entirely interdisciplinary and evolved in the early 1920s at various German universities, especially at Bonn and Cologne, when scholars there began to collaborate with each other and their colleagues in other countries with the help of significant support given by the Weimar and later Nazi governments.⁸⁴ Scholars associated with the *Westforschung* as a whole spanned the political and ideological landscape, but significant numbers aligned themselves with the *völkisch* wing of German politics.⁸⁵

So for example, Dr. Eduard Schulte, an archivist at the City Archive in Münster, researched the relationship between the Germanic nations of Sweden, the Netherlands, and Switzerland and their relationship to the Holy Roman Empire through a specifically *völkisch* lens, specifically as they related to the 1648 Peace of Münster that, among other things, marked

⁸³ Ibid., 867–69.

⁸⁴ Michael Fahlbusch, "Deutschtumspolitik und Westdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft," in *Griff nach dem Westen: die "Westforschung" der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, ed. Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau (Münster; New York: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2003), 570–82.

⁸⁵ Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau, *Griff nach dem Westen: die "Westforschung" der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)* (Münster; New York: Waxmann, 2003), xxiv–xxvi.

legal recognition of Dutch independence.⁸⁶ At the same time, the historian and archivist Robert Paul Oszwald published his *Deutsch-Niederländische Symphonie*, which focused on the close cultural and linguistic ties of between Germans, the Dutch, and especially the Flemish as groups of a larger Germanic peoples.⁸⁷ Alternatively, some scholars started out with more *völkisch* beliefs, but through their research came to questions these understandings of Western European peoples. Such was the case for Josef Schmithüsen, whose studies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg eventually caused him to distance himself from his original belief regarding Luxembourg's place within the larger German nation, although not enough to argue against its incorporation into the Reich during the Second World War.⁸⁸

Conclusion

When the Nazis came to power, they stepped into a world in which the German nationalist and *völkisch* right, supported in many cases by German academics, already saw much of Western Germany's neighboring peoples as "Lower German" rather than independent nationalities. It is, therefore, little surprise that the Nazis kept moving in the very same direction. Hitler made his plans clear to his chief architect, Albert Speer shortly before the 1937 Party Congress: "We will create a great empire. All the Germanic peoples will be included in it. It will begin in Norway and extend to northern Italy."⁸⁹ Expansion started, first, with the annexation of

⁸⁶ Johannes Arndt, "Um die Deutung des Jahres 1648: Eduard Schulte und das Konzept der 'Reichsgeschichte der Niederlande,'" in *Griff nach dem Westen: die "Westforschung" der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, ed. Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau (Münster; New York: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2003), 200–201.

⁸⁷ Stephan Laux, "Flandern im Spiegel der 'wirklichen Volksgeschichte': Robert Paul Oszwald (1883-194) als politischer Funktionär, Publizist und Historiker," in *Griff nach dem Westen: die "Westforschung" der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, ed. Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau (Münster; New York: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2003), 275–88.

⁸⁸ Klaus Freckmann, "Luxemburg: ein Teil des deutschen Reiches? Zur Kontinuität des landes- und volkskundlichen Kulturraumforschung und ihr Verhältnis zur kulturellen Identität Luxemburgs im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Griff nach dem Westen: die "Westforschung" der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, ed. Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau (Münster; New York: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2003), 480.

⁸⁹ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston, 1970, 70.

Austria in 1938 and the annexation of the Czech portions of Czechoslovakia the following year. On April 9, 1940, Hitler remarked to his subordinates, “Just as the German Empire emerged in 1866, so will the Greater Germanic Reich emerge from the present day.”⁹⁰ The invasions of Denmark and Norway began that very morning, and after their respective defeats, the Nazis turned on the Low Countries and France in May. In each case, the decision to attack their “Germanic” neighbors was made for military strategic reasons. Norway was vital to the security of Swedish iron ore shipments, while Denmark protected the Baltic Sea and was a stepping stone to the rest of Scandinavia. The Netherlands was invaded preemptively, as the Germans expected the British would use Dutch airfields against industrial targets in the Ruhr, while Belgium was the main route into the heart of the primary enemy of the May campaign, France.

Despite the military strategic impetus behind the invasions of the four countries, however, the Nazis very much planned to incorporate them into a Germanic Reich. In describing the sacrifice these populations would have to make, Hitler directly compared their fate to the fate of the formerly independent German states that made up the Kaiserreich and to the fate of the recently annexed Austria:

I understand that it may be hard for a young Dutchman or a young Norwegian to find himself called upon to form a common unit, within the framework of the Reich, together with men of other Germanic connections. But what is asked of them is no harder than what ... was asked of the countries that have formed the Second Reich, and to what we recently asked of the Austrians... When speaking to the Germanics of the northwest and north, one must always make it plain that what we're building is the Germanic Reich, or simply the Reich, with Germany constituting merely its most powerful source of strength, as much from the ideological as from the military point of view.⁹¹

Himmler's goal of creating an empire made up of the Germanic peoples of Europe was similarly expressed, albeit in a direr fashion, several years prior in a speech to SS officers: “I really intend

⁹⁰ Quoted in Hans-Dietrich Looock, “Zur ‘Großgermanischen Politik’ des Dritten Reiches,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 8, no. 1 (January 1, 1960): 39. Tellingly, both moments Hitler referred to were German invasions of Denmark.

⁹¹ Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens, 3rd ed. (New York: Enigma Books, 2000), 327–28, 403.

to gather Germanic blood in the whole world, to rob and to steal. ... What lies ahead for Germany is either the Greater Germanic empire, or oblivion.”⁹² During the occupation, Seyss-Inquart put it slightly differently, but still effectively the same:

The German national state idea found its fulfillment in 1938 in Greater Germany. Self-evidently Greater Germany is for natural reasons the core of the Germanic Empire, [but] this empire is not a mere enhancement of the Greater German Reich, but it is a [new] order that is designed for the sake of the entire race and [which] must be borne by the entire race.⁹³

Had he lived a century prior, Seyss-Inquart very well may have described the Greater German Reich just as Riehl had done, as a “new federation.”

In this chapter, I have argued that the Nazis’ Germanic project in the Netherlands had a long pre-history in German thought. Since at least the Napoleonic period, German nationalist agitators have argued for the incorporation of the Netherlands into a German state. While the specific focuses of German thinkers and their reasoning behind their desires for an intimate relationship between the Dutch and German peoples often varied, these thinkers, especially those who espoused *völkisch* beliefs, nonetheless represent the foundations upon which the Nazi occupiers of the Netherlands would build during the Second World War.

⁹² Quoted in Heinrich Himmler, *Heinrich Himmler, Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen*, ed. Bradley F. Smith and Agnes F. Peterson (Berlin: Propyläen, 1974), 38n.

⁹³ Arthur Seyß-Inquart, *Idee und Gestalt des Reiches*, 1943.

Chapter 3 - Dutch Fascists, National Socialists, and their Educational Policies

It is not our intention to break down the good that education in our country undoubtedly contains. However, it is necessary to carry out a radical revision, because the educational system in its honorable form is flawed with very large defects. - Anton Adriaan Mussert, 1938¹

To this end, [students] must be educated in a spirit whereby the Dutch element is accentuated with all proper emphasis, but which does not obscure, the relationship with other peoples, in particular the German people. - Jan van Dam, December 1, 1940²

During the interwar period, several thinkers and agitators assembled around themselves like-minded individuals and formed the first fascist and national socialist oriented political parties in the Netherlands. Although there were several native, Dutch antecedents to these movements, by and large, the bulk of the ideologies espoused by these nascent fascist and national socialist groups came from abroad, especially Italy and Germany, for it was in those countries that much more organized and powerful interests had coalesced into large mass movements that had, whether in the early 1920s or the early 1930s, actually succeeded in attaining power and thus became models for emulation. Each of these Dutch groups combined, to a greater or lesser extent, elements from the Dutch (and Belgian) past with elements from their Italian and German models to create broadly similar political platforms in which ideological content differed more in degree of emphasis than in content. The relation of the Netherlands to Germany was one such area in which the various national socialist parties in the Netherlands differed in emphasis. Indeed, all Dutch Nazi parties agreed that the future of the Netherlands was bound up with that of Germany in some way, but the nature of that future relationship differed according to each party.

Most Dutch Nazi parties, including the largest and most influential, the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (NSB), saw the future of the Dutch nation in the form of a

¹ Anton Mussert, *Grondslagen van het Lager en Middelbar Onderwijs in het Nationaal-Socialistische Staat* (Utrecht: Hoofdkwartier N.S.B., 1938), 3.

² "Radiorede prof. dr. J. van Dam," *Leeuwarder Courant*, December 2, 1940, sec. Binnenland.

Greater Netherlands, that would encompass Dutch speaking peoples and their descendants around the globe, and that would work in concert with Germany as an equal partner in the new European order. Significant minorities, however, supported a more intimate relationship with Germany. This was especially true of a loosely organized group of Dutch *völkisch* thinkers and intellectuals who were, while not necessarily members of one of the organized Dutch Nazi parties, nonetheless supporters of many of the larger cultural and political goals of German-style National Socialism.

In the education realm, by far the most important of these more independent thinkers was the Dutch, *völkisch*-oriented University of Amsterdam professor Jan van Dam. After the Germans established their hegemony in the Netherlands in spring and summer 1940 and began their project of remaking Dutch society along more Germanic lines, Seyss-Inquart appointed van Dam to lead the newly created Department of Education, Science, Cultural Administration. In this role, van Dam would exercise the single greatest influence of any Netherlander on education during the German occupation. Although van Dam ultimately enjoyed the support of both the German occupation administration and several influential Dutch, *völkisch* thinkers, his conceptions of educational reform were strictly at odds with those of the NSB.

The focus of this chapter is two-fold. First it traces the history and trajectory of the smaller national socialist groups in the Netherlands, beginning with their precursor groups and working toward the establishment and fortunes the NSB, which would, after the Germans established their control, become the only legal political party in the occupied Netherlands. But the success that the NSB experienced prior to the outbreak of war, as well as the model that German Nazism offered it in the 1930s, brought change and instability to the party. The established parties closed ranks against it and rival factions vied for supremacy from within the

NSB itself. On one side was the larger wing of the party that supported the Greater Netherlands ideology led by the party's founder Anton Adriaan Mussert, while, on the other, was an increasingly influential *völkisch* bloc that was much more closely aligned with the German occupiers, and especially with the SS faction thereof.

The second focus of this chapter is on the educational policies of the NSB and of Jan van Dam. Consistent with its overtly nationalist message and desire for a measure of Dutch independence from the German Reich, the NSB program called for a specific mode of education known as the Three Pillars system that factored in the unique nature of Dutch history. Alternatively, van Dam favored a more unified educational apparatus that was much more in line with the type of education preferred by the German occupiers. Although their policies shared broad outlines, I argue that given the history of education in the Netherlands, especially the School Struggle of the nineteenth century, the educational "reforms" proposed by van Dam were almost certain to fail in the face of stiff opposition on the part of the Dutch populace. At the same time, the educational designs of the NSB, while also very radical in nature, were more in line with the peculiar nature of Dutch society. The German occupiers would, however, favor van Dam's vision for the future of Dutch education, putting their efforts at a significant handicap from the outset.

Native Dutch Fascist and National Socialist Movements during the Inter-War Period

Extreme ideologies gained a foothold in many European countries during the inter-war period. In the midst of a Russian defeat during the Great War, communist revolutionaries overthrew the Russian provisional government, instituted a dictatorship of the proletariat, and established the world's first socialist state. Germany, Hungary, and Italy all saw similar, albeit far less successful, communist uprisings after the war ended, while uncertainty and fear over the

perceived threat of a future communist uprising could be found in all nations across the continent. In the Netherlands, the Dutch Communist party, the precursor of which had split from the Social-Democratic Workers' Party³ in 1909 partly over issues of educational reform, never managed to gain a significant foothold among the electorate and was, for all intents and purposes, ignored by the established parties.⁴ The threat of communism was distant and the local working-class population appeared to have little interest in communist politics.⁵

Anti-democratic movements could also be found on the extreme right wing of European politics. In 1922, fascist revolutionaries attained power in Italy under Mussolini. In 1933, the Nazis attained power in Germany, while a number of reactionary, authoritarian regimes established themselves in various countries in Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe. The Netherlands was not immune to this trend, but unlike many of their neighbors, the Dutch people never gravitated towards these extreme ideologies in large numbers. To be certain, the Netherlands did have its share of anti-democratic activists, especially following the expansion of the vote to all adults in the second decade of the twentieth century. There could also be found in the Netherlands agitators who experienced the general malaise surrounding the societal and cultural changes that became prominent in fin-de-siècle Europe.⁶ While these early fascist parties were certainly reacting to events in the Netherlands, it was, first to Mussolini's National Fascist Party, and then later to the German Nazi Party, that early Dutch fascists looked for

³ The forerunner of today's *Partij van de Arbeid*, the Dutch Labor Party.

⁴ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 512–513, 621. The 1909 split actually created the Dutch Social Democratic Party, which renamed itself in November 1918 as the Communist Party Holland. The Communist Party Holland changed its name again to the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) in 1935.

⁵ The Communist Party never managed to get above four seats in the Dutch Second Chamber and at its height, had about eleven thousand members in the country. This is compared with the Social-Democratic Workers' Party which averaged ten seats in elections to the second chamber before universal suffrage was introduced and twenty-two seats after universal suffrage was introduced. SDAP membership, when its related organizations are included, ranged as high as five hundred, fifty thousand. *Ibid.*, 607, 621.

⁶ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 9–15.

inspiration. But to the extent that fascism and National Socialism were native movements in Italy and Germany, respectively, fascism as a distinct political philosophy in the Netherlands must be seen, primarily, as a foreign import.⁷

Another aspect of German National Socialism was also, mostly, a foreign import into the Netherlands—biological racism. Much like Heine purportedly claimed of all things Dutch, scientific racism came late to the Netherlands and was not as quickly adsorbed by the academic community in the Netherlands as it was in other European countries and the United States. To be certain, eugenics did gain some traction in the Netherlands among a small subset of academics, but it was never seriously considered as governmental policy. Moreover, even among researchers and intellectuals, the eugenics movement, to the extent that it existed in the Netherlands, focused more on alcoholism and other hereditary conditions, not racial factors. Nor was there a large following for the idea of a greater Germanic community as was more common in Germany during the first part of the twentieth century. There were some proponents, such as the folklorist Dirk Jan van der Ven and Jan de Vries, professor of Old Germanic Languages at Leiden University, but they and their supporters were a very small minority, even among conservative, far-right, and fascist oriented individuals in the Netherlands. Much like fascism, the racist, *völkisch* ideology so prominent in Germany over the previous century, was primarily a foreign import in the Netherlands.⁸

Historian A. A. De Jonge, in his history of National Socialism in the Netherlands, points to four groups that, while not proto-fascist themselves, did hold some views that would later be championed by Dutch fascists, and to that extent, could be seen as a native precursor to the movements of the 1920s and 1930s. The first of these groups were the more conservative

⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁸ Künzel, “Germanic Brothers,” 84–89.

elements of the classical liberal bloc, personified by J. H. Valckenier Kips. Valckenier Kips was an editor of a provincial newspaper in Utrecht and professor at the Technical University there, where he was able to spread his ideas among his engineering students. These conservative liberals personified by Valckenier Kips feared the growing influence of socialism toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. For this reason, they opposed the further expansion of the vote, which they believed would further increase the pace of creation of the nascent welfare state. As his politics evolved over the first decades of the twentieth century, Valckenier Kips argued for a removal of the liberal, democratic state and a return to governance by the monarch, who would appoint the government without consulting the Estates-General, as in the days of old. These appointed ministers could then work from outside of the party apparatus and on behalf of the entire people, thus returning the legislature to nothing more than an “organ, through which the government keeps in touch with the people.”⁹ Like many conservative liberals who became disaffected by parliamentary democracy and the increasing influence of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party, Valckenier Kips eventually embraced fascism completely, joining first the NSB and then the *Zwaarte Front* in the 1930s.¹⁰

A second group could be found surrounding the Leiden University Professor of Philosophy G. J. P. J. Bolland, who would later be described as the forefather of Dutch fascism. Bolland’s political views were very complex. His philosophy was Hegelian at its base, and he supported a form of state absolutism in which the individual could only be fulfilled through the state. Further Bolland was a convinced anti-Semite and opponent of Free Masonry. Had he continued living, he himself might have played a more significant role in the fascist movements

⁹ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18–21.

of the 1920s, but his 1922 death meant that only his students could carry on his ideals.¹¹ It also bears noting that Bolland was part of a much larger strain of Dutch culture that had always looked to Germany for new ideas in various aspects of life, but especially in politics and philosophy. Whether liberal, radical, anti-revolutionary, or confessional, political operatives in the Netherlands often found inspiration in their neighbors to the east. The cultural dynamic between German-speaking Central Europe (and later the German Empire) and the Netherlands was similar in nature to, although not as strong as, the cultural relationship between France and Belgium. Regardless of the cultural influence that Germany, its thinkers, and its politicians have had upon the Netherlands, however, the cultural dependence of the Netherlands upon Germany should not be overstated, for while Dutch thinkers might have initially looked to Germany for inspiration, German culture and politics never dominated the Netherlands in the way that French culture and politics, and even the French language, dominated Belgium.¹²

The third group de Jonge sees as a forerunner to Dutch fascism was a group of more-or-less bohemian, highly chauvinistic characters surrounding Erich Wichmann. Wichmann's political philosophy was overly concerned with the loss of the "heroic" in Dutch society, and as such, he was against anything that he saw as contrary to the "heroic," including universal suffrage and gender equality. He founded the anti-democratic *Rapaillepartij*¹³ in 1921 before moving to Italy in 1922 to witness the first fascist "age of heroes" first hand. After returning in 1924, Wichmann again assembled around himself a group of like-minded activists, and his group even managed to win some small local elections in Amsterdam in the mid-1920s, but the group fizzled when its founder passed away on New Year's Day, 1929.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid., 21–23.

¹² Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 212–13; Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 186.

¹³ Literally, the Riffraff Party.

¹⁴ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 23–25.

The final branch on the family tree of Dutch fascism came in the form of certain elements within a larger Catholic youth movement. The Dutch Catholic youth movement of the early twentieth century had at its core a generational conflict. In short, the majority of adult, Catholic Netherlands, who had grown up during the School Struggle and only experienced full emancipation in 1918, were, in the minds of the younger generation, still living in the society of the past, a society that was foreign to these young people who had come of age only in the very late 1910s or 1920s. The chief unifying element of these youth was their opposition to the politics of compromise that had been so essential to their parents' generation in preference for an integration of Catholic principles into the state and society of the Netherlands. But the political goals of the Catholic youth movement as a whole were also diverse, and only some Catholic youth supported anti-democratic politics, indeed other elements within the Catholic youth movement were more concerned with the hierarchical, authoritarian organization of the Church itself. Many of the anti-democratic youth had similar intellectual backgrounds to the bohemians surrounding figures like Wichmann, and their anti-democratic sentiments often stemmed from similar ideas, but their prominence within the Catholic youth movement specifically, gives them a slightly different flair from the bohemian chauvinists of the third group. Moreover, were it not for the significant numbers of individuals who would later make their way to overtly fascist parties, this final group would not so easily be characterized as a forerunner to fascism.¹⁵

In addition to these four precursor groups, there was a current within nineteenth century Low Country Catholic culture that advocated for closer cultural ties among Dutch language speakers. Chief among such individuals is the Catholic novelist and poet Joseph Alberdingk Thijm. Born in Amsterdam in 1820, Thijm came of age during the 1830s, a decade that began

¹⁵ Ibid., 25–27.

with the Belgian revolution and ended with Dutch recognition of Belgian independence. When he founded the journal *De Dietsche Warande*¹⁶ in 1855, the events of the revolutionary decade and their roots in religious prejudice, would have still been well within living memory. In his journal, he attempted to bridge the divide between Catholic Flemish and Protestant Dutch authors, artists, and other important members of the cultural elite.¹⁷ Although the impetus behind these efforts lay more in combating the social exclusion faced by Catholic Flemish speakers from their Protestant Dutch counterparts in the middle of the nineteenth century, not in racist ideas regarding an inherent connection between the two peoples, the shift from conceiving of the people in the Low Countries as being *united* by language, rather than *divided* by confession, should not be overlooked.¹⁸ By the early twentieth century, notions of an inherent connection between Flemish Belgians and their Dutch counterparts had gained somewhat more ground. One of the leading figures in this regard was a Dutch born, Flemish nationalist, Protestant pastor named Jan Derk Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard. Nyegaard predicted, already in 1916, that a new William of Orange would come forth to unite the Dutch speaking peoples in a larger Germanic brotherhood. As Paul Arblaster notes, however, “the Führer turned out to not to be quite what he had in mind, and during the Second World War, he was imprisoned for insulting officers of the German Army.”¹⁹

After Mussolini’s “March on Rome” small, fascist groups sprang up throughout the Netherlands, but only one gained any sort of prominence on the national stage. The first of these early fascist groups was the *Verbond van Actualisten*,²⁰ founded in 1923 by students of Bolland’s

¹⁶ The Dutch Park.

¹⁷ Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 185.

¹⁸ The division of the people of the Low Countries by language instead of religion, after all, results in the same blocs as the later division of the same people by both Dutch and German Nazis that was based upon race, even if there is a significant difference, in the Nazi mindset, between one’s language and one’s race.

¹⁹ Arblaster, *A History of the Low Countries*, 226.

²⁰ League of Actualists.

at Leiden University and supported by business magnate Alfred Haighton. It petered out in just over four years. Haighton and one of the co-founders of the League, Hugues Alexandre Sinclair de Rochemont, went on to form the *Vereeniging De Bezem*²¹ in 1928, another fascist party that saw about as much success as the League of Actualists—that is to say very little. In 1932 Jan Baars founded the *Algemene Fascisten Bond*,²² and he was followed by Arnold Meyer, who founded the *Zwart Front*²³—unique only in that it focused its energies specifically in Catholic circles—in 1934, as a sort of successor organization to the General Fascist Union after the latter disbanded earlier that same year.²⁴ These earlier fascist parties had varied membership rolls, including students, workers, managers, and intellectuals. Their politics were also diverse, with agreement limited only to the most basic fascist tenets, such as the need for immediate and decisive action, fear of decadence and modernity, anti-democratic and anti-communist agitation, racism, the need for national unity, and the need for a great leader to reverse the downward spiral the nation found itself in.²⁵ Their movements, and the intellectuals who led them, tended to focus more on utopian fantasies, those “wishes, dreams, and idea that were the fascist ideology,” rather than the more concrete political issues of the day.²⁶ And as a result, they remained on the fringes of Dutch politics, with vote totals of the most successful such party, the Jan Baars’s General Fascist Union, ranging only up to about seventeen thousand votes nationwide in the 1933 election.²⁷

The only other minor fascist party of note in the pre-war Netherlands was the National Socialist Dutch Workers Party (NSNAP), which was founded in December 1931 by Adalbert

²¹ Association The Broom.

²² General Fascist Union.

²³ Black Front.

²⁴ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 60–61.

²⁵ Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 626.

²⁶ Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 18.

²⁷ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 60–61.

Smit. In contrast to the NSB, which mostly copied the form of the NSDAP but had its own distinct ideology, the NSNAP was conceived of as a direct copy of the German Nazi Party. The small party was defined primarily by its extremely pro-German position, but its unity was short lived. Within the first six months of the party's existence, it had split into three factions. The "original" faction, led by Smit (NSNAP-Smit), was eventually fused with Haighton's *De Bezem* group in 1933 and was distinguishable from the other NSNAP groups through its strong support of Greater Netherlandic ideology.²⁸ The second group, originally led by Albert de Joode,²⁹ was taken over in short order by former Dutch army major C. J. A. Kruyt. The NSNAP-Kruyt, as the group is known to historians, was little more than a club for extreme anti-Semites, even by Nazi standards. Although all of the NSNAP groups espoused antisemitism to one degree or another, the antisemitism of the NSNAP-Kruyt was especially prominent, and it ran so deep that the organization was openly hostile even to Italian fascism, which it decried as an outgrowth of a Jewish and Masonic conspiracy in its party newspaper *De Nederlandsche Nationaal-Socialist*.³⁰

The final NSNAP group was the splinter party formed by Dr. E. H. Ridder van Rappard (NSNAP-van Rappard). Of the three it is most notable because it rejected the idea of a Greater Netherlands and even Dutch independence in favor of direct incorporation of the Netherlands and Flanders into the Greater German Reich, using argumentation that sounded strikingly similar to Hitler's own private pronouncements regarding the Netherlands and other Germanic nations in Northwest Europe. In his *Table Talks* on April 5, 1942, Hitler noted that:

Mussert expressed himself in a rather curious fashion, in my presence ... That's why I asked him whether he supposed it was in sheer lightness of heart that I divided my Austrian homeland into several *Gaue*, in order to remove it from separatist tendencies and incorporate it more easily in the Germanic Reich. Has not Austria, too, her own history—secular five times over—a history that truly is not devoid of highlights? Obviously, in discussing these problems one must remain very careful, when confronted by Dutch and Norwegians. One must never forget that in 1871 Bavaria would never have agreed to become part of

²⁸ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 57.

²⁹ De Joode took the pen name "van Waterland," given that his surname *de Joode* means *the Jew*.

³⁰ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 53.

Prussia. Bismarck persuaded her only to agree to become part of a great association linked by kinship—that is to say, Germany. Nor did I, in 1938, tell the Austrians that I wanted to incorporate them in Germany, but I insisted on the fact that Germany and Austria ought to unite to form the Greater German Reich. Similarly, when speaking to the Germanics of the North-west and North, one must always make it plain that what we're building is the Germanic Reich.³¹

Eight years prior, in a 1934 pamphlet, van Rappard argued in a very similar manner that:

The German-Germanic people of our day is formed from tribes, a portion of which, after a long separation, reunified in 1871 in the Second German Reich. Around this middle point and nucleus, there are a number of other tribes, including the Netherlands and Flanders, which through location, blood, and the shared interests of the people are fused to the nucleus, and are predestined for the German Socialism of the Third Reich.³²

Van Rappard does not appear, however, to have made the distinction that Hitler and the German occupiers would later make between the Greater German Reich and a Greater Germanic Reich. For van Rappard, the goal was not just incorporation of the Netherlands into the Third Reich, rather, he argued not only that the Netherlands should be *reincorporated* into Germany—after all, centuries prior the Low Countries had been a part of the Holy Roman Empire—but also that the Dutch were really just like Swabians or Bavarians, that is, essentially German.³³ This stance was closest in outlook to that of the SS faction of the German occupation and made the NSNAP-van Rappard unique among the various NSNAP groups as well as the broader mass of Dutch fascist parties.³⁴ But like the other two National Socialist Dutch Workers Parties, the NSNAP-van Rappard was never popular among the Dutch public and found the majority of its members not in the Netherlands, but across the border in Germany.³⁵

Unlike the NSNAP-van Rappard, the rest of the various fascist and national socialist parties of any significance all were supporters of the Greater Netherlandic ideology, often called

³¹ Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944*, 402–3.

³² E. H. van Rappard, “Met Hitler voor het Derde Rijk,” quoted in De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 57.

³³ In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 177–79; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 1/271-277; Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 60–61.

³⁴ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 54–55.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

Diets—an academic term referring to the Middle Dutch language but appropriated by these Nazi movements as a propaganda tool emphasizing the connectedness between the two peoples. The heart of the *Diets* ideology was that Dutch speaking peoples across the globe should be assembled into a single imperial system ruled from The Hague. This would include not just the Netherlands proper, but Flemish portions of Belgium, Luxembourg, and all former and still extant Dutch colonies. *Diets* thinkers saw a future world order in which the Netherlands would sit as an equal at the table of world powers and at which Hitler's Germany would be, at most, a *primus inter pares*. It is important to note that none of these ideologies as articulated by the Dutch Nazi splinter parties would have been acceptable to the German occupiers, above all to the SS faction of the occupation regime. The SS strove for the eventual creation of a Greater Germanic Reich made up of the various Germanic peoples of Northwest Europe, not the incorporation of the Netherlands into Germany, and certainly not for the creation of a larger, more powerful Dutch state with more relative equality to Germany.

The distinction between the creation of a Greater Germanic Reich and incorporation of the Netherlands into Germany proper may seem minute but the difference in terms of ideology was profound.³⁶ Incorporation of the Netherlands into Germany would not serve the purpose of winning over the population to the *Germanic* ideal. If anything, such heavy handed geopolitics would have aroused suspicion and angst among the Dutch, a point which Hitler himself noted in his *Table Talks*.³⁷ Rather, the German occupiers correctly understood that any attempt to incorporate the Netherlands into the Greater Germanic Reich must be handled delicately, as evidenced by Seyss-Inquart's initial mandate to win the hearts and minds of the Dutch people for National Socialism, what is often described as "self-Nazification." Given that most Dutch Nazi

³⁶ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 160–63.

³⁷ Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944*, 327–28, 403.

parties remained firmly in the *Diets* camp and none espoused an ideology that meshed completely with that of the German occupiers, Seyss-Inquart continued the pre-invasion German policy of supporting the largest and most influential of these parties, the NSB.³⁸

Founded in the central city of Utrecht in 1931 by Anton Adriaan Mussert and Kees van Geelkerken, the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (NSB) would become the most influential and important native Dutch Nazi movement.³⁹ This was Mussert's first foray into fascist politics, although Geelkerken had been active in fascist circles since the 1920s, having been a member of Sinclair de Rochemont's *De Bezem* group, and before that a member of the Dutch Orange Nationalists, an extremely nationalistic drinking club that recruited from the garrisons in Utrecht and Amersfoort.⁴⁰ Mussert, who was by far the more powerful and important member of the duo, was a well-respected civil servant working for the Department of Bridges and Waterways who had gained a national prominence in the mid-1920s through his opposition to the Dutch-Belgian border treaty of 1927.⁴¹ During the great unrest of the early 1930s, Mussert parlayed his fame from the treaty opposition movement into a new political party aligned along fascist lines. Unlike the more ephemeral fascist parties of the 1920s, Mussert's movement was well organized and showed the growth to prove it. Already numbering one thousand members by the end of its first year, the movement grew fiftyfold over the next five years, growing to over fifty-two thousand members by 1936. In the 1935 provincial elections,

³⁸ Julius Count von Zech-Burkersroda, the German Minister to the Netherlands had initiated this policy of German support for the NSB already in the mid-1930s as part of an effort at supporting fascist sister parties in other European nations. This policy was not without opposition among German Nazis, however, with the more racist faction of the movement, exemplified by Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*, arguing that the NSB was little more than yet another leg of the purported world-wide Jewish conspiracy and that Germany's truest partner in the Netherlands was the politically insignificant NSNAP-Van Rappard. Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism*, 46–52.

³⁹ National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands, also known as the Mussert Movement.

⁴⁰ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 70–71.

⁴¹ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 62; Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 582.

the movement garnered some eight per cent of the vote, giving it two seats in the upper house of the Dutch parliament and causing concern among the more established, democratic parties.

Almost certainly, much of this support can be attributed to its propagandistic efforts and the economic crisis. Mass meetings began first in the “city of the movement” Utrecht, but by 1932, these meetings were being held across the country, attracting many listeners. In 1933, the party held its first *Landdag*, or party congress, in Utrecht. It was at this congress that the marching storm troopers of the party’s Defense Unit first emerged. Earlier that year, the party also published its first edition of the weekly party newspaper *Volk en Vaderland*.⁴² The poor economy of the Netherlands also likely contributed to support for the NSB. The great depression wrought havoc upon the Dutch economy, destroying the savings of the middle class and putting working men and women out onto the street. Just as in Germany, economic crisis proved helpful for the electoral campaigns of Dutch anti-democratic parties. But unlike in Germany, once the established, democratic parties saw the growing influence of the NSB, they closed ranks completely, labeled the NSB a fifth column promoting foreign interests above those of the Dutch population, and subsequently shut the party out of the political process entirely.⁴³ As a result, 1935 would prove to be a high-water mark for the movement in free and open elections. In the 1937 parliamentary election, the NSB’s vote share was only half of that two years earlier, placing it at about four per cent and squarely in the same range as the otherwise wholly uninfluential Communist Party. Around the same time its membership rolls began to decline, although it would retain a small core of hardened activists numbering about thirty-two thousand clear through to the German occupation.

⁴² De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 71–75. The complete set of *Volk en Vaderland* is available through the Royal Library of the Netherlands. See Delpher database (accessed February 12, 2017), <http://www.delpher.nl/>.

⁴³ Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism*, 15–16; Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 604, 626–30.

The Mussert Movement was, in many ways, a carbon-copy of the German original. Mussert founded the party after the success of the German NSDAP in the September 1930 German elections. Its uniforms, symbols, and general organizational structure were copied almost entirely. Nominally, Mussert was the party's *Leider*, although he would never command the respect within the ranks that Hitler or Mussolini enjoyed in their respective parties. The party established a *Weerafdeling* (WA) to mimic the SA and a youth group, the *Nationale Jeugdstorm* (NJS) to mimic the Hitler Youth.⁴⁴ To help spread their message and refine their art, Mussert and other early leaders of the party traveled to Germany during the early years of the NSDAP regime to see their inspirational fore-runners firsthand and to collect propaganda and instructional materials for use in the Netherlands.⁴⁵ They instituted mass meetings and party congresses meant to be every bit the spectacle they were in Germany. With each change the Nazis instituted in Germany, the NSB happily cheered along. First came the destruction of the Weimar democratic system, then economic and agrarian reforms. Especially popular was the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*, a Dutch version of which Mussert hoped to create to spur development along the Zuiderzee. In the international sphere, the NSB championed Germany's attempts to counter French hegemony on the continent and bolstered the Nazis' status as a bulwark against Soviet Bolshevism. But the more that the NSB cheered on the successes of Hitler's Germany, the more the established parties labeled them foreign lackeys and, thus, the more the NSB became alienated from the majority of the Dutch populace, leading to their declining share of the vote after the 1935 elections.

Despite this close organizational association to German National Socialism, however, the NSB was a distinct political movement with significant philosophical differences from German

⁴⁴ Defense Unit and National Youth Storm, respectively.

⁴⁵ Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism*, 35–39.

Nazism. The relative lack of importance placed on the leadership principle is one such difference. But much more important was the lack of a racialist element in the early days of the party, a characteristic of the movement that the NSB attempted to promote as evidence of its independence from the NSDAP. Mussert himself was not an avowed anti-Semite, although he certainly held racist views of the colonial subjects of the Dutch Empire. He claimed to have never heard of the so-called “Jewish Question” nor to have read *Mein Kampf* before he formed (i.e., copied) the original NSB program in the early 1930s. This is even more clearly shown by the fact that the NSB admitted Jewish members, and Mussert himself would be instrumental in saving many of these individuals from deportation to the east later in the war.⁴⁶ Further major policy differences between the NSB and the NSDAP included the NSB’s support for the *Diets* model of a Greater Netherlandic Empire which the Germans simply could not accept⁴⁷ and the NSB’s limited support for the system of *verzuiling* of the Dutch populace.⁴⁸ Fascist oriented parties in general decried the pillars as obstacles to national unity and as emblematic of the failures of democracy to strengthen the nation. The NSB was no exception in this regard, but its rejection of the system of pillarization was not so complete, especially as it related to the influence exercised by the Churches. Mussert and his supporters were not happy with the increasing pressure the Hitler regime placed upon the Church in Germany and saw no contradiction between being both an ardent national socialist and devoted Christian, whereas German Nazis tended to be much more suspicious of Christianity as a possible competitor for the

⁴⁶ The most authoritative work on the Jewish members of the NSB is Heijden, *Joodse NSB’ers*.

⁴⁷ On the Diets ideology of the NSB and its ambitions for empire, see Foray, “An Old Empire in a New Order”; Dietrich Orlow points out that there were factions in the German leadership during the 1930s who supported collaboration with fascist sister-parties, such as the German Minister to the Netherlands Julius Count von Zech-Burkersroda, but the collaborationist faction essentially lost the debate after the invasion significantly altered the dynamic between the NSDAP and those smaller fascist sister-parties in occupied nations from one of relative equals working in separate spheres to a dynamic of domination of the native fascist party by the German occupier in the same political sphere. Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism*, 11–15, 50–52.

⁴⁸ On the NSB’s views on pillarization, see Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism*, 11–12.

souls of the masses. Further, the NSB supported an educational system in which parents could continue to send their children to confessional schools as had been allowed since the School Struggle of the early part of the twentieth century. This sort of influence on the part of clerics in the education of the youth simply could not be allowed in the eyes of German Nazis and went directly against the grain both of the reforms the Nazis instituted in Germany in the 1930s and those they would eventually institute in the Netherlands during the occupation.

Much like the occupation regime with which the NSB would collaborate, the Mussert Movement was not a completely united organ throughout its existence. By the late 1930s, the movement had split into two main camps, with the defining difference being the projected place of the Netherlands within the German orbit. Like most Dutch Nazi parties, the NSB was originally a supporter of the *Diets* model and a Greater Netherlandic Empire. But in the mid-1930s the racist influence of German Nazism began to gain traction among the movement and a second wing developed around the *völkisch* Dutch agitator, Meinoud Rost van Tonningen. Rost would join the NSB in 1936, after he returned from a long stay in Vienna working as the League of Nations' representative following the Austrian financial turmoil of 1931. It was in Vienna that Rost first got involved in politics, originally with the Austrofascist Fatherland Front of Engelbert Dollfuss and then, from 1934, with Austrian National Socialism.⁴⁹ Despite his joining the NSB, Rost felt himself more ideologically at home in one of the smaller, more explicitly racist Nazi movements, such as the NSNAP-van Rappard. His reasons for joining the NSB were very likely purely pragmatic; if he were to have any success in politics, the NSB was the only available

⁴⁹ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 122–23. Rost's stay in Vienna receives its fullest treatment in Peter Berger, *Im Schatten der Diktatur: Die Finanzdiplomatie des Vertreters des Völkerbundes in Österreich, Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen 1931 - 1936* (Wien; Köln; Weimar: Böhlau, 2000). There is little evidence to suggest that Rost had any contact with Seyss-Inquart, however. Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 110.

vehicle to get there. The various NSNAP factions were far too unimportant to matter on the national political scene.

Once he did join, he rose quickly through the party ranks, not least because of his already close contacts with Austrian Nazis. It was, for example, through Rost's connections in Vienna that Mussert was able to get his first meeting with Hitler. The year after he joined, Rost successfully stood for election to the Second Chamber of the States-General and became one of only four NSB members of the Dutch Lower House.⁵⁰ Later the same year, Mussert appointed him editor of *Het Nationale Dagblad*,⁵¹ a daily NSB oriented newspaper with a wide readership among movement members and second in importance to the party only to the older, weekly, party publication *Volk en Vaderland*.⁵² In 1939, he founded the *Mussertgarde*,⁵³ which was to be a more *völkisch* oriented counterpart to the *Jeugdstorm*, but was ultimately unsuccessful as a separate faction, was disbanded, and its members were mostly subsumed into the Dutch SS, much to Mussert's consternation.⁵⁴

Shortly after the invasion, Rost was tasked by Seyss-Inquart with the liquidation of Dutch Marxist parties, a task which became moot when all non-fascist political parties were outlawed by the occupiers in July 1941.⁵⁵ By September 1940, Rost, who by that point could be fully considered as Himmler's Dutch protege, was the third in command of the NSB, behind only

⁵⁰ Mussert and Geelkerken both declined to take seats in the Parliament, probably due to the relatively low vote total the NSB received as compared to the more established, democratic parties. See In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 191–92.

⁵¹ *The National Newspaper*.

⁵² *People and Fatherland*

⁵³ Mussert Brigade.

⁵⁴ Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 115.

⁵⁵ As *Kommissar für die marxistischen Parteien*, Rost's job was to liquidate the Communist Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party, which was Trotskyite ideologically. The Social Democratic Workers' Party, on the other hand, was to be handled more lightly, as Seyss-Inquart hoped to win its members over to Nazism. See Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 239–42.

Mussert and Geelkerken.⁵⁶ The following spring, Seyss-Inquart appointed him to the position of Secretary-General in the Department of Finance and to the leadership of the Netherlands Bank, making him, after Tobie Goedewaagen and Jap Schrieke, only the third NSBer to be appointed to the chief bureaucratic post in a Dutch ministry.⁵⁷ In 1942, he founded the Dutch East Company,⁵⁸ which aimed to settle Dutch farmers in the newly depopulated areas of Eastern Europe conquered by the Nazi war machine.⁵⁹ Finally, in 1944, after completing his military training with the Dutch Waffen-SS unit *Landstorm Nederland*, he was promoted to the rank of *Untersturmführer* in the Waffen-SS. During this entire time, Mussert floundered. He was singularly unable to push through his own designs, even after the NSB was the only legally permissible political party, with his single political victory being his appointment by Hitler as *Leider* of the Dutch volk in 1942—a meaningless title that offered him no further authority than that which he already commanded.

It is unclear when, exactly, Mussert began to realize that Rost was leading a fifth column against him. Musset's support for Rost in the late-1930s and his post-war admission that he had not recognized Rost as a Trojan horse clearly evidence his initial ignorance regarding Rost's motives. Only at the end of 1944, when defeat was all but certain, did Mussert, who was undoubtedly thinking of his own future in a post-occupation Netherlands, gain enough of an upper hand vis-à-vis Rost that he was able to dismiss him from his leadership positions in the NSB. Despite his ultimate failure to wrestle control of the NSB from Mussert, Rost was successful in dividing the movement and positioning himself as the party leader most closely

⁵⁶ Ibid.; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 112.

⁵⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/251.

⁵⁸ *Nederlandsche Oost Compagnie*.

⁵⁹ An excellent overview of the Nazis' plans for resettlement of Dutch farmers in the East can be found in Künzel, *Hitler's Brudervolk*.

aligned with the German occupiers, especially with the SS faction of the occupation regime. When Himmler visited the Netherlands in early June 1940, he met with Seyss-Inquart and Rost, while Mussert was excluded from the meeting entirely. It was during this meeting that it was likely decided to appoint Rost as the Commissioner for the Marxist Parties (officially announced in July 1940), and it was also there that the first discussion regarding the formation of Dutch SS units and the recruitment of Dutchmen for the Waffen-SS took place.⁶⁰ Rost then proceeded to rub Mussert's absence from the meeting in his face the following day, as indicated in Mussert's diary.⁶¹ His appointment as Secretary-General of the Department of Finance must be seen as further evidence of the occupiers' favor toward the *völkisch* faction, as would the appointment of Dr. Tobie Goedewaagen, a *völkisch* NSBer, to the position of Secretary-General of the Department of Public Enlightenment and Arts, especially given Seyss-Inquart's general reluctance to rely on the NSB for personnel.⁶² A full-fledged split within the movement was already clear at this early point of the occupation. As Rost wrote to Seyss-Inquart shortly after the latter's installation as *Reichskommissar*, the NSB was made up of two factions: a "bourgeois, fascist, Christian" faction led by Mussert and a smaller, *völkisch*, national socialist core.⁶³ This split mirrored, in many ways, the split within the occupation regime itself between the power centers surrounding Seyss-Inquart and the NSDAP on the one hand and Rauter and the SS on the other. Just as the influence of the SS in the Netherlands increased over the course of the

⁶⁰ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 239–42; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 112; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 226.

⁶¹ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 489–93; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*, 112.

⁶² Rost's appointment to lead the Finance Department in mid-1941 made him the fourth NSB member or German-friendly bureaucrat to lead a Dutch governmental department. The other three were all under Wimmer's *Generalkommissariat* - Van Dam in the Education Department, Goedewaagen in the Public Enlightenment & Arts Department, and Jap Schrieke at the Justice Department. Only Schrieke could be considered in the Mussert camp of the NSB, although in contrast to Mussert he did not support *bijzondere scholen*. Knegtman, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 114–15.

⁶³ Quoted in In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 190–91.

occupation, the more *völkisch* wing of the NSB also gained prominence over the life of the party, and this only changed as defeat became inevitable and the war drew to a close.

Already by the eve of the invasion then, Rost had become a figurehead for a much more explicitly pro-German, *völkisch* wing of the NSB. This *völkisch* wing's rise in popularity over the late 1930s within the Mussert Movement as a whole contributed to the growing sense among the wider Dutch public that the *entire* movement was made up of little more than German puppets, thus exacerbating the movement's already strained public image. The split between the *Diets* and *völkisch* wings of the NSB also helped contribute, at least in part, to the eventual appointment of Jan van Dam to the position of Secretary-General of the Education Department. It was the closeness of the NSB to Nazi Germany that the democratic parties had used as a stick with which to, quite effectively, beat the Mussert Movement since the middle of the 1930s. While the *Diets* wing of the party had never proved especially popular among the Dutch public, the *völkisch* wing was even less so. Placing such individuals in positions of power carried risks of public backlash, something the occupation regime was trying to avoid during the early "hearts and minds" period. Yet it was the *völkisch* wing whose ideology was most closely aligned with that of the German occupiers. Under the circumstances, it is no surprise then that the German occupiers would select a *völkisch* thinker with no direct connection to the NSB to lead the education department. Van Dam, it would turn out, was the man for the job, but his vision for education was not the only vision competing for influence. The NSB and Mussert specifically also had very concrete ideas about the reform of Dutch education along more national socialist lines, as the NSB defined them, but which allowed for a certain particularly Dutch twist born out of the unique history of public education in the Netherlands.

The NSB's Plans for Educational Reform

“As the son of a school head,” Anton Mussert would have been very familiar with the School Struggle of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it was with that history in mind that he would develop his Three Pillars system for educational reform.⁶⁴ Dutch fascists in the inter-war period were confronted with an inherently problematic situation regarding education. On the one hand all of the fascist groups opposed the system of pillarization. These fascist movements all saw the pillars as obstacles to national unity and as such, believed they should be done away with. The NSB was no different in this regard. But at the same time, one would have to have been incredibly obtuse to introduce an educational reform proposal that attempted to undo the political compromise surrounding confessional education that had been a century in the making. Politically inept as he may have been compared to those surrounding him, Mussert was clearly not so foolish as to believe he could persuade, or force, the religious segments of Dutch society to give up their hard-fought victories in the education realm. Instead, he developed an educational policy known as the Three Pillars system, which he outlined in an article in the party newspaper *Volk en Vaderland*,⁶⁵ and published as the expanded pamphlet

⁶⁴ Mussert, *Grondslagen*, 1.

⁶⁵ Anton Mussert, “Opvoeding - Grondslagen voor het onderwijs in den komenden staat,” *Volk en Vaderland*, January 13, 1939.

*Grondslagen voor het lager- en middelbaar onderwijs in den nationaal-socialistischen staat.*⁶⁶ It was this system that would be the preferred official policy of the NSB during the occupation.⁶⁷

In the forward to the pamphlet, Mussert explains that many falsehoods have been spread about National Socialism in the Netherlands. Among these were the claims that the NSB stood for the “degradation of education, [the] elimination of parents and churches from education, [and] state absolutism.”⁶⁸ With his pamphlet, Mussert hoped to “arm [his readers] against the threat” these falsehoods posed to the party and the Dutch state and to inform them of the *real* goals of the NSB in the realm of education.⁶⁹ The problems Mussert saw in the Dutch educational establishment were multiple. There was too much fragmentation in the education sector, classes were too large, and teachers, who were paid via perverse, anti-social compensation systems, were reduced to little more than serfs under the not-always-helpful patronage of school administrators and religious clerics. Dutch education was too “anti-national” and even “a-national”; it was not focused strongly enough on the character building or physical education of the youth so necessary for creating future citizens. And to make matters worse, compulsory education ended too early, with students able to leave school as early as fourteen years old.⁷⁰ And all of this was the case, despite the immense sums the Dutch

⁶⁶ *Fundamentals for primary and secondary education in the national socialist state*. It should be noted that some scholars believe that the system (and/or pamphlet) was actually created/written for Mussert by H. W. van der Vaart Smit, a prominent Protestant theologian and, in 1938, still a covert supporter of the NSB. Van der Vaart Smit’s name does not appear in the pamphlet at all. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear that van der Vaart Smit came up with the system on his own, even if he was the original author. The 19th century Dutch politician Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer had first suggested a system of state run confessional primary schools based on the Prussian model. Regardless of whether Mussert or van der Vaart Smit wrote the pamphlet, Mussert took the initial credit. J Ridderbos, “Vaart Smit, Henk Willem van der” in D Nauta, *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme* (Kampen: Kok, 1983), Deel V, 317-320; Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 16; Kossmann, *The Low Countries*, 291; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 2; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 186–87.

⁶⁷ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 186–87.

⁶⁸ Mussert, *Grondslagen*, 1.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 3.

government—both the central government and the provincial and local governments—disbursed for education, which amounted to about one hundred, thirty million guilders per year.⁷¹ What was necessary was “a new powerful current, animated by faith in God, love for volk and Fatherland, respect for labor and a great sense of social justice,” which the NSB, in consultation with parents and clerics, would institute after their eventual assumption of power.⁷²

The soul of Dutch education, Mussert explained, must be “national in character.”⁷³ By this, he meant that the greatness of Dutch culture would be emphasized, without whitewashing the evils the Dutch had committed. This was no blind nationalism, rather, education in a national sense would promote the greatness of the small volk by the sea, its “great past and great future,” without ignoring the crimes committed in its name.⁷⁴ As regarded other cultures, students were to be taught that those cultures too had a right to exist and that the future the national socialist state would work toward is one in which all cultures of Europe would collaborate to defend their unique and collective interests.⁷⁵ Further, Mussert imagined that his national socialist state would stay out of religious instruction completely; that was to remain the realm of parents and church clerics, not the state. However, the state would do what it could to help the Churches in their missions. The starting principle, Mussert explained, was that “Catholic parents should have the complete freedom to educate their children in schools with a Catholic atmosphere and

⁷¹ Ibid. The Dutch governmental *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* puts total government outlays for education in 1939 at €119 million, or about 3.5% of total government spending. This was a significant increase over previous decades, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of total government spending, with the largest spike coming in the 1920s, no doubt the result of the full public financing of confessional education. Since 1990, the average outlay has been about 5.5% of total government expenditures. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, “Government: Expenditure on Education and Student Grants, Loans since 1900,” Statistics Netherlands, November 16, 2016, <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLLEN&PA=80509eng&D1=0-2,5,8,11-12,15,18&D2=0,10,20,30,39,50,60,70,80,90,95,100,105,110,113-115&HD=170401-1819&LA=EN&HDR=T&STB=G1>.

⁷² Mussert, *Grondslagen*, 4.

⁷³ *In nationalen zin*. Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 5.

Catholic character, wherein religious instruction is given by people designated by the Catholic church.”⁷⁶ The same was to hold for Protestant parents and students. For those parents who did not wish to send their children to religious schools, a new *Volksschool* was imagined that would not give religious instruction at all, although the Christian character of the Dutch people would still be emphasized.⁷⁷ In all cases, Mussert maintained that greater emphasis should be given to character building and physical education. While the focus on those subjects was to be increased during the regular week, Saturday was set aside entirely for character formation and physical education, to be promoted by an as yet non-existent organization created specifically for that purpose.⁷⁸

Under Mussert’s plan, education and caring for children up to six years of age was the responsibility of the parents, although the national socialist state would provide optional kindergartens for children ages three to six so that their mothers could work. From age seven, children would enter a five-year primary school, which they would complete in their eleventh year. From this point, the system split students based on their abilities, save for the disabled, who will have been provided for separately.⁷⁹ Most students would attend a three-year finishing school⁸⁰ where the subjects of reading and writing, mathematics, history of the Fatherland, geography and the basic sciences would be taught. But the emphasis would be placed upon physical education and character building.⁸¹ As Mussert explained, students at this age (generally their twelfth through fourteenth years) need lots of physical movement, so subjects where students sit for long periods should be less emphasized. In their stead should be subjects

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid. The author does not go into any details regarding the nature of this organization, aside from its independence (whether from the party or the state is not specified).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 6–7.

⁸⁰ *Kopschool*, literally a *head school*. Mussert also uses the term *Volkskopschool* (“people’s head school”) once.

⁸¹ Mussert, *Grondslagen*, 7.

like hand-working for boys and home-crafts for girls. These reforms were essential, Mussert argues, because those years “are the three most fruitful years for education.”⁸² After graduating from the finishing school, these students would enter an apprenticeship for the next four years before serving labor service and military service in their nineteenth and twentieth years respectively, only reaching adulthood and full inclusion into the national socialist state during their twenty-first year.⁸³ The remaining ten to twenty per cent of the student population would not attend the finishing school, but, rather, were destined for secondary education. The larger portion would attend a series of three-year schools from their twelfth through eighteenth years, before performing their labor and military service. The final group, those bound for higher education, would attend a two year “expanded primary education” school before moving on to a college preparatory secondary school, which itself came in three variations—the gymnasium, the lyceum, and the *hogere burger school*,⁸⁴ depending on whether the student was likely to follow a path in the natural sciences or the arts.⁸⁵ In the pamphlet, Mussert leaves all of these reforms open to possible changes in the future, noting that only three elements are absolutely critical. First, allowing children to work before their fifteenth birthday is tantamount to child exploitation and should be banned, which meant that, second, education should be compulsory through the end of a child’s fourteenth year. Finally, the nineteenth and twentieth years should be reserved for civilian and military service, only after successful completion of which could a young person fully enter Dutch society.⁸⁶

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ It is notable that 21 is the year of majority in Mussert’s plan. At this time, 24 was the year of majority in the Netherlands, so the NSB’s plan represented a significant shift downward.

⁸⁴ Higher Civic School.

⁸⁵ Mussert, *Grondslagen*, 8–9.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 6.

The administrative organization of the educational system was to be carried out along corporatist lines, and it was here that the NSB's educational plans most starkly contrasted with those of the later German occupiers. Primary education would be split into three corporations—one for Catholic education, one for Protestant education, and one for public, secular education—the members of which would be made up of parents, teachers, and representatives of the state. The specific inclusion of clerical input into the two religious corporations was promised, but the actual mechanism was not addressed, only stating that their input speaks for itself. Making allowances for the pillars of Dutch society by segregating children into schools reserved for each pillar was both the most significant difference between the NSB's proposed educational system and the one element that was certain to make its adoption a non-starter during the occupation. It is difficult to say whether Mussert's plan was based on a sincere desire to accommodate the peculiar differences within Dutch society or a more tactical proposal designed to make his system more palatable to the average Dutch parent. Either way, as a sort of middle ground between a completely unified, national educational establishment as favored by the German occupiers and their more *völkisch* Dutch collaborators and the more stratified educational system already in place favored by the majority of Netherlanders, the likelihood of the Three Pillars system actually being adopted were very slim indeed.

The heads of each corporation, known as Directors-General, were to be nominated by the corporations themselves, but appointed and dismissed by the state. The schools would be larger, incorporating kindergartens, primary schools, finishing schools and expanded primary education schools in a single complex, rather than smaller individual institutions, so as to be able to assign teachers according to their abilities, rather than to have only a handful of teachers who

functioned more as generalists than specialists.⁸⁷ These reforms, Mussert insisted, would produce the necessary results of ending the fragmentation of education, removing teachers from positions of serfdom to their administrators, reducing costs, reducing teacher unemployment, and increasing results, all while guaranteeing the influence of the Churches in their respective spheres and ensuring the sound education of the youth along lines acceptable to the national socialist state.⁸⁸ After spending several pages explaining how he would pay teachers based on their familial status—married teachers earned more than single teachers, teachers with families earned more than teachers without, etc.—Mussert concludes his pamphlet by arguing that the outlines he has drawn for educational reform would restore justice to the Dutch volk, including all its constituent parts, parents and children, church and state.⁸⁹

He spends little time discussing secondary education, and almost no time discussing higher education. The reason for this, he states, is that the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth years of life are the most important of a child's development, and it is during those years that all children receive education, so it is there that he focuses his attention in his short brochure. This explains the amount of space dedicated to describing his proposed finishing school, designed explicitly for students of those crucial ages, which Mussert argues would be attended by between eighty and ninety per cent of that age cohort. To the extent he does discuss secondary education, he notes only that the broad outlines he has painted regarding primary education—aspects like the teacher payment schedule—would be duplicated for secondary education.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ This was especially problematic in rural areas where population densities were so low as to make such centralized schools prohibitively far from students.

⁸⁸ Mussert, *Grondslagen*, 9–13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13–16.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7, 14.

Mussert's pamphlet would remain the only significant contribution to the question of education reform on behalf of the NSB before the German invasion. But once Gerrit van Poelje, the Secretary-General of the Education department at the time of the invasion, was arrested, Mussert saw his chance for action. He assembled around him the brightest educational minds the NSB had to offer to determine their strategy. Most immediate was the need to organize NSB oriented teachers into a coherent bloc in order to flex their muscle. The same month, the NSB founded the *Opvoedersgilde*,⁹¹ and placed the Belgian-born jurist Robert van Genechten as head.⁹² Mussert appears to have believed that if he could nominate the head of such an association to succeed van Poelje, he was more likely to encounter success with the German occupiers—a belief what turned out to be wholly incorrect. Van Genechten had no experience in educational matters but was a competent administrator who took his position seriously. The growth of the guild reflected this seriousness, growing to about one thousand members by the end of 1940 and doubling each of the next two years, reaching a height of four thousand four hundred members by the Spring of 1943. By and large, members were made up of two groups, committed national socialists and hangers-on hoping for a teaching position or promotion.⁹³ Membership in the guild was not an especially poor path for a young teacher hoping to find a job either. Vacancies were regularly published in the organization's publication, and as the influence of the guild specifically and the NSB more generally grew, primarily through placing their members in important administrative positions, such as mayors and education inspectors, their ability to further influence the hiring and firing of teachers grew commensurately. But as

⁹¹ Educators' Guild.

⁹² Despite its name as a guild, it was not a guild in the traditional sense, but rather an association of mostly like-minded educators who subscribed to the basic tenets of national-socialism. Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 40.

⁹³ This was the position taken by a post-war inquiry, which noted that the impulse to join for opportunistic reasons was strongest among younger, unemployed teachers hoping to find work. Ibid., 40–41.

with so many other aspects of occupation policy, the NSB's aspirations were always much larger than their ability or popularity would allow.

In early 1943, van Genechten, who had always been an ardent NSBer and proponent of the *Diets* ideology, came into conflict with his German overlords who were increasingly beholden to the ideals of the SS. He was fired from his day job as Procurer-General in The Hague in February and promoted elsewhere. After attempting suicide in May, van Genechten spent the rest of the war in isolation, ostensibly working as a professor at Leiden University, a job that gave him precious little to do, since the university had been closed by the occupiers in 1940 and would not reopen until after the war ended.⁹⁴ Although the newly installed head of the guild, J. Jeswiet, attempted to infuse new life into the movement, it fizzled anyway. Coercion was attempted next, with some NSB mayors making attendance at *Opvoedersgilde* events mandatory for teachers in their towns, while other mayors allowed for the introduction of *Opvoedersgilde* propaganda placards in the schools. None of the efforts were successful. The following year saw a reboot of the guild, with a complete reorganization initiated. It too did not have the desired effect.⁹⁵ The fact of the matter was that, by mid-1943, the tide had turned in the war effort, and the once grudging acceptance of German authority turned to a willful resistance on the part of much of the Dutch populace. The education sector was not immune to these forces. The most hardened core of NSB oriented educators remained true to the end, however, with some following Mussert and other high ranking NSB functionaries over the German border just ahead of Allied troops.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 51–54.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 55.

The guild was never an especially strong force among the more than thirty thousand teachers working in primary education, let alone the entire educational establishment. It did attempt to influence events, however. It held annual meetings highlighting the work of the guild, and it recruited for teacher retraining seminars held in Germany at Oldenburg, the completion of which would allow those teachers a position at a school in Germany, which given the high unemployment rates for teachers was not an insignificant incentive. It also was mostly successful at infiltrating the Avlon, the German-created, state-sponsored teachers' union, although the value of that infiltration is questionable beyond the monetary gains it afforded the guild.⁹⁷ Its most influential work, however, was the publication of a weekly journal *Opvoeding in volkschen geest*.⁹⁸ It was in this journal that the educational ideology of the members was put on full display.

Given the frequency of editions that were published during the war and the numerous authors that wrote articles for the journal, it is difficult to assign an overall tenor to the writings. Most authors believed that the fundamental building blocks of human society were a set of communities, and it was only through these that the individual could achieve his or her maximum potential. The smallest and most important community was the family, but a close second in importance was the *volksgemeenschap*,⁹⁹ although who, exactly, constituted the *volksgemeenschap* varied depending on which author was writing. Most authors in the journal argued that only the citizens of the Netherlands themselves were members of a specifically Dutch *volksgemeenschap*, while others pushed for a *Diets* understanding of the idea, while still others spoke of a *Germaansche* or *Groot-Germaansche*¹⁰⁰ ethnic community that spanned the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 44–50.

⁹⁸ Education in the *völkisch* spirit.

⁹⁹ Ethnic community, a direct translation of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.

¹⁰⁰ *Germanic* or *Greater Germanic*.

Germanic nations of Europe. Sometimes there was a mixture of ideas, such as when one author, who stressed the importance of physical, spiritual, and political education for the formation of the youth who would one day be the “carriers of the blossoming *Diets* culture [that is] an essential part of the Greater Germanic and European development.”¹⁰¹ But whichever understanding of the *volksgemeenschap* an individual author supported, all agreed that the education of the youth must be based squarely on the firm foundation that was the ethnic community. Further, education of the youth was the primary function of the ethnic community, for it was only through the youth that the ethnic community could perpetuate itself. For this reason, “all education must then also be in the first place *social development*.”¹⁰²

As might be expected, the writings regarding the *volksgemeenschap* took on a *völkisch* flair. The social formation of the student into a fully-fledged member of the ethnic community was possible through emphasis on particular subjects in the educational realm. Consistent with the educational emphases of other fascist movements elsewhere, the writings of *Opvoedersgilde* members stress the importance of physical education for the youth. Physical education created healthy bodies and sound minds. Healthy individuals, together, constituted the living, organic whole that was the ethnic community, a type of larger social organism.¹⁰³ Part and parcel of this idea of an organic whole was the need to protect the soil from which the people had sprung, for it was only in nature that healthy bodies and sound minds could be formed. A healthy body would exist in harmony—harmony between body and spirit and harmony between man and nature. Some of the more explicitly *völkisch* leaning writers introduced directly the German Nazi

¹⁰¹ G.E.M. Janssen, “De politiek in die opvoeding,” quoted in Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 61–62.

¹⁰² *Alle onderwijs moest dan ook in de eerste plaats opvoeding zijn*. Emphasis in original. Ibid., 60 The Dutch term *opvoeding*, while usually translated as education, carries a strong connotation of character formation. The difference between the Dutch *onderwijs* (“education”) and *opvoeding* is similar to the difference between the German *Erziehung* and *Bildung*.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 63–65.

concept of *Blut und Boden* into the pages of the magazine, arguing that humanity's connection to nature had two aspects. Not only did the people spring from and most completely fulfill themselves in nature, but that the ethnic community was a natural unit based on the racist-scientific understanding of the period.¹⁰⁴

Historical education, too, was supposed to help the student feel part of the larger organic whole that was the ethnic community. Rather than focusing on facts or names and dates—that was too intellectual—historical instruction should teach students love of the Fatherland, respect and honor for one's ancestors, and love for the *volk*, which is really just “a big family, without partitions of confession and class.” Or, when more honestly put, the NSB's vision of history was one in which “we pick out the facts that are best suited to serve in the development of a national and social youth with a firm character.”¹⁰⁵ Much like historical education, political instruction was necessary to “cultivate a specific mentality” not of critical thinkers, but of a strong youth, in both the physical and spiritual sense, for politics “forms the basis and the synthesis, of the entire public life, which our boys will also one day have to face.”¹⁰⁶

Perhaps most exciting to the journal's authors was the subject of *heemkunde*.¹⁰⁷ The idea of *heemkunde* was not new in the Netherlands, it had been a particular wish of educational reformers prior to the outbreak of the war as well, dating back to the late-nineteenth century as a school subject (*Heimatkunde*) in Germany, and to the political, *völkisch* thought of Riehl at mid-century.¹⁰⁸ In the Netherlands, the subject was valued for its integrative nature, and like in Germany, was not solely supported by *völkisch* or racist elements.¹⁰⁹ A field trip to a local

¹⁰⁴ G. Schuitemaker, ‘Volksche Opvoeding II’, quoted in *ibid.*, 60–61.

¹⁰⁵ J. Buitenwerf, ‘Het geschiedenisonderwijs op de lagere school’, quoted in *ibid.*, 66–68.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 61; G.E.M. Janssen, ‘De politiek in die opvoeding,’ quoted in *ibid.*, 61–62.

¹⁰⁷ Local Studies, a direct translation of the German *Heimatkunde*.

¹⁰⁸ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 155.

¹⁰⁹ Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 102–8.

agricultural site, for example, would offer teachers the opportunity to instruct students on the local flora and fauna, farming, local history, basic principles of economics, and geography, all while taking part in physical activity. In the eyes of many pre-occupation reformers, such an integrative school subject was superior in form, if not content, to the more traditional lesson hours in individual subjects while sitting behind a desk in the classroom. The authors of *Opvoeding in volkschen geest* saw in *heemkunde* the same methodological advantages, but added to them an ideological element that was, for all intents and purposes, lifted from German *völkisch* thinkers and their fore-bearers dating back to Wilhelm Riehl. *Heemkunde* was able to fuse various subjects into an organic whole, much as the individual was part of the organic ethnic community. In this way, all of the elements of the NSB's educational ideology, such as it was, could be inculcated among the students all at once, in a more natural setting.¹¹⁰

Taken together, these major strains of education would produce *total education*. This total education was meant to foster a greater appreciation for the *volksgemeenschap* in all of its aspects, with all elements of the teaching program working together to produce a sum greater than the combination of its parts.

Everything had to do with everything else ... Harmony of body and soul, of blood and soil, of individuals and the volk, of leader and follower, of ancestry and progeny, of intellect and emotion, of nature and culture. Everything that was different threatened to disturb the beautiful, pure harmony; thus, threatening the *volksgemeenschap* itself.¹¹¹

The articles found within the pages of *Opvoeding in volkschen geest*, as a whole, betray a lack of significant theoretical or practical educational expertise on the part of the authors. Those ideas that could be found in the journal were almost wholly lifted from elsewhere. Policies tended to be either generally hoped for educational reforms with a particularly NSB bent, such as

¹¹⁰ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 69–72.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 68.

the introduction of the subject *heemkunde*, or they tended to be taken from the writings of more famous German educational theorists—Hans Schemm and Ernst Krieck were both especially popular.¹¹² Originality was not the strong suit of the guild. As Henk van Setten notes in his study of the guild, the members of the movement, even the leading members, were often scholars and educators of the second or third tier.¹¹³ The heavyweights of the Dutch academy were, by and large, absent from the pages of the journal and the membership rolls of the guild.

The NSB and the writers of *Opvoeding in volkschen geest* owed a significant amount of their educational theory to German Nazis, which is not entirely surprising given the history of the organization. The focus on physical education, the “ethnic community,” historical instruction, the nature of the community as a sort of “social organism,” the individual’s connection to the environment, national unity, and even the subject of *heemkunde* were all elements of educational reform stressed by the Hitler regime across the eastern border. Indeed, many of these elements could rightly be understood as explicitly *German*-style reforms with only a local flavor added to them. At the same time, much of the NSB’s educational ideology was based upon Dutch history and pedagogical theory, albeit with different emphases compared to their non-Nazi Dutch colleagues.¹¹⁴ The sole exception here is the Mussert Movement’s focus on the Three Pillars system of allowing for separate education for the pillars of Dutch society. Unlike the rest of its educational program, which was either an absurd reworking of Dutch educational theory or a foreign import, the Three Pillars system showed that Mussert and the NSB were well enough in

¹¹² Schemm was the founder of the National Socialist Teachers Union in Germany (NSLB) and its head until his death in 1935 resulting from an airplane crash, while Krieck was a leading Nazi historian, educator, publisher, and SD agent.

¹¹³ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 79–80.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

tune with the majority of the Dutch populace to know that re-litigating the School Struggle of the nineteenth century was political suicide.

The *Opvoedersgilde* and the NSB more generally were mostly unsuccessful in pushing through their agenda on the national stage. As will be discussed in later chapters, many of the reforms championed by the guild and outlined above would be implemented during the occupation, but not because of the efforts of the NSB or its educators' guild, rather because those particular reforms found a broader consensus within the *Reichskommissariat*, especially in the persons of Heinrich Schwarz and Jan van Dam. The real weakness of the NSB and the guild is shown when one sees the many "reforms" that Mussert and the NSB opposed, but that were implemented anyway.¹¹⁵ While the party and the *Opvoedersgilde* never managed significantly to influence education policy on the national level, they did have some success at installing their members into important positions within the education department.

The first major success the NSB encountered was when, on November 15, 1940, Seyss-Inquart appointed the NSB secondary school teacher Piet van Rossem as the *Gemachtigde van den Rijkscommissaris voor het Toezicht op de Orde en Rust in de Scholen*.¹¹⁶ Van Rossem was tasked with maintaining peace and order in the schools, which was a euphemism for removing any anti-German or anti-NSB elements in primary and secondary education. For this purpose, he was allowed two colleagues, J. J. Valkenburg and P. Dijkema, both of whom were also NSBers. Although he was working in the education field, administratively, he was placed directly under Commissioner-General Wimmer, making him not responsible to the Secretary-General of the

¹¹⁵ These will be discussed more fully in the following chapters. In short, the Mussert Movement opposed anything that could be seen as too German or too anti-Dutch. They opposed the SS schools, the introduction of German language in primary education, attempts to enroll NSB children in the German schools in the Netherlands, the removal of clerical influence from education, etc.

¹¹⁶ Authorized Representative of the Reichskommissar for the Supervision of Order and Peace in the Schools. NIOD 114a/5; NA 2.14.37/414.

Education Department, at least in theory. The extraordinary inspectors were extremely diligent in their work, so much so that they quickly engendered much anger and resentment not just among the teaching corps, but even within the Reichskommissariat itself.¹¹⁷ Van Dam, who was appointed Secretary-General *after* van Rossem's installation quickly decided that he needed to first contain under his own authority, and then finally to remove van Rossem and replace him with a less objectionable figure, a coup he was able to accomplish in mid-1941 when van Rossem was sacked from his position as extraordinary school inspector and replaced with van Dam's old friend and colleague, Dr. D. G. Noordijk.¹¹⁸

Shortly after van Rossem was appointed, G. F. Vlekke was appointed on December 1, 1940 to lead the First Main School Inspectorate, which encompassed the provinces of Gelderland, North Brabant, and Limburg in the east and southeast of the country. This position, which was within the already existing School Inspectorate did allow for a certain influence on the part of NSB circles on teachers in those provinces, and, in fact, Vlekke suggested that his appointment was a sign of the times to come during his first meeting with the local school inspectors.¹¹⁹ But Vlekke's appointment would actually mark a stall in the aspirations of the NSB, for the next major functionary the party managed to install would not come until the appointment of Noordijk in May 1941. Noordijk was a figure who was both professionally and personally close with van Dam and as such, his appointment did not really represent an upswing in the fortunes of the NSB itself.

The appointment of W. Terpstra, Mussert's brother-in-law and a prominent figure of the *Opvoedersgilde* to lead the Sub-Department of Primary Education in summer 1942 did, however,

¹¹⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/678.

¹¹⁸ NA 2.14.37/414; 2.14.37/12; 2.14.37/13

¹¹⁹ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 264–65.

represent an upsurge in the NSB's influence. Especially in the latter half of 1942, Noordijk and Terpstra managed to install eleven NSB school inspectors, out of a total of only forty-nine across the country. But that would mark the high-water point of the influence of the NSB within the education realm. Additional attempts to appoint NSB functionaries to prominent positions such as school inspectors would be blocked by van Dam, with the support of Schwarz.¹²⁰

Despite the relative success the NSB enjoyed in the second half of 1942, by and large, when the interests of the NSB or its members came into conflict with the interests of the German occupiers or their chosen proxy in the education realm, Jan van Dam, the NSB ended up on the losing side. Sometimes this was because of power-political reasons, as was the case with van Rossem. Van Dam refused to allow an extraordinary school inspector to remain outside of his control and so worked to both bring van Rossem within his control and eventually to have him sacked.¹²¹ But in other cases, the difficulty for the NSB and its members lay in the fact that there were sometime substantive policy differences between the NSB proper and the goals of the occupation regime or its local proxies. This was the case in the education field as well. In contrast to the highly nationalistic education policy of the NSB, which made room for the peculiarities of Dutch society, van Dam's reform proposals, which he released before his appointment, were much closer in spirit to the efforts of the Nazi occupiers directly, even though van Dam would be loath to admit as much.¹²² Where the NSB hoped to strengthen the Dutch nature of the Netherlands, despite his denials, many of the "reforms" van Dam would propose,

¹²⁰ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 266; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 219–22.

¹²¹ BAL R83-Niederlande/25; NA 214.37/414.

¹²² During his trial after the war, van Dam claimed he had been an instrument of the German regime, merely carrying out the orders given to him from on high. The court at the time was unaware of his two pieces on educational reform (discussed below), which scholars only discovered later. Those pieces clearly show he was no hapless pawn, but an initial creator of many of the reform proposals.

when taken together, appear much more like a policy of educational Germanicization.¹²³ In one of the first major defeats of the NSB in the education field, the German occupiers chose the forty-four year old University of Amsterdam Professor of Ancient Germanic Languages and Literatures Jan van Dam over the NSB's preferred candidate and *Opvoedersgilde* leader Robert van Genechten to lead the newly reformed education department. Part of the reason van Dam was chosen was explicitly because he was pro-German, but anti-NSB.¹²⁴

Jan van Dam and the Reform of the Dutch Education System

Jan van Dam was born to a middle-class family in Amsterdam in 1896 and after attending primary and secondary school, where he was by all accounts an exceptional student, van Dam moved on to the University of Amsterdam in 1914.¹²⁵ Originally intending to study natural philosophy, at the urging of his German professor, Dr. Jan Hendrik Scholte, van Dam chose instead to study German and Dutch language and literature. After successful completion of his studies, he stood for and passed the necessary state exams to become a secondary school teacher and spent the 1919-1920 school year as a German teacher in the towns of Haarlem and Amsterdam. After only a year, again at the urging of Scholte, van Dam moved to Bonn, Germany and began his graduate studies there at the *Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität*. After two years in Germany, van Dam returned to Amsterdam, continued his graduate studies at the university there, and earned his doctorate a year later in 1923. His dissertation, which focused on medieval German literature in the Rhineland was well received and, for his trouble, van Dam was appointed as lecturer at the University of Amsterdam.¹²⁶ By the end of the decade,

¹²³ Loe de Jong had gone so far as to declare some of Van Dam's efforts to be *Germanization*, but this is a step too far. The efforts of van Dam can more accurately be described, not as the process of making the Dutch *German*, but rather as making the Dutch *Germanic*. See De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/251.

¹²⁴ NIOD 020/2062.

¹²⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/336; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 226.

¹²⁶ Knegtmans, "Jan van Dam und die Reform," 1092.

he would be promoted to the position of Professor for Old German Languages and Literatures and cemented his reputation as one of the most well-respected academics in his field.¹²⁷

In addition to his academic work at the university, van Dam kept a dizzying pace of various professional side projects. Because only three Dutch universities of the day even had modern German language professors, the oversight and examination of teachers-in-training in the German language fell to those few professors. Additionally, van Dam was a board member of several Amsterdam secondary schools and a member of the Commission for the Oversight of Secondary Schools, through which he had some influence on the curriculum at those schools. He also spent his Saturday afternoons instructing teachers-in-training.¹²⁸ Finally, van Dam spent the 1930s assembling around himself a group of like-minded Dutch Germanist thinkers. In part, he managed this by publishing two periodicals aimed at promoting German language, literature, and culture. The first, *Het Duitse Boek: tijdschrift voor de vrienden van het Duitse boek in Nederland*,¹²⁹ found little success from its inception in 1930 and folded after only a few years.¹³⁰ Despite the failure, however, van Dam was able to find a new publisher for the magazine, newly titled *De Weegschaal: maandblad voor de vrienden van het Duitse boek*¹³¹ in 1934 and would continue his work promoting German language, literature, and culture for the remainder of the decade and beyond.¹³²

Up to this point, van Dam had shown little interest in politics and had never joined a political party.¹³³ Certainly, he was already well known as a Germanophile and he made little

¹²⁷ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 226–30; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/336.

¹²⁸ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 230–36.

¹²⁹ The German Book: Magazine for the Friends of the German Book in the Netherlands.

¹³⁰ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 236–37.

¹³¹ The Scale: Monthly for the Friends of the German Book.

¹³² Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 237–38.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 239. Despite this, Loe de Jong maintains that van Dam voted for liberal parties (whether the *Liberale Partij* or the *Vrijzinnig Democratische Bond*) prior to the war and was a member of the Walloon Church, the French language counterpart of the Dutch Reformed Church! Knegtmans maintains that van Dam was not religious. See De

secret of his fondness for the German people and their culture, but politically he remained aloof. Scholars debate when exactly van Dam's politics began to lean more toward the still nascent, *völkisch*, nationalist wing of Dutch politics, but by the late 1930s, he was firmly entrenched in those circles, and when he was recommended to Seyss-Inquart by Snijder for the position of Secretary-General, Snijder's recommendation specifically stated his politics were based in National Socialism, but that he was not connected to the NSB.¹³⁴ It is possible that his transformation dates as far back as his time in Bonn, when he was present for some of the worst years of Weimar's democratic instability.¹³⁵ More likely, his transformation was a result of the circles in which he moved in the 1930s. His periodical *Het Duitse Boek* was not overtly political and contained essays by authors of various political affiliations on various topics, including topics that would have been impossible in Germany proper, such as extolling the virtues of the German expatriate writer and noted anti-Nazi activist Thomas Mann. Once that periodical was reformed as *De Weegschaal*, however, the number of openly national socialist authors increased while essays by authors who had been condemned by the Nazis became scarcer and scarcer, until they stopped appearing entirely. It was around this time in the mid-1930s that van Dam became the chairman of the Amsterdam branch of the *Nederlands-Duitse Vereeniging*,¹³⁶ an historically and still ostensibly politically neutral organization that had abandoned almost all pretenses of neutrality in favor of a strongly pro-Nazi attitude after Hitler's "seizure of power." Also, in the late 1930s van Dam joined the Amsterdam branch of the

Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/336-337; On van Dam's religion, see Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 226.

¹³⁴ NIOD 020/2062. *Er steht auf nationalsozialistischen Boden (ist nicht bei der N.S.B. angeschlossen)*.

¹³⁵ See De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, Deel V, 335-336.

¹³⁶ Netherlands-German Association.

*Nederlands-Duitse Werkgemeenschap*¹³⁷ as well as the Amsterdam *Waagkring*,¹³⁸ both of which functioned as *salons* for the intellectual creme of the Dutch, *völkisch*, but not necessarily NSB-oriented crop.¹³⁹

Van Dam's meteoric rise was nearly capped off in January 1940 when he was invited to work as a guest professor for the 1940-1941 school year at Harvard University in the United States.¹⁴⁰ Van Dam appears to have desperately wanted to go to Massachusetts, no doubt because of the prestige such an appointment would have afforded him, but fate had other plans for the still young scholar. Having seen the writing on the wall, the Dutch government ordered a general military mobilization at the end of August 1939 and van Dam, who was a reserve captain in the artillery, was forced to limit his professional activities in favor of military training. With their star professor's academic activities already curtailed because of his military responsibilities and faced with losing him entirely for a whole year, his superiors at the University of Amsterdam initially refused his request for leave to work in the United States in April 1940. Although several important and powerful individuals intervened on his behalf, including the Minister of Education and the Minister of Defense, the curators of the university were only willing to allow van Dam a three-month sojourn to America, and then, only beginning in March 1941. Administrators at Harvard were unenthusiastic about the timing, which would place van Dam's arrival directly in the middle of the spring semester, but the point became moot, as so many other matters did, only weeks later when German tanks crossed the border.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Netherlands-German Working Society.

¹³⁸ Literally, weight circuit—a collection of groups named after the Dutch national-socialist, *völkisch* magazine *De Waag* ("The Weight"), published by the ardent *völkisch* thinker, Dr. Tobie Goedewaagen.

¹³⁹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, Deel V, 337; Berkel, *Tobie Goedewaagen (1895-1980)*, 112–13.

¹⁴⁰ Given the public disgrace he found himself in after the war as a result of his collaboration with the Nazis, this would turn out to be the academic high point of van Dam's career.

¹⁴¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/337-338; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 223–24.

By the time of the invasion, then, van Dam was a nationally known and respected professor of Germanic languages and literatures with a growing international reputation. He was intimately connected with the secondary school establishment in the Netherlands through his work in Amsterdam as well as his work in teacher training and he also had important connections in the academic world both in the Netherlands and in Germany. He was a well-known Germanophile, but, importantly, was not a member of the NSB, the members of which he mostly considered brutes and ruffians, and therefore carried little of the stench generally associated with the Mussert movement.¹⁴² His affinity for the cultural aspects of National Socialism—especially the Nazis’ emphasis on their Germanic past, which was van Dam’s chosen academic specialty¹⁴³—had been on public display for several years through his publications, but at the same time, any affinities he did have for National Socialism as a governing philosophy resulted from its apparent successes in Germany and Austria in the 1930s, not in any particularly strongly held political beliefs. As he stated after the war, one

got the impression that the [Hitler] regime had done much good and that the communists would be the bosses had Hitler not won. Immensely important was the abolition of unemployment. You could also see this in Austria. My wife and I were there the summer of ‘37—everywhere misery, and in the summer of ‘38, after the *Anschluss*, everyone had work again.¹⁴⁴

Despite his initial mostly only pragmatic embrace of National Socialism as a governing system, van Dam was in complete agreement with other *völkisch*, Nazi-oriented thinkers in seeing a great need for the reform of the Dutch school system along more nationalist lines. In essence, he was ideologically a supporter of Greater Germanic concept, with a much lesser emphasis placed upon the racial elements of that ideology. For van Dam, it was culture alone that was most important.¹⁴⁵ As part of his task to coordinate public life in the Netherlands, Seyss-Inquart asked

¹⁴² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/70.

¹⁴³ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 239–40.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/337.

¹⁴⁵ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 256, 274–77.

University of Amsterdam Professor of Archeology and noted *völkisch* thinker Geerto Snijder to begin that process sometime in late Summer 1940. For reasons that remain unclear, Snijder was not keen to take a leading role in the occupation regime, preferring an equally important, yet far less public role.¹⁴⁶ Instead, Snijder asked his colleague and friend Jan van Dam to formulate his ideas on education reform. Van Dam put his thoughts into writing—in German, no less—on September 2, 1940 and released his *Gedanken und Vorschläge zur Neugestaltung des niederländischen Unterrichtswesens*¹⁴⁷ on seven typed pages. He then released a slightly revised version of the same document entitled *Reform des niederländischen Unterrichts*¹⁴⁸ later that month.¹⁴⁹ The “reforms” that van Dam suggested in these works can be broadly classified into three categories: strengthening the national character of education, eliminating rampant intellectualism, and fostering the unity and national self-consciousness of the Dutch populace.

First and foremost among the changes van Dam suggested implementing was a strengthening of the national character of education.¹⁵⁰ To accomplish this, he proposed a much greater emphasis be placed upon Dutch language instruction. The importance of Dutch language instruction was somewhat of a hobby horse for van Dam and a cause for which he had agitated already in the 1930s, a fact that is unsurprising given his position as a language professor.¹⁵¹ He suggested doubling the hours given for Dutch language instruction; the creation of a Dutch

¹⁴⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338.

¹⁴⁷ *Thoughts and Suggestions for the Restructuring of the Dutch Educational System.*

¹⁴⁸ *Reform of Dutch Education.*

¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, these two documents have apparently gone missing from the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies archive in Amsterdam. Since these documents were last consulted by outside scholars in the 1990s, the archive changed its internal numbering system and these documents apparently went missing during the transition. Fortunately, the basic outlines of the two documents have been partially preserved in the secondary literature. It is these sources upon which I draw when discussing the contents of the reform programs. See De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338; Knegtmans, “Jan van Dam und die Reform,” 1094–97; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245–49; Gerard Alberts and H. J. Zuidervaart, *De KNAW en de Nederlandse Wetenschap Tussen 1930 en 1960* (Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 18–19; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 40–41.

¹⁵⁰ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245.

¹⁵¹ Knegtmans, “Jan van Dam und die Reform,” 1092–94.

language institute that would work on spelling, grammar, and the creation of a Dutch language dictionary; and the introduction of newer teaching methods.¹⁵² In addition to an increased stress on Dutch language instruction, German language instruction was to receive greater emphasis as well, not just through an increase in lesson hours dedicated to German language in the higher grades, but also through the introduction of German language instruction at the lower levels. This greater emphasis on Dutch and German language instruction was to be combined with a greater emphasis on certain aspects of historical instruction, the majority of which was to focus on the Germanic nature of the Netherlands and its connection to other Germanic peoples, especially Germans and Germany proper.¹⁵³ Beyond emphasizing the *völkisch* and Germanic character of the Netherlands and the Dutch people, historical instruction was to be reduced to the major outlines of Dutch history. With an eye toward producing better future citizens, van Dam proposed strengthening physical education and suggested that schooling generally should emphasize the joy of working and the dangers of negativity and non-conformism. As a final measure toward this end, van Dam proposed the introduction of the *Führerprinzip*¹⁵⁴ into the educational establishment.¹⁵⁵

To make room in the curriculum for the new emphases he proposed, van Dam suggested a reduction in scientific instruction. Lesson hours in mathematics, physics, and chemistry were to be reduced, while bookkeeping was to be eliminated altogether. Instruction in the French language, which had up to this point enjoyed the status of being the primary second language taught in Dutch schools, was also to be a further victim of van Dam's "reforms."¹⁵⁶ But the

¹⁵² Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245.

¹⁵³ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 42–43; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245–46.

¹⁵⁴ Leadership Principle.

¹⁵⁵ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 246–47.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

reduction of subjects deemed to be overly intellectual was not limited to the student curriculum. Recognizing that it would do little good to change the curriculum if the teachers giving lessons were not on the same page, van Dam also suggested “reforms” of the teacher training system. Here the emphasis was on turning out teachers of a more “proletarian”—that is less intellectual—character and this was to be accomplished by emphasizing the same subjects in teacher training colleges as in primary and secondary schools. Additionally, van Dam proposed the dismissal of Christian clerical instructors and Jewish instructors. While the latter were not terribly numerous in the Netherlands, Christian clerics held teaching positions in many Dutch schools and their elimination from the teaching corps would, van Dam proffered, free up much needed funds that could be earmarked for increasing the salaries of the newer, proletarian teachers coming on the job market.¹⁵⁷

While these changes would be sure to arouse opposition, it was van Dam’s planned “reforms” of confessional education that showed how truly out of touch he was with the majority of Dutch society. Unlike Mussert and the NSB which supported the Three Pillars system, van Dam argued that all education must be unified under the purview of the state. The separate system of confessional schools, financed by the state, but with little government oversight into the curriculum, was, in van Dam’s eyes, anathema to national unity.¹⁵⁸ Only through a unified elementary education, to be accomplished by the replacement of public and confessional primary schools with a single type of *Volksschule*, could national unity be strengthened and the corrupting influence of the churches diminished. To his credit, van Dam recognized that this final step was too far, too fast, and as such suggested as an initial salvo in that direction, that the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 42–43.

¹⁵⁸ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 42. As de Pater notes, this was a similar approach as that followed by the liberal parties during the School Struggle, which, of course, the liberal parties lost.

state reserve the right to appoint and dismiss teachers at confessional schools as well as the ability to shutter smaller schools incapable of maintaining adequate enrollments. In addition to incorporating confessional schools under the umbrella of state control, van Dam proposed a reorganization of secondary education for males between three main branches: gymnasias; a new, middle school that would incorporate elements from both the gymnasias and *hogere burger school*; and a third professionally oriented school designed for future middle managers and shopkeepers. Women were to be excluded from this third professional school in favor of a school form that van Dam had not yet determined, but one that would be more oriented towards the female psyche. Taken together, the two papers could easily be misinterpreted as job application for the position of a school reformer.¹⁵⁹ Van Dam does not appear to have had his eye on the position of Secretary-General of the education department at this early point. Rather, in his second piece, he described the position he would prefer, one that was situated directly under the *Reichskommissariat* itself, and in which he would work hand in hand with the Secretary-General, but also one which would give him the final say.¹⁶⁰ Regardless of the position he was to receive, however, what is abundantly clear is that, given the history of education in the Netherlands, his proposed “reforms,” which in some ways echoed both the criticisms of and proposals for education made the liberal faction during the School Struggle, were certain to engender opposition among the Dutch populace and educational establishment.¹⁶¹

Van Dam would not have to wait for very long to start down his proposed path. Already in late September 1940 van Dam was appointed by the then acting Secretary-General of the Department of Education, Arts, and Sciences to lead a commission tasked with “cleansing” (i.e.,

¹⁵⁹ Knechtmans, “Jan van Dam und die Reform,” 1096.

¹⁶⁰ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 40–41.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42–43.

censoring) school texts books of anti-German passages or passages that could be understood as potentially detrimental to the occupation authority, such as those praising the House of Orange or those written by Jewish authors.¹⁶² Continuing to display what can only be described as an incredible work ethic, van Dam's textbook commission managed to work through some nine thousand works in only two months, striking anti-German passages from many and outright banning over four hundred from use in school instruction. During the interim period, the occupation authority decided to split the pre-war Dutch Department of Education, Sciences and Arts into two separate departments. As van Poelje had been arrested on September 2 for taking part in celebrations of the Queen's birthday, both new departments were in need of bureaucratic leaders.¹⁶³ The top position in the newly formed education department was initially offered to Geerto Snijder, but Snijder again declined a public role. For its part, the NSB hoped to install Robert van Genechten, the Belgian-born head of the *Opvoedersgild*, in the post, but Seyss-Inquart and Dr. Heinrich Schwarz, head of the *Hauptabteilung Erziehung und Kirchen* in Wimmer's *Generalkommissariat*, both hoped to limit, not expand, the influence of the deeply unpopular movement, and especially not that of the faction led by Mussert.¹⁶⁴ Shortly after Snijder's decline, D. G. Noordijk, a German teacher, NSB and *Opvoedersgilde* member, and old acquaintance of van Dam recommended the latter to Wimmer for the position of Secretary-General. Around the same time, Snijder passed along van Dam's two writings on school reform to Schwarz as well as a written recommendation noting that van Dam was much involved with German-Dutch language and cultural relationships as well as had a great interest in Germanic cultural history.¹⁶⁵ A consensus quickly formed that van Dam was the man for the job.

¹⁶² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, Deel IV, 678-681.

¹⁶³ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 16.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 42; Knechtmans, "Jan van Dam und die Reform," 1096.

¹⁶⁵ NIOD 020/2062.

There were many reasons that Seyss-Inquart's choice of van Dam to lead the new education department was well advised. He was well known in the academic world, with direct experience in secondary schools, higher education, and teacher training. He was one of the best known Germanists in the Netherlands and was supported by various important players on the *völkisch* wing of Dutch politics. Further, his interest and specialization in Old-German language and literature fit in very nicely with the Germanic ideal promoted by the SS. He could be reliably counted on to promote the interests of the German occupiers, but at the same time, he was not tied to the deeply unpopular NSB and, even more importantly, did not subscribe to the educational reforms the Mussert Movement hoped to achieve regarding confessional education. His approach toward "reform," aimed at eliminating confessional schools entirely, was preferred by both Seyss-Inquart and the deeply anti-clerical SS-man Schwarz.¹⁶⁶ Jan van Dam contained within himself all of the qualities the Nazi occupiers could have hoped for in a local proxy, and if there were any reservations on the German part, it was only because van Dam was not radical enough, although Snijder was able to convince Seyss-Inquart that, at least in this case, discretion was the better part of valor.¹⁶⁷ Van Dam's suitability for the role was likely reinforced from the German perspective when, a year after his appointment in September 1941, van Dam joined the Germanic SS as a patronizing member, making it absolutely clear where on the ideological spectrum between the NSB and the SS he stood.¹⁶⁸ For his part, van Dam was initially unsure whether he should take the job. After asking several colleagues and friends for advice, van Dam decided that Germany's influence in the Netherlands would remain after the war ended, whether

¹⁶⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, Deel V, 338; Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 249–50.

¹⁶⁷ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 17.

¹⁶⁸ *Förderndes Mitglied der SS*.

by German victory or negotiated peace.¹⁶⁹ Given this apparent fact, and his own mastery of the German language, knowledge of German culture and society, and his already expressed interests in pacifying the unrest in the schools, van Dam saw himself as a perfect middle-man, able to work with both the Dutch populace and the German occupiers to the mutual benefit of each.¹⁷⁰ With van Dam's willingness assured, and despite Mussert's disapproval, his appointment to the position of Secretary-General of the Department of Education, Sciences, and Cultural Administration was made public on November 25, 1940.¹⁷¹

A week later, on December 1, van Dam delivered the first of several nationally broadcast radio addresses to the Dutch people. The address, which was also transcribed and published by newspapers across the country, was partly a formal defense of the coming "reforms" and partly a directive against agitation.¹⁷² He began by attempting to reassure the populace that although the present era of war and occupation was difficult, all societies face difficulties and that history had shown that all such difficult times eventually pass. But in contrast to previous periods of difficulty, the difficulties of the present moment were not of a material nature, but of a "spiritual nature."¹⁷³ This spiritual deficiency was also manifest in the schools, and its symptoms, "restlessness, confusion, lack of concentration, agitation surrounding rumors, [and] voluntary or involuntary misinterpretation of policies and regulations, [were] the order of the day." While noting that these symptoms must be combated, he assured Dutch parents that education would "accentuate the Dutch element," and that the lines between the Dutch and other peoples,

¹⁶⁹ This was by no means an unpopular view at the time. The German-Jewish born Dutch Professor of Physics at the University of Amsterdam, Ph. Kohnstamm, probably the most famous and well respected academic in the entire country at the time of the German invasion, made a similar point in an essay published just after the German invasion was completed. See Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 29–41.

¹⁷⁰ Kneegmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 250–51.

¹⁷¹ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 211/1940. NIOD 020/2062. On Mussert's disapproval, see Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 17; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338.

¹⁷² "Radiorede prof. dr. J. van Dam."

¹⁷³ *Geestelijke aard*.

especially the German people, were not blurred: “We are all Dutch and want to remain so.”¹⁷⁴

The Germans, van Dam explained, also wished that educational instruction was given in a “Dutch sense,” and he assured his listeners that the occupiers would not prevent the implementation of these “reforms.” Further, he attempted to assuage fears regarding the censorship of school textbooks, about which misunderstandings and rumors were running rampant. Denying that any books had been banned, he instead noted that some books had only been “taken out of circulation” and some of those only because they had not yet been inspected. Only those books that contained passages that were “unfit for the present situation,” by which he meant books that “contained offensive passage against the German people or their leaders” were actually removed, van Dam insisted.

At the same time, van Dam interspersed his speech with dire warnings for teachers and students that they should not do anything to endanger their position, and by extension, the future of the Dutch volk. Teachers were warned not to allow instruction to spread enmity or falsehoods about the German people or its leaders. Students in elementary schools should avoid speaking about politics or the other events that were unfolding around them on the streets and in the public sphere. Rather, these students should spend their time discussing their daily lives (as though the invasion and occupation had had no impact upon them!) or engaging in physical education and sporting activities. Secondary school students should quit dividing themselves into groups by political persuasion and they should recognize that those students who incite other students to enter the conflict in any way do those students and the entire nation a disservice. Rather, secondary students, van Dam explained, should take their colleagues with differing opinions by the hand and be friends. Van Dam left his strongest language for university students. Their

¹⁷⁴ *Wij zijn allen Nederlanders en willen dat blijven.*

protest activities had already led to the closure of some universities, and should the situation not change, he assured them that more closures would follow the winter break when classes resumed.¹⁷⁵ These closures were harmful, he warned, not just to the students themselves, as they would prevent the students from continuing with their education, but also to the nation as a whole, as the closures prevented the students from entering adult society and thereby contributing to the future of the nation. Van Dam allowed that in different times, he would support the students' right to air their grievances through protest, but not now. Rather, he exhorted the nation that "this is a time in which much work must be done. Therefore, discipline is necessary; and the best form of discipline is self-discipline."

The only actual point of policy he introduced to his audience in the entire speech dealt with his hobbyhorse, the importance of Dutch language and literature instruction. He hoped that instruction in such subjects would be "substantially expanded and renewed," eventually to be incorporated into a new subject of *heemkunde*. This new *heemkunde* was to include, in addition to the expanded and renewed Dutch language and literature instruction, lessons in cultural and art history, geography, and ethnic studies. All of this combined would prepare young Dutchmen and women "to spread the knowledge of the treasures of Dutch culture" around the world.¹⁷⁶ Although the concept of an integrative subject like *heemkunde* was already supported by educational reformers before the war as a methodological innovation, its support ended there. Van Dam's overtly nationalistic conception of *heemkunde*, which he intended to use to extol the virtues of the Dutch nation and people, however, was more in line with the ideas that would, later during the war, be promoted in the pages of the *Opvoedersgilde's* journal.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Leiden University had been closed four days prior, on November 27, 1940, as a result of widespread protests against the dismissal of Jewish civil servants. See Chapter Five, "Anti-Jewish Measures."

¹⁷⁶ "Radiorede prof. dr. J. van Dam."

¹⁷⁷ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 68–70.

Taken together, van Dam's writings on school reform and his radio address to the nation show van Dam's overriding concerns regarding the national character of education, the maintenance of order in the schools, and the importance of the relationship between the Netherlands and Germany.¹⁷⁸ He continually framed his "reforms" as necessary for the renewal of the Dutch people and any opposition, whether on the part of parents, teachers, or students, was a danger not only to themselves, but to the very existence of the Dutch nation. The threats were multiple and manifest. Whether by the internal, spiritual degeneration of the nation or through external reprisals by the occupiers, resistance to van Dam's changes to education was tantamount to a strike against the very people those resisters ostensibly aimed to help. Instead, Dutch teachers, parents, and students should move forward with their lives, heads held high, into a new future brought about by the near certain German victory and guided by van Dam's steady hand. Van Dam would spend the next three years attempting to guide the Dutch education system into this new future, but his efforts were ultimately a failure. Some scholars, such as Loe de Jong, have argued that this was a result of van Dam's political ineptness, but this negates the fact that many of the changes that were implemented during the occupation in the education realm came directly out of van Dam's early wartime writings.¹⁷⁹ While van Dam did experience an increasing political opposition to his position within the occupation apparatus as the occupation went on, focusing only on that later period of the occupation ignores the many successful "reforms" he was able to push through in his first years atop the education department. He might not have operated like a seasoned politician, but there is no good reason to dismiss the real, tangible effects of his efforts.

¹⁷⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338-339.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., V/341; Not all scholars have taken this view, however. See e.g. Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 27–28.

At the same time, other scholars, and van Dam himself in his trial, have argued that he had always had the best interests of the Dutch people at heart and that he had only worked to protect the Dutch nation from German aggression.¹⁸⁰ In this view, van Dam gradually lost confidence in the German occupation and slowly settled on passive resistance himself. There is some evidence that this was the case. Van Dam was, for example, instrumental in helping to save a number of Jews from deportation. These individuals were usually highly acclaimed persons, artists, academics, and others working in the cultural sphere, some of whom were, through the intervention of van Dam personally, spared by Seyss-Inquart from deportation “to the east.” Although these Jews were eventually deported first to the transit camp Westerbork and then to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, they were spared from the more usual and lethal deportation destinations of Bergen-Belsen and, worse still, Auschwitz. At least partly because of van Dam’s intervention on their behalf, many survived the war.¹⁸¹ Scholars are uncertain what motivated van Dam to help save these individuals from deportation. Van Dam does not appear to have been a committed anti-Semite, despite his *völkisch* leanings, and it is possible that his desire to help stemmed more from the perceived loss to the Dutch nation that the murder of these esteemed individuals would cause. Whatever the case, this single act, commendable as it was, cannot negate the overwhelming evidence showing that van Dam not only supported the efforts of the German occupiers, but that in many instances, the eventual changes instituted by the occupiers and the designs he spelled out in his *Thoughts and Suggestions* and *Reform* pieces in Fall 1940 were substantially the same.

Regardless of van Dam’s political ability, the “reforms” he instituted were met with stiff resistance by teachers, parents, and students. This resistance to education reform was combined

¹⁸⁰ Knechtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 225.

¹⁸¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/287-290.

with an ever-increasing resistance to the German occupation more generally as the war carried on into its third and fourth years. By mid-1943, at the very latest, the goals of the German occupiers had shifted from a more stable, less repressive occupation aimed at incorporating the Dutch into the wider Germanic world to a much more repressive occupation aimed at resource extraction in support of the ever-worsening war effort. It was also at this time that van Dam appears to have mostly stopped performing everything but cursory duties over the department.¹⁸² As the German occupation got more repressive, Dutch resistance activity increased at an inverse proportion, creating a violent, negative feedback loop that threatened to, and eventually would, spiral completely out of control.

Conclusion

The systems of education that were preferred by the NSB and Jan van Dam had several important similarities. Both held that education should be given in a “national sense,” emphasizing the Dutch character, physical education, history instruction, and the importance of the individual’s relationship with the *volksgemeenschap*. In both reform proposals, intellectualism was to be reduced in favor of an education that focused on the emotion and feelings of unity among the Dutch people. Intellectualism was seen as a barrier to national unity, and as such, the higher sciences and even French language should be replaced in emphasis with subjects more likely to foster love and appreciation of the fatherland, the *volksgemeenschap*, and, at least in van Dam’s case, the larger Germanic race.¹⁸³ For the mass of Dutchmen and women, fostering a greater national unity required a reduction in the educational niveau of the populace. Overt intellectualism included too much individualism, too much critical thinking, and too little

¹⁸² Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 36–37.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 58; Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 246–47.

unquestioning acceptance of proper authority. As one writer in *Opvoeding in volkschen geest* put it:

We see the school much less as a learning institute, where almost exclusively the intellect is developed, but we place, much more than usual the emphasis on emotional life; one always *feels* oneself bound to the volk, [one does] not “think” oneself bound to the volk.¹⁸⁴

The irony, of course, was that van Dam, Mussert, van Genechten, and many of the other leading educational thinkers among the NSB and the *völkisch* wing of Dutch politics were, themselves, intellectuals. Van Dam, who was trained as a specialist on ancient Germanic languages and literatures and who had spent his entire adult life in academia, was the very model of a successful intellectual, while Mussert and van Genechten were both university trained, the former as an engineer, the latter as a lawyer. The leaders of the German occupation regime, at least those who oversaw educational policy, were similarly well educated, with Seyss-Inquart, Wimmer, and Schwarz all possessing doctorate degrees.

But there were also significant differences between the educational reform proposals adopted by van Dam and the NSB. Van Dam was much more in favor of specifically German elements, such as the introduction of German language instruction into primary education and was himself a believer in the *völkisch* ideal of a Germanic community of peoples, whereas Mussert and the majority of the NSB were simply too nationalistic in their outlook to allow for anything that even resembled Germanization or Germanicization.¹⁸⁵ But, by far, the most important difference between Mussert and the NSB’s proposals for education and those of van Dam was the question of unity in education versus allowance for separate confessional education.

¹⁸⁴ A. G. Aalderink, “Enkele grondgedachten over de Volksopvoeding,” quoted in Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 60. Emphasis in original.

¹⁸⁵ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 268; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 168–72. Schwarz was well aware of this tendency on Mussert’s part as well. NIOD 020/2047.

Mussert and the majority of NSB members favored the Three Pillars system of educational organization which allowed for separate, confessional “special schools.” This system was very much in line with the peculiar nature of Dutch education that had formed over the previous century and that became firmly established as a result of the victory of the confessional pillars in the School Struggle. Although the NSB, more generally, was not in favor of the pillarized nature of Dutch society, Mussert and the thinkers in his faction of the NSB were all too aware of the dangers of trying to undo the gains the confessions had gained and so made an exception for their interests in the educational realm. Yes, the ultimate leadership of each educational pillar would be in the hands of the state, but relative independence would be granted under Mussert’s scheme.

Alternatively, van Dam, much like the eventual German occupation regime, saw confessional education as anathema to national unity and thus believed it must be done away with. It is difficult to say from where van Dam got this notion. Given his education and experience, he must have been familiar with the School Struggle of the previous century, and he came of age during the height of the struggle in the second decade of the twentieth century. But he was also raised in a non-religious household, and it is possible that his anti-clerical opinions as regarded confessional education found their genesis there.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, before the Second World War, he had generally voted for one of the liberal parties, and so it is equally possible that his support for unified public education first surfaced during his young adult life.¹⁸⁷ His plan for educational reform, after all, had significant overlap with the liberal agenda of the nineteenth

¹⁸⁶ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 226.

¹⁸⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/336-337. De Jong suggests that van Dam voted either liberal, that is for the Liberal State Party, which was created by the unification of the classical-liberal Liberal Union and the conservative-liberal Union of Free Liberals, or for the progressive-liberal Free-Thinking Democratic Union, which was an offshoot of the Liberal Union and is one predecessor of the conservative-liberal People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, which, as of 2018, is the leading party in the present coalition government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. A vote for either of these parties would have been in opposition to the clerical and socialist parties.

century as it related to confessional education—namely the elimination of separate, confessional schools and the unification of all education under the direct purview of the state. Either way, his background suggests that his opposition to confessional education was not a direct result of his adoption of *völkisch* politics in the 1930s.

The position of the German occupation leadership is more difficult to determine. Seyss-Inquart, more generally, tried to minimize direct confrontation with the Dutch churches, knowing that they would provide stiff resistance and could not as easily be pushed aside as, for example, the political parties.¹⁸⁸ At the same time, however, when the Catholic Church began preaching against the NSB in spring 1941, Seyss-Inquart decided it needed to be punished and chose the issue of confessional schools as his weapon of choice, yet again showing that his political power base was the Catholic Seyss-Inquart's chief concern. It was only through van Dam's sage advice against reigniting the School Struggle that the most extreme measures were not taken.¹⁸⁹

Wimmer, on the other hand, was somewhat more favorable, at least personally, toward Catholicism specifically, as he was and always had been a practicing Catholic. In fact, this was one of the downsides Rauter saw in him when Himmler requested an evaluation of Wimmer in reference to a possible promotion within the SS. According to Rauter, although politically Wimmer supported the Greater Germanic concept, he was, in terms of his *Weltanschauung*, purely Catholic.¹⁹⁰ Schwarz for his part, was a true believer in the SS world and, as was typical in SS circles, strongly anti-clerical.¹⁹¹

For the most part, however, it was van Dam and Schwarz who would become the driving forces in the education realm, working together and forming a relatively friendly relationship

¹⁸⁸ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 256–60.

¹⁸⁹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 258.

¹⁹⁰ Annemarie Liebler, *Geschichte der Regierung von Niederbayern* (München: Utz, 2008), 132–33.

¹⁹¹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 250.

over the next several years. While their feelings regarding the place of the churches in education likely stemmed from different origins, they were generally in complete agreement about the need to remove clerical influence from education entirely, even if, as it would turn out, they were largely unsuccessful in doing so. In fact, most of the “reforms” that the pair attempted to institute would fail over the course of the occupation, but before we can turn to the reactions of the Dutch populace and the ultimate failure of the educational “reforms” implemented during the occupation in chapters seven and eight, we must look more closely at the specific “reforms” themselves, who supported which “reforms,” the goals of those “reforms,” and their implementation, often uneven, at the local level. It is these topics to which we turn in the next three chapters.

Chapter 4 - The Direct Path to the Greater Germanic Reich

The overall mandate of the *Reichskommissar* [is] to induce the Dutch people into a positive cooperation in the Greater Germanic area. ... [to] win young people to the Reich. For this there [are] two ways, the direct: to win the Reich and thus to win National Socialism, and the indirect: to win National Socialism and thus to win the Reich. Both paths must be taken. - Heinrich Schwarz, March 22, 1941¹

In the field of education, there were two paths that the German leadership saw for the creation of a Germanic identity among the Dutch, each with its intended audience and each necessary for the creation of the Greater Germanic Reich. The first path, described as “indirect,” involved Dutch youth, and put succinctly, was to win the youth over to National Socialism, and then their acceptance of the Greater Germanic Reich would follow naturally. The second method involved German educational institutions in the Netherlands, especially the German Schools and the *Reichsschulen*, which were attended by German and German-friendly Dutch students. This process, described as the “direct route,” involved German educational institutions as models for other schools in the nation; they were to become the goal toward which Dutch schools would strive. Winning the battle through the German Schools in the Netherlands would mean a strengthening of the Reich, and with that strengthening, National Socialism would conquer.²

This chapter focuses on the “direct path” toward the Greater Germanic Reich as practiced in the educational realm in the Netherlands. It begins with a brief look at educational practices in Germany during the 1930s, before moving to German institutions in the Netherlands prior to the Nazi invasion. These schools had been present in the Netherlands for many decades, but with the Nazi “seizure of power” in 1933, they began focusing more explicitly on imparting Nazi values to their students. With the invasion and occupation of the Netherlands by Germany, these schools were significantly expanded, increasing the total number of students, both Dutch and German, who were educated along explicitly German lines. The education provided to these students

¹ NIOD 020/2047.

² NIOD 020/2047.

would, in theory, stand in stark contrast to the overly intellectual education students received in Dutch schools and would, by their very nature as superior institutions, slowly bring Dutch educators and parents over to the Nazi side.³

The chapter then moves on to the establishment of three separate educational institutions meant to instruct the future elite of the Nazis' pan-Germanic, European empire. The first of these projects was the NIVO, or Dutch Institute for *Völkisch* Education, which was established by the occupiers as a Dutch counterpart to German National-Political Educational Institutes (Napola). Owing to infighting between the German leadership, as well as staunch opposition from Dutch Nazis to the NIVO project, the Germans scrapped it after the first year and turned to the establishment of German style Napolas in 1942, although for political reasons, they were called *Reichsschulen*, instead of National-Political Educational Institutes. These schools, one for boys and one for girls, would last until fall 1944, when both schools, which were located in the southern province of Limburg, were evacuated to Germany in advance of the Allied onslaught expected to come later that fall.⁴ As with so many other efforts at "reform," the turning tide of the war meant an end for the Germans' efforts.

Education in Nazi Germany

Education as a tool for the social formation of the next generation has a long history in Europe. Most, if not all, Western European states attempted to use their school systems in the nineteenth century as "instruments of nation-building," that is, the training of a loyal citizenry.⁵ The Nazis were no exception to this trend, and when they came to power in Germany, they made a concerted effort to use education to influence the next generation toward the ideals of National

³ BAL R83/29.

⁴ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 46–47, 54.

⁵ De Kwaasteniet, "Denominational Education and Contemporary Education Policy in the Netherlands," 371.

Socialism.⁶ Hitler directly stated as much in one of his rambling “table talks” with his subordinates: “In the same way as the press, the school also must be used as an instrument for the education of the people.”⁷ This process, in and of itself, is not nefarious so much as it is universal to formal education. The Nazis, who certainly attempted to use education to build the next generation of Germans, did not invent this idea; it was common to the other major political parties in Germany during the early part of the twentieth century.⁸ Moreover, the Nazis’ efforts were not limited to the creation of better Germans, but were also aimed at turning the Dutch, whose almost three hundred years of independence from their “ethnic kin” in Germany had allowed for the creation of a separate culture and national identity, into the Germanic brothers and sisters Nazi racial theorists saw in them.⁹ Central to my overarching argument, however, is the realization that the goals of the occupation regime in the field of education in the occupied Netherlands went *beyond* the Nazis’ corresponding efforts in Germany, to include the redefinition of what it actually means to be Dutch and the creation of a new national identity based on their Germanic past. In order to make this larger point, however, a short survey of the Nazis’ educational goals in Germany in the 1930s is necessary.

Like many aspects of German life, the Nazis saw the Weimar period’s influence on education as extremely problematic. Instead, Nazi educational theorists looked back to cultural critics from the previous century, especially Lagarde and Langbehn, who criticized industrial society and the developments that led to it, especially the Enlightenment, liberalism, socialism, and parliamentarianism. These *völkisch* thinkers instead romanticized about a pre-industrial,

⁶ Gilmer W. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich: A Study of Race and History in Nazi Textbooks* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), viii.

⁷ Hitler, *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-1944*, 523.

⁸ Wolfgang Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 9.

⁹ NIOD 020/436.

agricultural past, with its unquestioned norms and, ostensibly, charismatic political leadership.¹⁰

These thinkers professed a racial unity between the *volk* and the land, and among society as a whole, based upon racialist lines. Indeed, it would be the influence of race that stood at the center of Nazi educational policy.¹¹

The prevailing trend in Weimar education, on the other hand, was that of decentralization.¹² Because educational policy was determined by the states, new types of schools became common under Weimar, including Montessori schools; “worldly schools,” secular schools that usually also had a pedagogical reform element included; and schools promoting “democratic” reforms (i.e., schools giving students a greater say in their own education). For its part, the central government did promote guidelines for education that suggested education should be of a “German-National” character, in which the individual was subordinate to the larger nation—a concept that dates back to the Romantic era and notable thinkers such as Fichte and Hegel¹³—but the government had little ability to enforce these guidelines among the various states. As a result, there was a large proliferation of new schools and pedagogical techniques under the Weimar Republic, a proliferation the Nazis and other conservative, nationalist, and/or *völkisch* elements found distressing. Despite Weimar’s encouragement of educational reforms, however, the overwhelming nature of the German teaching corps remained conservative, “anti-democratic, anti-liberal, authoritarian, and sexist.”¹⁴ The nationalist and *völkisch* parties, the Nazis among them, fought these reforms tooth and nail. For the extreme right wing of German politics, education in Weimar was too formulaic, focusing too much on intellectualism and

¹⁰ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 32–37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9–19.

¹² Isaac Leon Kandel, *The Making of Nazis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36–37.

¹⁴ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 111–113, Quote on 113.

bookishness to the detriment of the nation. Instead, these right-wing parties, the Nazis included, preferred an education that was based more on cultivating the spiritual and physical characteristics of the student in order to make them loyal to the German nation. Learning, according to the most *völkisch* elements of German society, was to be rooted in one's connectedness to the soil that allowed for the spirit to flourish, rather than the production of intellectual automatons.¹⁵ These characteristics of Weimar education, which the Nazis consistently labeled as "liberal" and "Marxist," were to be rejected completely in favor of a national education that would produce a future Aryan ruling class in Europe.

When the Nazis came to power, they immediately began to shape education in Germany in a more national socialist mold. In doing so, they were building on an already long tradition of using education as a method for forming and inculcating particular sets of values among the youth. Already in the nineteenth century, German education theorists recognized that education was an effective, even necessary, vehicle for transmitting specific values to the next generation. Educators such as Friedrich Froebel, the mid-nineteenth century founder of the kindergarten, argued that education must start in the home and that it should be intimately tied to education in the school. For Froebel, who saw the family as the basic building block of society, the child's understanding of the unlimited love of a mother for her child, and understanding the virtue of that love, was paramount. Only then could the child grow up to exhibit the ideal purity of heart and mind that was so important to Froebel's conception of proper society.¹⁶ Later, in the Weimar period, reflecting the republican individualism of that period, works of youth literature such as *Emil und die Detektive* emphasized the individual's (in this case the child's) ability to overcome

¹⁵ Kandel, *The Making of Nazis*, 33–39.

¹⁶ Lisa Pine, "The Dissemination of Nazi Ideology and Family Values through School Textbooks," *History of Education* 25, no. 1 (1997): 91–92.

great odds in the big city to prevail over injustice, while at the same time completely ignoring the systemic causes of poverty and crime that shape the main character's world.¹⁷ Once they gained power, the Nazis were, in some ways, simply following in the footsteps of their Kaiserreich and Weimar forbearers.

Almost immediately after Hitler established his dictatorship in March, 1933, the Nazis took the first steps in their institutional coordination of the German education apparatus. Shortly after assuming power, the regime identified those individuals determined to be undesirable elements and then dismissed, transferred, or demoted them from positions of authority in the schools. Through laws such as the *Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen*¹⁸ and the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*,¹⁹ both from April 1933, put limits on the number of Jewish students who could attend schools and gave the government the authority to remove public servants, including school faculty, administrators and education officials, for reasons of "race" or previous political activity. These dismissals had significant impacts on the German educational establishment. Although they varied by region and province, the numbers of dismissed or demoted teachers, school administrators, and state education officials could range upwards of twenty-five per cent, and this does not count those who resigned or those who, for reasons of self-preservation, joined the NSDAP to prevent their previous political activity from counting against them. When some administrators ignored the laws regarding the dismissal of undesirable elements, they themselves were dismissed. Naturally,

¹⁷ Jennifer Redmann, "'Läßt Sich Daraus Was Lernen?' Children's Literature, Education, and Ideology in the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany," *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German* 31, no. 2 (1998): 133.

¹⁸ Law against the overcrowding of German schools and universities.

¹⁹ Law for the restoration of the professional civil service.

these politically or racially undesirable elements were mostly replaced with regime loyalists, especially the so-called *Alte Kämpfer*.²⁰

In addition to the removal of politically and “racially” undesirable elements, the Nazis took aim at entire educational institutions. Chief among these, in the early days of the regime, were schools that promoted new pedagogical techniques, such as the “democratic reform” or Montessori schools. The “worldly schools” and even schools with a history of political activity among their teaching corps and students were also targeted for closure. In Berlin, some fifty-three schools were closed, their teachers and administrators either dismissed or transferred to other schools, while their students were divided up among neighboring schools. When closure was not an option, personnel changes were in order. The numbers of teachers who were harassed, dismissed, demoted, or forcibly transferred is in some cases absolutely astonishing. In Hamburg, one of the main centers of the school reform movement, as many as fifty-five per cent of school directors were dismissed and replaced with party loyalists, as opposed to the comparatively paltry fifteen per cent who were forcibly removed from service in Berlin (the other major center of such reform movements). In some cases, dismissal was not enough, as the now unemployed former teachers and administrators continued to face discrimination in future employment, harassment by the SA, and even outright murder. But pressure on teachers and administrators for conformity was felt even by those who were not dismissed. Evaluations by their superiors, the constant threat of being labeled “suspicious” by party loyalists, and the enforced declarations of one’s independence from political organizations opposed to the regime were all methods used

²⁰ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 77–81, 83. *Alte Kämpfer*, or “old fighters” are NSDAP members who joined the party before Hitler’s assumption of power in 1933.

to keep otherwise apolitical teachers in line, to say nothing of those teachers and administrators witnessing the dismissal and persecution of their erstwhile colleagues who did not fall in line.²¹

Running in the opposite direction was, contradictorily enough, the establishment of schools specifically for Jewish students on the one hand and various forms of “elite” schools for the creme of the Aryan crop on the other. Some of these Jewish schools had existed for some time, just as confessional schools of all stripes had, but others were newly established to accept the influx of Jewish students and teachers who were increasingly leaving the state run public schools because of harassment but could not forgo school altogether because of the universal schooling requirements. The percentage of Jewish students in “regular” schools decreased by some fifty per cent by 1935, and then by another third in 1936.²² After the November Pogrom of 1938, all Jewish pupils were required to attend Jewish schools until they were banned from school attendance altogether in 1942 in favor of deportation “to the east.” At the same time that the Nazis were expelling Jewish Germans from public education and relocating them in segregated classrooms, they were establishing other segregated schools for the future elites of the elites. They took two forms: the *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten*²³ (Napola) and the *Adolf-Hitler-Schulen*.²⁴ The goal of these schools was to train the next generation of German leadership, although they targeted different groups. The former were meant to educate those students who would enter the civil service and serve the state, while students at the latter were meant to enter into leadership positions within the party and its connected mass organizations.²⁵

²¹ Ibid., 92–110.

²² Ibid., 104.

²³ National-Political Educational Institutes.

²⁴ Adolf Hitler Schools.

²⁵ Christian Schneider, Cordelia Stillke, and Bernd Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola: Versuch einer Generationengeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, 1. Aufl. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1996), 33; Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich*, 135; In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 793.

Reorganization of the schools was another change that the Nazis instituted. Even before the Nazis attained power, nationalist, *völkisch*, and conservative elements had been pushing for a reduction in the numbers and types of public schools found in Germany, which in all of their variations numbered more than a dozen types of secondary schools. Although it must also be noted that the impetus behind these desired reforms differed among groups, with *völkisch* thinkers espousing a more populist, revolutionary ideology aimed at national unity. In 1938, a school reform was instituted that allowed for three basic types of secondary school: the *Oberschule*, the *Aufbauschule*, and the *Gymnasium*.²⁶ The *Oberschule*, which returned to the system of separate education for boys and girls that had been abandoned by some schools promoting new pedagogical techniques during Weimar,²⁷ was by far the most attended, with more than eighty per cent of German students attending these schools during the Nazi period. Conceived as a “unity school,”²⁸ the *Oberschule* was to focus on those core subjects necessary to the creation of a *German* (history, German, physical education, etc.), as opposed to the more universalistic, humanistic, and, therefore, un-German education given to *Gymnasium* students, the attendance at which was restricted to males.²⁹ The increased importance placed on the “core subjects” of history, physical education, and German language, combined with a reduction from nine to eight years of compulsory education, lest students become too intellectual, allowed these new schools to be “instruments of nationalism” that “pushed humanistic education into the background.”³⁰ At the same time, even the humanistic education given at the *Gymnasium* was

²⁶ Higher School, Feeder School, and College-Preparatory Schools, respectively. The Feeder Schools were designed for rural students who wished to take the *Abitur* but did not have access to a *Gymnasium*.

²⁷ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 95; Hans J Hahn, *Education and Society in Germany* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998), 79–80.

²⁸ *Einheitsschule*.

²⁹ Hahn, *Education and Society in Germany*, 80.

³⁰ R. H Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), 49–51. Quote on 51.

rolled back as Latin and Greek, long-standing features of humanistic, continental education, were removed from the required courses list, betraying the radical, populist nature of the reforms.

The make-up of the civil service and student bodies were far from the Nazis' only concern. Further regulations were issued along similar lines that encompassed wide-ranging topics related to schooling, such as the replacement of non-aryan and politically suspect parental representatives with candidates whose political inclinations could be trusted, that is until they were abolished altogether in 1934 as too democratic.³¹ Under pressure from the regime, most educational associations were also incorporated into the already existing National Socialist Teachers Union³² by mid-1933, and although some groups, such as religious associations, were able to hold out somewhat longer, they too were eventually forcibly "coordinated." Some groups, which for political reasons refused to join the NSLB simply dissolved themselves. The pressure to join the NSLB was intense, and the participation rates prove this, as by the end of the Nazi period, some ninety-seven per cent of teachers and administrators were members; of those a full quarter were members of the Nazi Party itself, a higher percentage than in most other sectors of the civil service.³³ Other "reforms" that touched upon school life, but not yet on the curriculum, included the replacement of holidays that celebrated democratic institutions, such as the *Verfassungsfeiern*³⁴ with those more directed towards Nazism and its ideals, such as new holidays celebrating Hitler's Birthday, the *Tag der nationalen Arbeit*,³⁵ or Mother's Day.³⁶ Further, laws allowing for punishment of teachers and administrators for their political affiliation

³¹ Hahn, *Education and Society in Germany*, 94–95.

³² *Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund*, or NSLB.

³³ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 111–13; Hahn, *Education and Society in Germany*, 69.

³⁴ Constitution celebrations.

³⁵ Day of national work, May 1.

³⁶ The latter two holidays were co-opted by the Nazis for their own purposes. May Day became the day of *national* work, while the Nazis' emphasis on women's role as mothers of future Aryan supermen was highlighted for Mother's Day.

with Nazism were repealed, while laws promoting the wearing of symbols and uniforms of national movements (i.e., the NSDAP and its affiliated groups, such as the *Hitlerjugend* and *Bund deutscher Mädel*³⁷) and the introduction of the Hitler greeting were promulgated.³⁸ These new holidays helped engender a sense of community by their very simultaneity, by the mere fact that students and teachers were participating in them, regardless of whether specific individuals *actually believed* the message these reforms imparted.³⁹ Centralization of German education followed in 1934 with the establishment of *Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung, und Volksbildung*⁴⁰ and the appointment of Bernhard Rust, formerly the head of the Prussian education ministry, as *Reichsminister*. This process of *Gleichschaltung* was completed the following year when the various education ministries of the German provinces were incorporated into the Reich Education Ministry.⁴¹

In addition to laws dealing with the coordination of educational institutions and associations, the Nazis introduced changes into the actual curriculum as well. Although many of the changes were decreed early in the regime, their introduction was cemented through the control and regulation of school textbooks. As the regime solidified control, fewer and fewer publishers were allowed to publish school text books, until, finally, in 1941, only the official publishing house of the Nazi Party, *Eher Verlag*, was allowed to publish school texts.⁴² By and large, these changes can be grouped into four major categories: introduction of the leadership principle and its accompanying effects, an increased emphasis on physical education, a complete

³⁷ Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls.

³⁸ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 82.

³⁹ T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 1998). Fujitani's argument that the simultaneity of imperial processions in early-modern Japan helped created a sense of collective national identity *regardless of one's acceptance of the message itself* can be equally applied here.

⁴⁰ Reich Ministry for Science, Education, and Culture.

⁴¹ Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 83–86.

⁴² Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, 82.

reevaluation of history, and the racialization of instruction and content. Each of these can be directly traced back to *Mein Kampf*.⁴³ The *Führerprinzip*, or leadership principle, was one of the defining characteristics of National Socialism. It called for complete subordination to one's superiors, especially the decisive actions of the Führer himself, creating a hierarchical society in which decisions were made at the summit and were to be carried out by those below. Like many Nazi ideas, the authoritarian roots of the leadership principle have existed previously in German schools, but the Nazis took the concept to an entirely new level. Its extension to the classroom made the teacher a petty-tyrant and the school director a not-quite-as-petty-tyrant, and it proceeded up the chain until it reached the Führer at the summit. Already instituted in 1933, the inclusion of the leadership principle affected almost all facets of education, ranging from a deemphasis on actual classroom instruction in favor of character development or physical education, to curriculum changes and the grading of exams. The ban on corporal punishment passed by the Weimar government was repealed on Jan. 31, 1933, the day after Hitler took power, putting discipline squarely back in the hands of the teacher. Further, as part and parcel of the co-optation of Mother's Day by the regime, school teachers were instructed to use the holiday to counsel students on the importance of the *German* mother and the value of respect and gratitude to their parents, the parents being the petty-tyrants of the *German* family. School administrators, especially, gained new powers with the introduction of the leadership principle. Whereas school directors had been first-among-equals under the Weimar government—a change that was in itself instituted in the immediate post-war period—the Nazis gave school directors complete authority over their schools, from administration to teacher evaluation to student

⁴³ George F Kneller, *The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1941); Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München: Eher Verlag, 1937), 451–75, 491–93.

discipline. At the same time, the influence of the faculty on the operation of the school was reduced to an advisory role at best, insignificance at worst.⁴⁴

An increase in the importance of physical education was another of the most prominent elements of Nazi educational reforms. The overriding goal here was the creation of future mothers and future German soldiers.⁴⁵ Only by perfecting the human body could the future of the German nation and people be preserved, and so physical education was seen as paramount to the future success of the German volk. As with the leadership principle, the roots of the Nazis' fascination with physical education can be traced back, at least, to the beginning of the nineteenth century with Friedrich Jahn's gymnastic associations. Even the militarization of physical education predated the Nazi seizure of power, but the Nazis, again, took it further. Physical education instruction in the schools was increased both in primary and secondary schools from their Weimar levels and a new emphasis on sport, especially team sports, was introduced. In secondary schools, the number of periods spent on physical education in a given week amounted to a more than eleven per cent increase, while in primary schools, the time spent on physical education doubled.⁴⁶ Further, the centralization of physical education teacher training was implemented in 1936 through the *Reichsakademie für Leibesübungen*,⁴⁷ which was founded in the Berlin suburb of Spandau in 1936.⁴⁸ Importantly, however, the promotion of physical education was not limited to formal education, but was included in the informal educational system of youth associations such as the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls. In terms of physical education (and many other aspects of Nazi youth socialization), these organizations

⁴⁴ Kandel, *The Making of Nazis*, 60–61.

⁴⁵ Pine, "The Dissemination of Nazi Ideology and Family Values through School Textbooks," 96; Kandel, *The Making of Nazis*, 63.

⁴⁶ Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, 160.

⁴⁷ Reich Academy for Physical Education.

⁴⁸ Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, 161.

served alongside the regular school system as creators of a future national socialist German ruling class. Further, the informal system of physical education instruction extended beyond the student's school years when, at least in the case of young men, students were encouraged to enter into voluntary work service⁴⁹ and then into the German army, what Hitler referred to as “the highest school of patriotic education.”⁵⁰

If proper physical education was the highest priority for the *body* of the next generation of Germans, then a proper understanding of the national socialist view of history was the most important for the *minds* of the next generation. Of all the traditionally academic subjects students encountered in the nazified classroom, the study of history, or more accurately the study of the politicized notion of history held by the Nazis, was the most important to Nazi leaders. Like so much of Nazi ideology, historical instruction in the schools was to be reorganized around racial lines. According to Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, “It is the task of the national state to see to it that a world history is finally written in which the race question is raised to a predominant position.”⁵¹ And so historical instruction was remodeled around these lines with little regard for any sort of objective accuracy. Of primary importance for history instruction was pre-history. The Prussian education ministry published a set of “guidelines for history books” in August 1933 that give an overview of just how important the Nazis saw race.

According to these *Richtlinien für die Geschichtsbücher*,⁵² the differences between the races were already formed in pre-history and were evidenced through the superior handicrafts, whether made of stone or bronze, that they left behind. From Europe, the Nordic race spread throughout the Near East, North Africa, and South-Central Asia already some five millennia

⁴⁹ *Freiwillige Arbeitsdienst*.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur*, 16; See also Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 459.

⁵¹ Quoted in Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, 65; See also Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 468.

⁵² Guidelines for History Books.

before the time of Christ. This, of course, meant that the Ancient Egyptian and Sumerian peoples were originally Nordics, or, at least, conquered by Nordics who would have then installed themselves as a ruling class; the author of the document, most likely Prussian Education Ministry official Wilhelm Stuckart, was not entirely sure which was correct. The Greeks and the Roman patricians (but not the plebeians) were also Nordic, the former having died out because of a low birth rate, the latter dying out because of infighting and, eventually, intermixing with the plebs. All that was good and decent in the Middle Ages was the result of the spread of Germanic tribes throughout the continent, which allowed for a fresh infusion of the Germanic blood that had been nearly wiped out by Roman intermixing. With the coming of the early modern period and the rise of nation-states, the importance of the German state begins to take center stage. But here, the emphasis is on the degradation of the German people and state through foreign influences. It is against these foreign influences that the Nazis were fighting by trying to build up an explicitly nationalist, German *Weltanschauung* among the German population, the history of which was to be especially emphasized in history textbooks.⁵³ In reality, Nazi history texts were overwhelmingly concerned with the “great men” of German history (and only *German* history), especially Frederick II. “Old Fritz” was *the* exemplar of a heroic military leader whose only desire was to serve the state. The intended parallel with Hitler is patent. That he was a Francophone lover of Enlightenment philosophy was shunted aside.⁵⁴ The purpose of all of this historical revisionism was to inculcate an extreme sense of nationalism among the next generation of Germans. In his summary of German history texts, Gilmer Blackburn accurately sums up the Nazis’ use of history: “The central theme of the history written by the National

⁵³ Zentralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preussen, Aug. 5, 1933, 196, quoted in Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, 66–71.

⁵⁴ Pine, “The Dissemination of Nazi Ideology and Family Values through School Textbooks,” 103.

Socialists [was] to arouse in the student a sense of Germanness [*Deutschtum*] in accordance with the most exclusive definition of the term, which would kindle the urgent desire to secure Germany's permanent hegemony in the world.”⁵⁵

Following closely behind the importance of history in Nazi educational policy was the introduction of disciplines such as *Rassenkunde*, *Vererbungslehre*, and *Rassenhygiene*.⁵⁶ In these classes, which were required from 1935 and given greater precedence at the expense of mathematics and foreign languages, students learned about heredity, racial hygiene, racial demography, and the importance of the family for the continuation of the German people and Aryan race.⁵⁷ The goal of this instruction was to educate the student of his or her proper place in the hierarchy of races, as well as to warn them of the dangers of intermixing with “inferior races” and/or the so-called *Minderwertigen*.⁵⁸ Further, *Rassenkunde* was a prototypical exercise in community building (and exclusion), by showing German students that they belonged (or not) to a racial community, the vaunted *Volksgemeinschaft*, that stood at the pinnacle of human society.⁵⁹ Central to the notion of race, as the Nazis conceived it, was German blood. It was in German blood through which the soul of the German people was passed down, and it was the threat to that same German blood that made other races and the physically and mentally disabled so dangerous in the Nazi mindset. Although these new subjects were mostly meant to be included in biology classes, especially in the higher grades, in truth, racial ideology spread throughout the curriculum at all levels. So, for example, an arithmetic textbook for elementary students had problems that asked students to determine how much the state pays extra, per

⁵⁵ Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich*, 178.

⁵⁶ Racial studies, genetics, and eugenics, respectively.

⁵⁷ On the 1935 institution of the requirement see BAL R4901/6623. On the increase of biology instruction at the expense of math and foreign languages, see Samuel, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, 79.

⁵⁸ Less-valuable, i.e. the physically and mentally disabled.

⁵⁹ Ethnic community.

person, for physically and mentally disabled students versus their non-disabled peers.⁶⁰ The intended lesson is clear.

Although the preceding is but a short summary of the most important changes the Nazis implemented in German education during the 1930s and '40s, it bears emphasizing that the importance of *German* blood, *German* culture, *German* history, and the *German* state are front and center. Education in Nazi Germany was geared, explicitly towards all things *German*, to the complete detriment of anything deemed “foreign,” including liberalism, Judaism, and Marxism. As will become clear in later chapters, the Nazis’ efforts in the occupied Netherlands were, in many ways, very similar to their efforts in Germany, right down to the creation of elite schools for future leaders of the Greater Germanic Reich.

But there is an extremely important difference: the Dutch are not German, they are Dutch. Despite many leading Nazis’ views on the Dutch as nothing more than Germans with a funny sailor’s dialect, the preceding three centuries of Dutch independence had led to the creation of a distinct culture that was separate from their German neighbors. Even if Dutch racial theorists agreed with their German counterparts about the ethnic relationship between the two peoples, and there were several who did, Dutch culture was clearly distinct from that of their Teutonic neighbors. When the Nazis were extolling the greatness of the German people and Nordic race to German students, they were not attempting to completely overhaul German culture so much as to elevate certain aspects while silencing others. Alternatively, in the Netherlands the Nazis were forced to try and inculcate an entirely new concept of what it meant to be Dutch. Therein lies something of a difference.

⁶⁰ Allgemeinbildender Grundlehrgang, 1. Teil (Breslau/Leipzig, 1941), 226, quoted in Pine, “The Dissemination of Nazi Ideology and Family Values through School Textbooks,” 105.

The *Deutsche Schulen in den Niederlanden* before the Nazi invasion

The German presence in the Dutch educational system predated the Nazis' arrival in the country by more than forty years. Being neighbors, the Netherlands hosted a large German expatriate community. As is not uncommon when large communities of foreigners are collected in a single region, schools were erected to cater explicitly to that community. By the 1930s, there were eight such *Deutsche Schulen in den Niederlanden* ranging from the major western cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam, clear across to the German border, in border adjacent towns such as Steyl and Vlodrop.⁶¹ Because of a unique twist in the history of Dutch education policy resulting from the School Struggle, these schools were partially subsidized by the state, but mostly financed through tuition fees levied on the students.⁶² Although the Dutch government maintained legal oversight of the German schools, which was necessary to maintain the mutual reciprocity of diploma recognition between German and Dutch schools that had been established under Dutch law in 1906, by the time the Nazis attained power the majority of the administration and curriculum was determined with significant input from Berlin, although meddling by Dutch authorities in the administration of the schools was a constant concern.⁶³ In the words of one German school inspector, these schools acted as an "outpost of Germandom" in the Netherlands, and, according to Wimmer, would become, during the occupation, models for the reform of Dutch education and the strengthening of Germandom in the Netherlands.⁶⁴ Schwarz, who would come to directly oversee the German Schools during the occupation was of

⁶¹ Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde (BAL) R83/29. German [International] Schools in the Netherlands

⁶² BAL R4901/6624.

⁶³ BAL R4901/6623, R4901/6624, R4901/6626, R4901/6627, R4901/6628. Regarding the 1906 law, see *Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, Nr 229, August 22, 1906.

⁶⁴ For "outpost" see BAL R4901/6628. For their model status, see BAL R83/29

a similar mindset, arguing that the German Schools played a central role in what he described as the “direct route” of winning the Netherlands over to the Greater Germanic Reich.⁶⁵

In the pre-Nazi period, the purpose of these German Schools was two-fold. On the one hand, they acted as one of several nexuses for the German expatriate community in the various towns in which they were located, and on the other, as a form of cultural foreign policy in which the German state attempted to mold the expatriate community into a bastion of “Germandom” in the Netherlands.⁶⁶ As Dr. Jungbluth, the head of the German secondary school in Rotterdam, noted in 1927:

The more flourishing and powerful a colony, the more developed and powerful their school system. The florescence and esteem of their schools is, to a certain degree, the gauge of the importance and prestige of the German colony itself.⁶⁷

Unfortunately for the German administrators of these schools, there were significant obstacles to attaining these goals. First, the language of instruction in the primary schools was usually Dutch, owing to the Dutch state’s financial support and legal oversight. Moreover, most of the teachers were also Dutch because Germans with the necessary Dutch state teaching certificates were difficult to locate. This was especially prevalent at the German *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule* in Amsterdam, where, beyond the school head Rector von Diepenbroek, only a single teacher was

⁶⁵ NIOD 020/2047.

⁶⁶ Happe, *Deutsche in den Niederlanden*, 144–45 The others were church communities and associations. Martin Kröger, “Die Praxis deutscher auswärtiger Kulturpolitik in den Niederlanden zwischen den Weltkriegen,” in *Griff nach dem Westen: die “Westforschung” der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, by Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau, vol. 2 (Munich: Waxmann, 2003), 902; Franz A Jungbluth, “Die deutschen Schulen in Holland,” in *Aus deutscher Bildungsarbeit im Auslande: Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen in Selbstzeugnissen aus aller Welt*, by Franz Schmidt and Otto Böhlitz (Langensalza: Jul. Beltz, 1927), 425–426. Jungbluth was the head of the German secondary school in Rotterdam at the time of his authorship of the cited article.

⁶⁷ Jungbluth, “Die deutschen Schulen in Holland,” 425.

German after the end of the First World War.⁶⁸ These factors called into question the entire nature of these schools as purely German schools in the first place.⁶⁹

Secondary schools, which in some cases were part of a larger school that also included a subsidized primary school, were not required to adhere to the same restrictions as their primary school counterparts and thus were supervised by German authorities through the Foreign Office. The lack of Dutch governmental supervision meant that the German secondary schools could have a higher percentage of German teachers, as they were not required to have Dutch teaching certificates, although most of the schools still employed Dutch teachers to a greater or lesser extent. This also freed the German Schools to organize their curriculum along more German lines. But the lack of Dutch state financial support brought with it financial constraints, as these secondary schools were only partially funded through the German Foreign Office, albeit at a higher level than many German schools in other countries,⁷⁰ requiring them to get the majority of their financial support through tuition fees. This was not always an easy task, as the economic situation in the Netherlands, during the 1930s especially, was unfavorable, with high unemployment, including within the German colonies there. This meant that some parents were not able to pay the full tuition fees, creating additional financial hardships for the schools.⁷¹ As a result, some of the schools switched the status of certain classes, such as when the German School in Rotterdam first removed the two highest classes of the nine-year primary school from

⁶⁸ G. von Diepenbroek, "Die deutsche Schule in Amsterdam," in *Aus deutscher Bildungsarbeit im Auslande: Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen in Selbstzeugnissen aus aller Welt*, by Franz Schmidt and Otto Böhlitz (Langensalza: Jul. Beltz, 1927), 442.

⁶⁹ Kröger, "Die Praxis deutscher auswärtiger Kulturpolitik," 903; Happe, *Deutsche in den Niederlanden*, 61–62; Diepenbroek, "Die deutsche Schule in Amsterdam," 442. Rector von Diepenbroek notes that at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule in Amsterdam, only the first two years of instruction were in German, and thereafter instruction was in both the German and Dutch languages, depending on subject.

⁷⁰ Kröger, "Die Praxis deutscher auswärtiger Kulturpolitik," 903–4.

⁷¹ BAL R4901/6626.

Dutch oversight in 1914, only to return them to Dutch school oversight in 1919 because of an intense need for Dutch state financial support.⁷²

Financial constraints were compounded by the fact that many Germans in the Netherlands were not members of the school associations and did not send their children to German Schools when they were available, choosing instead to send their children to Dutch schools. There were many reasons for this. For starters, many Germans, especially those who had married Dutch partners, had no intention of returning to Germany, but rather intended for their families to remain in the Netherlands, and for those parents, sending their children to Dutch schools was the more appropriate choice.⁷³ Other times the choice to send one's children to a Dutch school was based on more mundane factors. The location and amenities of the German Schools were not always the best. This was particularly evident in Amsterdam, where the German School there was located in a run-down building in a poor neighborhood. Similar mundane factors plagued the German Schools in The Hague and Rotterdam.⁷⁴ It stood to reason, the German leadership thought, that if the facilities could be improved, it would lead to higher enrollments and greater success in strengthening both the German colony and the German nature of the student bodies.⁷⁵ Finally, financial constraints on the part of parents cannot also be overlooked, especially during the economically turbulent period after the New York stock market crash of 1929. Taken together, all of these factors contributed to an overriding fear in the German expatriate community of its members becoming "Dutchified." As Jungbluth noted, Dutch culture and language was so essentially similar to that of Germany and that even

⁷² Jungbluth, "Die deutschen Schulen in Holland," 429–30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 427.

⁷⁴ BAL R4901/6624, 6626.

⁷⁵ BAL R4901/6624.

“educated Germans are easily ‘Dutchified.’”⁷⁶ German Schools were meant to prevent just this problem from infecting the larger community.

With the assumption of power by the Hitler regime in Berlin, the focus on the German nature of the German Schools in the Netherlands only grew in importance. From 1934, the supervision of the German Schools in the Netherlands was removed from the Foreign Office and was placed under the purview of the newly created Reich Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, headed by Bernhard Rust. Consequently, a third goal would be added to these first two functions—the use of the schools as a tool of political indoctrination such that students attending German Schools would become appropriately acquainted with and bound to the political outlook of the new Germany. It was a process that was relatively quick and seamless.⁷⁷

As part of its oversight, the Education Ministry sent German education officials to help administer the final exams of the graduating students at each of the German schools annually. At the same time these officials filed detailed reports that betray the Nazis’ overriding concern with entrenching Germandom in the Netherlands. Most of the reports began with a notation on the make-up of the student body. In the reports, the students were divided between *Reichsdeutsche*, *Volksdeutsche*, Netherlands, and foreigners. Included among the foreign element were any Jewish students who happened to be attending. So, for example, at the German School in Amsterdam, officially known as the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule*, in 1934, of the 290 students, 205 were Germans from the Reich, 53 were Dutch, 9 were Jewish (“*israelistisch*”), and the remainder were of other nationalities. By 1941, the ethnic makeup of the school had grown significantly more German, with 308 *Reichsdeutsche*, 153 *Volksdeutsche*, 117 Dutch, and 5 of other

⁷⁶ Jungbluth, “Die deutschen Schulen in Holland,” 425–426, quote on 425. “... auch gebildete Deutsche leicht ‘verholländerten.’”

⁷⁷ Happe, *Deutsche in den Niederlanden*, 92–93, 154.

nationalities; Jewish students disappeared from the roster completely.⁷⁸ Similar demographic changes occurred in the other German schools.⁷⁹ Somewhat ironically, in the very earliest years of Nazi rule in Germany, the number of Jewish students actually *increased* at the German Schools, likely a result of large numbers of Jewish emigrants from Hitler's Germany who wanted their children to maintain some connection to their country of origin, although this increase was short-lived as the number of Jewish pupils began to decline by the later 1930s because of the increased stress laid upon racial factors at these schools.⁸⁰

Beyond their pure statistical value, these numbers show a large increase in the student body of these schools which can be, on the one hand, attributed to a larger number of Dutch parents deciding to send their children to German schools, presumably for the benefits it would grant their children in the new Nazi-controlled Europe, and, on the other, because of a greater attendance by the children of the German community in Amsterdam, which numbered more than seventeen thousand individuals. Both of these factors were of intense interest to the inspectors sent from the German Education Ministry, although in differing ways. The inspectors were generally very pleased with the increase in German students, as their attendance at the German schools would prevent their "Dutchification" in Dutch schools, a severe threat to the status of Germandom in the country. This was doubly important as, in the estimation of the inspector who wrote the 1935 report, far too many German adults in Amsterdam had been, essentially, "Dutchified," weakening the German nature of the entire community. At the same time, the increase in the number of Dutch students offered the possibility that the school would be unable

⁷⁸ BAL R4901/6624

⁷⁹ BAL R4901/6626, R4901/6627, R4901/6628

⁸⁰ Happe, *Deutsche in den Niederlanden*, 166–167. The German School in The Hague, for example, experienced an increase from 10 students in 1931 to 35 in 1934. For later decreases, see BAL R4901/6624; R57 neu/1085.

to succeed in its work of strengthening Germandom in Amsterdam.⁸¹ For the German leadership, the appropriate ratio was about one-third Dutch, and two-thirds German, which they believed sufficient to maintain the German nature of the student body, but also not so low as to remove any possibility the German schools' influence upon the wider Dutch public.⁸²

In addition to the ethnic make-up of the student body, the inspectors were particularly interested in the cultural disposition of the students and teachers, among the latter of which both Germans and Dutch could be found. This is unsurprising, as the stated purpose of the schools was to foster the "life and spiritual being" of the students, which directly affected future generations of Germans. As one 1938 advertisement for the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule*, noted:

A German child who doesn't attend a German school is inevitably lost to Germandom. Even if he succeeds in preserving the German language, he nevertheless grows up without the educational, spiritual, and emotional values that make up the German people. A language without these contents, however, is like an empty glass. Only a German school is able to convey these values, only here do these values flock to the child through daily and hourly lessons from all subjects, mainly from German lessons, reading lessons, history, geography, music and religious instruction.⁸³

Among the students, membership in national socialist organizations was also consistently noted, whether the students were members of youth organizations such as the Hitler Youth, the League of German Girls, and the youth branch of the *Reichsdeutsche Gemeinschaft*⁸⁴; the *freiwillige Arbeitsdienst*⁸⁵; or in some cases, after 1939, even the German army.⁸⁶ Importantly, the focus was always on the students' participation in *German* national socialist organizations; the participation by Dutch students in national socialist organizations such as the *Nationale Jeugdstorm*⁸⁷ was given little attention. In addition to their participation in German Nazi

⁸¹ BAL R4901/6624.

⁸² BAL R83/24.

⁸³ BAL R4901/6624.

⁸⁴ The "German Community," was an officially independent organization covertly funded and operated by the Foreign Organization of the NSDAP.

⁸⁵ Voluntary Labor Service.

⁸⁶ BAL R4901/6626.

⁸⁷ National Youth Storm, the youth wing of the NSB.

organizations, the school inspectors consistently noted whether the students appear to be accepting of the new national socialist ideology slowly being implemented in the various German schools. For example, in the 1934 report on the German School in Steyl, near Venlo in the eastern part of the Netherlands, the report's author, Dr. Klemmer, notes that the students at the gymnasial section of this catholic school were surprisingly well versed on Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, the basic principles of National Socialism, the history of the Nazi movement, and the changes introduced in the first year of Nazi leadership in Germany. The teachers in the primary school section had not yet begun teaching the tenets of National Socialism in earnest, but both the teachers and students were interested and willing to learn, all the more surprising to the inspector because of the confessional nature of the school and the suspect nature of the teachers whose loyalty, according to Klemmer, was to the Catholic church first and foremost and only secondarily to the German people and the national socialist state.⁸⁸

The cultural disposition of the teachers was also extensively noted in the reports, regardless of whether the teachers were German or Dutch, including their membership in national socialist organizations, although, as with students, only German organizations—whether the NSLB, the German Labor Front, the *Reichsdeutsche Gemeinschaft*, the NSDAP, and even the SA—were considered.⁸⁹ In the 1934 report on the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule* in Amsterdam, the author, *Senator für das Bildungswesen*⁹⁰ Dr. Richard von Hoff, notes that, while both the Germans and Dutch teachers appear effective educators, he was unable to ascertain the Dutch teachers' positions as regards the new Germany. Regardless, however, the advanced age and imminent retirement of many of these teachers and the school director offered a chance to

⁸⁸ BAL R4901/6627. The confessional nature of the school did eventually come back to haunt the school as its position of equality with German schools in Germany was rescinded by the Education Ministry in 1938.

⁸⁹ BAL R4901/6623, R4901/6624, R4901/6626, R4901/6627, R4901/6628.

⁹⁰ Senator for Education.

strengthen Germandom with the introduction of younger teachers more in tune with Nazi government's educational and cultural policies, a change the school board and Education Ministry did not miss.⁹¹ By the time the Second World War began, the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule* began experiencing shortages of German teachers, with many of the teachers having been called up for service in the armed forces. As Senator von Hoff notes in his 1941 report, the Dutch teachers who have replaced the departing Germans all seem to be oriented toward Germany, and although they were "undoubtedly keen to teach and work in the German sense to the best of their ability," they simply could not replace German teachers in their entirety.⁹²

In 1934, *Ministerialrat* Billen commented that students at the *Kolleg St. Ludwig* in Vlodrop exhibited "unrestrained enthusiasm for the *völkisch* state and its leader," and further noted, "the school is a real German oasis in an otherwise not entirely scenic green belt."⁹³ A year later, his praise was even more emphatic:

One feels [this to be] as an outpost of Germandom in the frontier region, and indeed as an outpost of the *völkisch*-unified Germandom of the national socialist state. The German Greeting [Nazi salute] is a matter of course, and I have seen images of Hitler in classrooms as well as in the reception rooms. I have not had the impression that in these uncomplicated people, the denominational attachment affects a national socialist way of life and life guidance.⁹⁴

To be certain of his assessment, he interrogated several students away from their teachers, and came away from the encounters with the impression that all of the students in Vlodrop would be "excellent assistants in the further development and expansion of our *völkisch* state."⁹⁵ Such was the concern about the internal mindset and political persuasions of the students and teachers that when, in his 1938 report on the *Kolleg St. Ludwig*, *Ministerialrat* Liep, who had written the two previous reports on that school, omitted any lengthy discussion of the

⁹¹ BAL R4901/6624.

⁹² BAL R4901/6624.

⁹³ BAL R4901/6628.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

political orientation of the students and faculty regarding National Socialism and the new Germany, the Reich Education Ministry replied to him specifically requesting it.⁹⁶ Liep responded noting that the reason for his curtailed mention was that they were still being educated in the same manner as the previous years and he did not think it necessary to repeat the information again. Nonetheless, he proceeded to do just that, and in much more detail than his previous reports. As far as he could see, and he believed he was getting an accurate portrayal of the situation in Vlodrop, the teachers tried in earnest to impart a national socialist worldview to the students. All of the secular teachers were already members of the National Socialist Teachers League, and several were party members. Additionally, among the entire student body and faculty, even the clerical teachers, members of various national socialist organizations could be found, including the German Labor Front, the *Sturmabteilung*, the Hitler Youth, and the League of German Girls, among others, while many of the students who had been drafted into the German Labor Front appeared to have enjoyed the experience.⁹⁷

According to the 1936 report on the German school in Rotterdam, the teachers, both German and Dutch, were all very much oriented toward the new Germany, with many students and teachers who were members of national socialist organizations. Hoff, who wrote the 1936 report, noted however that the school board did have some reservations about the school director of the primary school, who was Dutch. Two years later, the school board decided that the primary school director needed to be replaced with a German more closely oriented with National Socialism. The preferred candidate was already a teacher in the seventh grade of the primary school, although his promotion would create a vacancy that would need to be filled, naturally only with a German. The solution the school board came up with was a complete

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

reorganization of the school such that the seventh grade was removed from the primary school and attached to the secondary school. This was not entirely unproblematic, as it would mean that the primary school no longer conformed with Dutch education law, thereby putting state subsidies at risk. Regardless, the school board desired to go through with the changes because it would help to better foster the new German consciousness among the students in Rotterdam.⁹⁸ At the *St. Michaels Gymnasium* in Steyl, Dr. Huhnhäuser reported in 1937 about his gratification regarding the positive opinions that could be found among the student regarding the “racial question.” This was a result of the inner stances of those at the school, especially the teacher of *Rassenkunde*.⁹⁹

The political and cultural disposition of the students and teachers, with which the Nazis were so eminently concerned, was furthered through many curriculum reforms the Nazis instituted in these schools during the 1930s. In contrast to schools in Germany, where the Nazi government had free reign, the German schools in the Netherlands had to perform a delicate balancing act resulting from the dual oversight of both the Dutch and German governments. On the one hand, the German schools in the Netherlands were, legally, Dutch schools that happened to cater to the German community in the Netherlands, not entirely dissimilar to confessional schools that catered to religious families.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, some level of de facto oversight by the German government was necessary in order to, from the German point of view, guarantee the integrity of the education provided to the students, many of whom both governments recognized would return to Germany for higher education or work after their schooling in the Netherlands was completed. This system of dual oversight had functioned successfully for at

⁹⁸ BAL R4901/6626.

⁹⁹ Racial Studies. BAL R4901/6627.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, many of the schools were founded as explicitly religious schools, although most, by this point, were no longer connected to the churches.

least twenty-five years before the Nazis came to power. When they did achieve power and began implementing educational reforms in Germany, the Dutch Education Ministry started taking note, for the Dutch government had little desire to finance the importation of National Socialism in the Netherlands via the German schools there.¹⁰¹ This necessitated a certain amount of caution and outright secrecy on the part of the Nazis in implementing their educational reforms in the German schools in the Netherlands. So, for example, when Dr. Usadel, the inspector for the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Schule*, arrived in Amsterdam in April 1935 to administer the final exams, he was warned by the school director and head of the German colony to say nothing in his speech before the German community—formal gatherings in honor of the school inspectors were usually held so that the inspectors might get to know the members of the local community—that might upset the Dutch education officials who were also in attendance. Highlighting the double-speak that he employed in his speech, Dr. Usadel noted to his superiors in Berlin: “In this way it was possible, without the use of the word ‘National Socialism,’ to explain the nature of the national socialist *Weltanschauung* before this extraordinary public, which also included Dutch.”¹⁰²

Despite the secrecy that was necessary to avoid arousing the suspicions of the Dutch government, the Nazis proceeded with the curriculum changes in the Netherlands they felt necessary to help strengthen Germandom in that country and educate the next generation of German Nazis. On the one hand, there was the introduction of new subjects that more closely aligned with the mindset of Nazi Germany. These included *Rassenkunde*, and *neuzeitliche Biologie*,¹⁰³ among others, and often their implementation came at the expense of other subjects,

¹⁰¹ BAL R4901/6624.

¹⁰² BAL R4901/6624

¹⁰³ Contemporary Biology

such as Greek language or mathematics.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, traditional topics began to take on a specifically national socialist bent. Geography lessons emphasized themes such as “blood and soil,” “living space,” the “races of Germany,” while history lessons focused on the history of the national socialist movement, *Mein Kampf*, and the changes that Hitler’s regime had introduced in Germany since it came to power.¹⁰⁵ In some instances, these changes took place relatively quickly after similar changes were introduced in Germany. For example, the September 1933 directive of the German Interior Ministry mandating *Rassenkunde* in schools in the Reich was followed by the introduction of “racial studies” and “contemporary biology” at the Kolleg St. Ludwig in the 1934-35 school year.¹⁰⁶ Given institutional hurdles of changing the lesson plan during the school year, a quicker adoption of such nazified subject material is hardly conceivable.

By the time of the German invasion, the German Schools in the Netherlands were largely in lock step with their counterparts in Germany. This already existing system would provide Schwarz with one of the main tools he thought useful for the spread of the Germanic ideal in the Netherlands. All that was necessary, in Schwarz’s eyes, was the expansion and consolidation of this system throughout the country, a task he was largely able to accomplish. In fact, the expansion of the German Schools in the Netherlands was so dramatic that growing pains ensued as a shortage of qualified teachers quickly became a problem, leading to the creation of teacher retraining seminars held in Germany aimed at producing Dutch teachers with the proper ideological mindset and pedagogical training to teach the next generation of German and pro-German Dutch students.

¹⁰⁴ BAL R4901/6627, 6628.

¹⁰⁵ BAL 4901/6627.

¹⁰⁶ BAL R4901/6628.

Deutsche Schulen in den Niederlanden after the Nazi invasion

Shortly after his arrival in August 1940, Schwarz gained control over the German Schools in the Netherlands. Up to that point, they had been the purview of the *Reichserziehungsministerium* since 1934, and before that, of the Foreign Office, but from October 1, 1940, they fell under the jurisdiction of the *Reichskommissariat*, and within that institution, under Schwarz's *Hauptabteilung Erziehung und Kirchen*.¹⁰⁷ Although control of the schools changed, their purpose largely remained intact—to protect the German community in the Netherlands from the influence of the Dutch.¹⁰⁸ At the same time however, two new entirely purposes were added: the education of the next generation of Dutch leadership under a largely German curriculum in a German context and the establishment of these schools as models for their Dutch counterparts.¹⁰⁹

When Schwarz arrived in the Netherlands in August 1940, he found eight German schools that educated, in total, about eighteen hundred students.¹¹⁰ These included three secondary schools in Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam, as well as mixed school in Haarlem, and four primary schools in Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Venlo.¹¹¹ The expansion of these German schools was of unmitigated importance to the German leadership in the Netherlands, such that they subsidized the schools making them tuition free for students. Already by March 1941, they had expanded the German School system in the Netherlands to twenty schools, when they went on a founding spree and increased the number of German schools to forty-three by the end of July. A year later, in July 1942, that number had increased to

¹⁰⁷ BAL R4901/694.

¹⁰⁸ BAL R4901/6628; R83/29.

¹⁰⁹ BAL R4901/6624; R83/29.

¹¹⁰ NIOD 020/2047.

¹¹¹ The two German confessional schools in Vlodrop and Steyl had had their status as German schools revoked by the Nazi government in 1938, and so were not counted as German schools by Schwarz. BAL R4901/6627, 6628.

forty-nine schools serving nine thousand students in all areas of the country—only the province of Zeeland lacked a German school—although a large proportion of these were concentrated on or very near the German border.¹¹² The number of German schools topped out at fifty such institutions and ten thousand students in Schwarz's last report in November 1943.¹¹³ At least part, but certainly not all, of this increase was due to German occupiers sending their own children to German schools; Dorothea Seyss-Inquart, the *Reichskommissar*'s younger daughter, attended the German School in The Hague.¹¹⁴

Because of the increase in the number of schools, there was a constant need for teaching personnel. Already at the beginning of the occupation, there was a shortage of qualified teachers. By and large, the teachers at these schools in the 1930s were Dutch, as Dutch law required that teachers in schools in the Netherlands have Dutch teaching certificates, although there were also many Germans who had the necessary qualifications and thus also taught at these institutions.¹¹⁵ By 1940 however, that had changed as the Germans placed emphasis on recruiting German teachers in these schools in order to strengthen their specifically German nature. They did this by bringing in young teachers from Germany and placing them in these German schools on a temporary basis. No matter the nationality of the teaching staff, however, there was a constant shortage at most schools that needed to be addressed.¹¹⁶ There were two primary methods for solving this problem. The first was trying to incentivize more German teachers to teach at the German Schools, and when, necessary, to force their travel to Holland using the German

¹¹² Rauter, in a September 13, 1942 letter to Himmler, noted that the total was planned at fifty-five, with five *Oberschulen* and fifty Primary and *Hauptschulen*. In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 820–21.

¹¹³ NIOD 020/2047.

¹¹⁴ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 514.

¹¹⁵ Kröger, "Die Praxis deutscher auswärtiger Kulturpolitik," 902–3.

¹¹⁶ NIOD 020/2047.

government.¹¹⁷ The other method was to train Dutch teachers, primarily those who already had an affinity for Germany and German culture, in the proper German way of doing things.

Already in October 1940, Dutch teachers were offered the option of taking retraining courses in the German town of Oldenburg, after the completion of which, they could be placed as teachers in German schools, both in the Reich proper and in the German Schools in the Netherlands.¹¹⁸ Initially, these seminars were meant to, on the one hand, decrease the high unemployment rate of teachers in the Netherlands, and, on the other, to increase the quality of instruction offered by Dutch teachers at the German Schools in the Netherlands. At Oldenburg, Dutch teachers were taught an array of subjects that would make them, in the eyes of their German supervisors, more capable teachers of German students, including German educational theory; racial studies; German language, history, poetry, geography, and ethnic studies; music; and physical education.¹¹⁹ The re-education seminars, which admitted both men and women, graded each of the teachers in the various subjects. Even by 1941, it is clear that the shortage of teachers at German schools and in Germany was causing reductions in quality among teachers. At the July and October 1941 sessions of the teacher training seminar in Oldenburg, most of the students received, on a one to five scale, where one is excellent and five is inadequate, threes, fours, and fives. Only a few of the students received a two in any subject, and none received a one. The refrain that strict supervision of these teachers was necessary was quite common.¹²⁰

The shortage of teachers in German Schools in the Netherlands was a constant theme throughout the war period, especially as those young German teachers who had been brought to

¹¹⁷ NIOD 020/2047.

¹¹⁸ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 270.

¹¹⁹ BAL R83/14.

¹²⁰ BAL R83/14.

the Netherlands returned to Germany or were called into military service.¹²¹ Although one might expect that the teacher training seminars in Oldenburg would have been heavily attended, at least initially, once van Dam introduced his “reforms” for the education sphere in February 1941 that partially aimed at reducing unemployment at Dutch schools, the impetus for young Dutch teachers to go to retraining seminars in Germany declined. In the first year of the German occupation, about one hundred Dutch teachers went through the teacher re-training course in Oldenburg. The following year, only twenty did so, despite the fact that teachers at German Schools were better paid and that service in such schools still counted as government service for the purpose of Dutch state benefits.¹²² Moreover, the disappointing quality of these Dutch teachers remained a constant source of concern in the upper levels of the *Reichskommissariat*. As a result, the German leadership was left to trying to recruit teachers from Germany. They were offered additional pay in the form of a per diem for German teachers willing to relocate to the Netherlands. When this proved insufficient, they resorted to begging German government officials in various locales for the release of teachers from their service in Germany and their transfer to German schools in the Netherlands.¹²³ These efforts were largely ineffective because Germany was also experiencing a shortage of teachers as a result of the war effort, especially after the invasion of the Soviet Union began, which only worsened as the war went on.

By 1942, Wimmer was forced to beg old colleagues in leading positions in Austrian *Reichsgaue* for help with teaching personnel, but he met with only mixed results. The Gauleiter of Styria, Siegfried Uiberreither, responded that of the 480 male teachers in his district, 300 had been called into the military, necessitating the combining of classes and even entire schools, and

¹²¹ BAL R83/29.

¹²² NIOD 020/2047.

¹²³ BAL R83/29.

thus sending Wimmer any teachers would be impossible. Friedrich Rainer, in Gau Kärnten, responded that he was more of the mind to ask Wimmer for teachers than to send his own to Holland. Baldur von Schirach (Vienna) and Albert Reitter (Salzburg) both responded that they *might* be able to send some teachers later, but not now, and that they would get back to Wimmer at some later date (they never did). Only August Eigruber, Gauleiter of Oberdonau, was able to answer Wimmer's request affirmatively, making four teachers available for service in the Netherlands. Eventually, the shortage of teachers became so dire that, in 1943, the German secondary school in Rotterdam, the oldest German school in the country, was forced to close down. The following spring, the German secondary school in The Hague was threatened with the same.¹²⁴

Despite the setbacks that the *Reichskommissariat* encountered with the German Schools in the Netherlands, the German leadership there was determined to press on. German Schools were seen, not only as defenders of Germandom in the Netherlands, but as competitors for students. According to Schwarz, if the niveau of German Schools could be raised, it would create a positive feedback loop in which Dutch schools tried to keep up, thereby making the political task of the Germans that much easier.¹²⁵ Wimmer felt similarly regarding the importance of the German Schools:

The German schools have the task of pushing forward the development of the Dutch school system. The advantages of the complete education of the German school stand out clearly from the Dutch school, which is generally good in practice, but too intellectual, so that every new German school establishment can act as a new example in the sense of our schooling and education principles. ... This influence of the German schools, which follows from the very fact of its existence alone, but which is strengthened by constant contact of the German teachers with Dutch teachers, will be steadily increasing, the better and more exemplary the German schools are being developed.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ BAL R83/29.

¹²⁵ NIOD 020/2047.

¹²⁶ BAL R83/29.

The examples that both men discussed relate to not just the niveau of the schools, but also the content of the courses taught within. In most German Schools, the subjects taught were more similar to those taught in the Reich than in the Netherlands. Physical Education, for example, had long been a component of the curriculum at German Schools. With the Nazi seizure of power, subjects like “racial studies” became prevalent as well, as did the teaching of politics and history along Nazified lines. Because Seyss-Inquart decreed that the schools should be made up of two third Germans and one third Netherlanders, this content was certain to seep into the general population eventually acting as a further influence upon the Dutch populace, especially as the schools grew in importance and size.

Furthermore, the content that was being taught at these schools was clearly aimed at conditioning the students to see the world through the lens of the Greater Germanic Reich already coming into being. For the 1942 *Reifeprüfung* (the secondary school exit examination) at the German secondary school in Rotterdam, which was at that time located in Bad Wörishofen, Bavaria as a result of the *Kinderlandverschickung*, the graduating students were tasked with writing an essay on the developments in the Netherlands since the occupation began. The student respondents, who both received positive marks for the content of their essays but who also had several grammatical errors, were clear in the purpose of the German occupation:

The Führer sent the Reichskommissar to the Netherlands with the clear and unambiguous assignment to prepare the Netherlands for integration into the Greater Germanic living space. ... I am firmly convinced that we are on the correct and best path toward the realization of the Führer's great mission and that the Netherlands in the not too distant future will [become] a worthy member and strong cornerstone in the Greater Germanic living space.¹²⁷

The other student was of a similar mindset:

... From all these attempts, a people will be formed, ready to occupy its natural place, intended for it in the Greater Germanic living space, and to see [itself] as an outpost of a firm block on the North Sea. For if

¹²⁷ BAL R83/24.

Europe, or rather the Germanic race, wants to persist, it must not mutilate itself and waste valuable blood, but must join forces to resist the attacks of the rest of the world in a strong and powerful way.¹²⁸

As examples for the future of Dutch education, the German Schools in the Netherlands experienced both success and failure. They had trouble with recruiting enough staff, but that was a problem that was encountered throughout Germany as well and was not specific to German International Schools. The huge increases in the student body of these schools and the establishment boom that took place under Schwarz could only be, and in fact were, viewed quite positively from the German perspective. It is more difficult to say what effect they had directly on the Dutch system, however. While many of the changes that took place at the German schools were carried over into Dutch schooling, this was not explicitly because the Dutch leadership of the Education Department saw the examples set by the German Schools and wanted to emulate them, rather it was because the Nazis were ultimately in charge of Dutch education. Whether they would have eventually provided the desired example, as Schwarz and Wimmer predicted they would, remains pure speculation, although, given the generally negative view of the German occupation held by most Netherlands, it seems highly unlikely. In either case, neither man believed the change would happen overnight and so the short period of German dominance proved too short to have a lasting influence, and in that sense, they were a failure. Regardless, the German Schools in the Netherlands were not the only schools that were representative of the “direct route” that Schwarz discussed in his reports back to the Party Chancellery. The other type of schools were also German institutions, but unlike the German Schools, were meant specifically and only for the future elite of the proposed Greater Germanic Reich—the NIVO and the *Reichsschulen*.

¹²⁸ BAL R83/24.

*Nederlandsche instelling voor volksche opvoeding (NIVO)*¹²⁹

On August 12, 1941 in a nationally broadcast speech van Dam announced several major changes to Dutch education. A short paragraph toward the end of the speech that had not been contained in any of the draft versions was inserted which announced the formation of so-called *Nederlandsche instellingen voor volksche opvoeding*, or NIVO (Dutch Institutes for *Völkisch* Education).¹³⁰ The reason for its late addition to the speech is unclear, but was likely because this was one development of which van Dam did not personally approve, although this was only because the NIVO, in many ways, was an attempt to circumvent van Dam's personal authority in the Education Department.¹³¹ Van Dam did not personally support the creation of the NIVO; what work he did on its behalf was, apparently, merely because Schwarz presented the NIVO to him as a *fait accompli*.¹³²

The development of the NIVO as one possible "direct route" toward the Germanicization of Dutch youth had been under consideration for the better part of a year by the time it was announced to the public.¹³³ The idea was that the Dutch, as ethnic and racial kin to the German people, needed an institution similar to the *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* (National Political Education Institutes, or Napola) that had been operating in Nazi Germany since shortly after the Nazi seizure of power.¹³⁴ The goal of the Napola was the select education along national

¹²⁹ The name of these institutions varies depending on what material one looks at. The Dutch terms *instituut*, *inrichting*, and *instelling* can all mean variations of *institute* or *organization*. NIOD labels them *instituut*; van Dam originally labeled them *instelling* in his speech announcing the institutions to the Dutch people; the most complete work devoted to the institutions uses the term *inrichting*. All refer to the same school at Koningsheide. When necessary, I have used van Dam's original formulation, but to keep things simple, I have generally stuck with using their acronym, NIVO.

¹³⁰ Drafts of the speech can be found in NIOD 020/2062. The newspaper reports include the section on the NIVO. See e.g. "Wijzigingen in het onderwijs," *Rotterdamsch nieuwsblad*, August 13, 1941, Day edition; "Nieuwe wijzigingen in het onderwijs aangekondigd," *De Noord-Ooster*, August 14, 1941, Day edition, sec. Tweede Blad.

¹³¹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 21; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 83–84; Knegtman, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 268.

¹³² De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 84.

¹³³ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 156.

¹³⁴ Knegtman, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 268.

socialist lines of the next generation of the German bureaucratic elite and had as their spiritual forefathers the British public school system, the military cadet academies of the Kaiserreich and the *Landerziehungsheimen*.¹³⁵ Where the military cadet academies were to produce future officers for the German military, the Napola was to produce the leadership in the political war for the future. Like the British public school, the Napola would produce the ruling elites of the coming generations, and like the country education homes, the Napolas were boarding schools that placed a special emphasis on one's connection to the land. All in all, they were models of the Nazi view of what ideal education in a national socialist world would look like.

Education in the German Napolas had a similar focus to the various later "reforms" that would be implemented in the Netherlands by the German occupiers and their Dutch collaborators. There was an increased emphasis on those subjects thought to be most beneficial to the creation of future Germans such as history, racial studies, music, physical education and sport, politics, German language, biology, and geography. At the same time, other subjects were deemphasized, including mathematics, foreign languages, and religious instruction. The schools offered a "complete education,"¹³⁶ and in many cases, offered additional courses such as horseback riding, automobile driving, and sailing, that lent them the veneer of elite schools for the sons of the wealthy, even though they drew students from all social classes.¹³⁷ This was made even more prominent by the focus of the Napolas upon education in a camp-like setting, rather than in school buildings. Especially as the war went on, and the Germans resorted to sending children to the countryside to escape bombing raids in the *Kinderlandverschickung*, which many

¹³⁵ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, I/138; Schneider, Stillke, and Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola*, 34. Country education homes

¹³⁶ *Gesamterziehung*.

¹³⁷ Schneider, Stillke, and Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola*, 36, 38–39; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 160.

Napolas took part in, the ability to fuse education via the Napolas with political acculturation via service in the Hitler Youth allowed students to receive the type of “total education” most revered by Nazi educational theorists.¹³⁸

Like many aspects of Nazi bureaucracy, the Napolas were the center of a power struggle between the regular government, in the form of German Minister of Education Bernhard Rust, and the institutions of the party, especially the mass organizations such as the SS.¹³⁹ Whereas the Nazi party had managed to establish the *Adolf-Hitler-Schulen*, that would prepare the next generation of party leadership, the SS had no such direct institution, so it was little surprise that Himmler attempted to co-opt the Napola for his own purposes. Rust, however, was mostly able at least initially to keep the SS at bay and maintain his own authority over the Napolas, of which there were more than forty throughout Germany by the later war period.¹⁴⁰ By 1936, however, with the appointment of *SS-Obergruppenführer* August Heissmeyer as Inspector of the Napola, the SS began to make inroads into the institution and turn it ever more into an institution of racial and ideological indoctrination, although, formally, the Napolas remained under the control of the German Education Ministry.¹⁴¹

A similar dynamic threatened to play out in the Netherlands with the creation of the NIVO. There were, for all intents and purposes, three sides in the mix. The first was that of the *Reichskommissariat* itself, including especially Wimmer and Schwarz who were mainly concerned with maintaining their own authority over educational installations in the occupied Netherlands. The second group was that of the SS in Germany, in the form of Heissmeyer, who also had Himmler’s support and who hoped to control the Dutch institutions via his power center

¹³⁸ See Schneider, Stillke, and Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola*, 38–40.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33–34.

¹⁴⁰ In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, I/138.

¹⁴¹ See Schneider, Stillke, and Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola*, 42–45.

in the Reich, while the third side was that of the NSB, specifically the Mussert wing of the party, which was entirely against the idea for fear of it being an institution of Germanization, which was at odds with the Diets ideology of the Mussert wing of the party.¹⁴²

The initial impetus for the creation of the NIVO lay with Wimmer, who took up contact with Heissmeyer in November 1940 suggesting the creation of a Napola-like institution for the education of the elite of the next generation of Dutch youth.¹⁴³ The question was, however, how to go about erecting such an institution while keeping all of the players satisfied with the eventual outcome. There were several potential options that were considered. First was the establishment of a Napola in the Netherlands but that was generally ruled out as a violation of Seyss-Inquart's sole authority over the political indoctrination of the Dutch people. Moreover, it was feared that the creation of such a school might engender fears among the Dutch about the annexation of the Netherlands into the Reich. The second was the creation of an NSB-oriented institution, but that too was ruled out because the NSB's conception of education was at odds with the Germans' goals.¹⁴⁴ The third option was the creation of the NIVO. The NIVO could be a singularly Dutch institution, funded by the Reichskommissariat but whose mission was essentially similar to that of the Napola in Germany. By mid-1941, this third option had been decided upon and work began for the creation of such a school.¹⁴⁵

After much back and forth, the former Koningsheide Sanatorium in the village of Schaarsbergen near Arnhem, which had been first occupied and then relinquished by the German military, was chosen as the site for the first NIVO. Over the summer of 1941, advertisements were spread out across the country in order to recruit the appropriate youth to attend the school.

¹⁴² Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 22–23.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 20; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, I/138.

¹⁴⁴ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, I/139.

¹⁴⁵ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 22–23.

While their previous academic qualifications were taken into consideration, the most important selection criteria for the some 500 hundred applicants were their physical state and their racial qualities.¹⁴⁶ In the end, after two rounds of selection in which applicants were put through various tests to determine their qualifications, only twenty were chosen to attend the first class at the NIVO Koningsheide, although they were accompanied by a smaller group of German students from the Napola Bensberg, near Cologne, in order to ensure that the right cultural values were maintained in the school.¹⁴⁷ The school officially opened in September 1941, with trials for the second and third cohorts held in November.¹⁴⁸

For their part, the teachers were chosen carefully. Schwarz had been on the search for appropriate Dutch teachers for most of 1941.¹⁴⁹ Those he selected were sent to various Napolas in Germany for several months so that they could be trained in the appropriate educational methods by their German colleagues. There were seven Dutch teachers in total, six of whom were chosen from the ranks of the NSB, but importantly, all were believers in the Greater Germanic ideal and did not stem from the Diets wing of the party. The sole exception was a teacher from the NSNAP-van Rappard, the most extreme of the minor Nazi parties which advocated for a direct *re-incorporation* of the Netherlands into the German Reich. Both the school head and the head of instruction were Dutch.¹⁵⁰ In addition to these seven Dutch teachers, several teachers from the Napola Bensberg were sent to NIVO Koningsheide, including the chief of staff who stood as second in command of the institution.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, I/139; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 24. This was also the case for the German Napolas. Schneider, Stillke, and Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola*, 34–35.

¹⁴⁷ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 24; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 24–25.

¹⁴⁸ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 25.

¹⁴⁹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 21.

¹⁵⁰ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 23–24.

¹⁵¹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 24; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 26.

The fate of the NIVO Koningsheide was not what the Germans had hoped for. As it would turn out, the various political entanglements between the German and Dutch sides proved too great to overcome.¹⁵² Although it had originally supported the idea of the NIVO, the NSB soon resorted to an active anti-NIVO propaganda campaign, similar to the way their campaigns against the German Schools in the Netherlands had been orchestrated.¹⁵³ In short, these institutions went against everything that the Mussert wing of the party stood for in the realm of education and so could not be supported by the Mussert Movement.¹⁵⁴ The Germans, especially the SS faction, wanted the school to be controlled from Germany so as to make the NIVO as similar to the Napolas as possible; the NSB wanted to control the school themselves. The Dutch side wanted a school for only Dutch students, but the Germans, especially Heissmeyer and his lieutenant Wilhelm Kemper, who had temporarily run the Napola at Bensberg and was sent to the Netherlands to get things in Koningsheide in order, wanted a school that included German students from the Reich. The NSB saw the German language as, at best, the first foreign language, while the Germans wanted German to be the language of instruction.¹⁵⁵

Moreover, Seyss-Inquart was dissatisfied with the quality of the education being given to the students. This was, according to Seyss-Inquart, a result of the lack of political awareness of the Dutch teachers, which is not terribly surprising given that their training had consisted of little more than a couple of months at German institutions. In one example of such inappropriate political indoctrination, a student asked the school head and P.E. teacher Bossong, whether a person should give his seat in a full tram to a Jewish woman. After polling the class as to the

¹⁵² Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 20; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, I/140; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 156.

¹⁵³ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 27.

¹⁵⁴ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 156–57.

¹⁵⁵ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 96; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 28; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 156–57.

correct answer, Bossong, replied that, of course one should give up their seat in such a situation.¹⁵⁶ This was, obviously, not the politically acceptable type of instruction expected at such an august institution.

Finally, the problems of the NIVO were exacerbated by a lack of demand on the part of Dutch students to attend the NIVO, as those same students could get many of the advantages of attendance of the NIVO by attending one of the, by this point, several dozen German Schools in the Netherlands. Yet, by February 1942, Seyss-Inquart was in contact with Himmler regarding the establishment of actual Napolas in the Netherlands that would be based on the Greater Germanic ideal. By the end of April, shortly after the Easter holiday, the school was shut down, with the building reverting back to Luftwaffe control and the majority of the students being sent to the Napola in Bensberg.¹⁵⁷

The *Reichsschulen*

When the NIVO experiment ended in failure because of opposition from all sides, the German regime in the Netherlands and their counterparts in the Reich turned to a new educational institute that would better serve their purposes—the *Reichsschulen*. This time, there would be no mistakes. Because the NIVO had been created through the apparatus of the Dutch state, several sides, including van Dam and the NSB were able to attempt to influence the institution. The *Reichsschulen* were created directly by the *Reichskommissariat* itself, completely outside the purview of the Dutch government and securely under German control.¹⁵⁸ The very name of the institutions signified this explicit connection to Germany and disconnect from the Netherlands. Although the *Reichsschulen* were supposed to be near carbon copies of the German

¹⁵⁶ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 26.

¹⁵⁷ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 27–28; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 30; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 157.

¹⁵⁸ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 97n; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 652.

Napola, Himmler and Seyss-Inquart, with Hitler's blessing, chose the name "Reich School" because they felt that *National-Political Education Institute* should be reserved for institutions within Germany, but also wanted to signal that the education provided at these schools would serve the future elite of the Greater Germanic Reich.¹⁵⁹

As with the NIVO, there was some concern within the German side who, exactly, would be in control of the institution. On the one hand, there was the question of which entities in the Reich would control the *Reichsschulen*, with both *Reichserziehungsminister* Rust and Himmler vying for complete control. The result was a sort of reversal of the status of the Napola in Germany, with Himmler directly controlling the *Reichsschulen* and the German Education Ministry offering support, while in Germany the Napolas were controlled, technically, by the Education Ministry with the SS offering support.¹⁶⁰ On the side of the Reichskommissariat, the exact opposite happened, with the schools being technically under the jurisdiction of Wimmer's *Generalkommissariat für Verwaltung und Justiz*, but with any and all SS oriented issues going through Rauter's office.¹⁶¹

There were two such institutions, one for boys in Valkenburg and one for girls in Heythuysen, both in the southeastern province of Limburg, although Himmler had wanted to create a third school in 1944, but a lack of funds and the Allied invasion prevented the establishment of this third institution.¹⁶² On June 23, 1942, the *Deutsche Zeitung in den Niederlanden* published a lengthy report on the plans on its front page calling for applicants. The newspaper noted that these schools were "not intended for the broad masses, rather [would] take

¹⁵⁹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 29; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 160; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 143, 666–67, 808–9.

¹⁶⁰ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 160.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., 162.

in students, who are able to demonstrate their special spiritual, temperamental, and physical aptitude in a strict selection procedure.”¹⁶³ The “*Reichsschulen* want to educate their students into strong, active, self-sufficient boys and girls, that the new Europe urgently needs.”¹⁶⁴ Moreover, selection would not be based on the material means of the parents; any qualified student would be admitted regardless of financial ability to pay. The education would be similar in nature to a regular Dutch secondary school, but “but beyond that, they [the *Reichsschulen*] give and demand significantly more.” After successful completion, students would be free to choose any course of study at any university or enter any occupation they saw fit. The call for applicants asked for boys between the ages of ten and eleven and girls between ten and thirteen.¹⁶⁵

The purpose of these institutions, and their connection to the Napolas in Germany was spelled out explicitly:

The idea that was decisive in founding the Napola [in Germany] was to secure the next generation of leaders for the Greater German Reich created by Adolf Hitler. After this war, however, it will be a matter of securing the next generation of leaders for the Greater Germanic Community in the new Europe. For this reason, the establishment of the *Reichsschulen* in the Netherlands on the model of the Napola is justified, since the Netherlands will be a constituent [part] of the Greater Germanic-European community. This all the more justifies the entitlement of the *Reichsschulen* in the Netherlands to take over the education of German children as well as the education of Dutch children, since the Dutch should also be represented in this ideologically, temperamentally, and spiritually uniformly trained leadership class.¹⁶⁶

Seyss-Inquart was of a similar mind about the purpose of these schools. In a letter to Himmler during their initial discussions regarding the replacement of the NIVO with the *Reichsschulen*, he noted that

The curriculum would need to take more into account the history of the Netherlands and the nature of the Dutch people, but through the pan-Germanic point of view, so that the boys who have gone through these institutions will receive the best possible understanding in order to eventually fulfill Germanic task in this area [i.e., the Netherlands]. For this reason, the institutions in the Netherlands should also teach Dutch

¹⁶³ “Neue Wege der Erziehung,” *Deutsche Zeitung in den Niederlanden*, June 23, 1942.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

language, for example, so that Dutch is the native language, but German is the overall Germanic language of spirit and mutual understanding.¹⁶⁷

Or, in the words of Heissmeyer, who oversaw the two *Reichsschulen* in the Netherlands, the purpose of the *Reichsschulen* was to strongly bind the “Germanic tribes with the Germanic heartland—and that is Germany.”¹⁶⁸ There can be no mistaking that these schools were meant to produce the leadership of the future Greater Germanic Reich.

The *Reichsschule* for boys was located in a former Jesuit monastery, the St. Ignatius College, which had stood on the site since the 1870s.¹⁶⁹ The Jesuits were kicked out of the monastery in July 1942, when the local SD commander, with several SS officers and German soldiers in tow, came to occupy the grounds. The friars were given only a few hours to prepare their belonging before being sent via truck to their new locations. The official reason given was that the buildings were a military necessity. The next month, the preparations for the conversion of the former monastery into the *Reichsschule* for boys began.¹⁷⁰

It formally opened in September 1942 with a not insignificant carryover from the NIVO Koningsheide in Schaarsbergen. Wilhelm Kemper, Heissmeyer’s assistant who had significant experience with the NIVO and was previously an interim head of the Napola at Bensberg, was tasked with leading the new institution, although because his presence in the Hague was necessary, an adjutant was put in place as chief-of-staff.¹⁷¹ This was E. Debusmann, who had previously served in the same role at the NIVO, and who, prior to his work at the NIVO, had worked at the Napola in Bensberg as well. There was a total of nine teachers, two of which had previously served at the NIVO and had been sent with those students to Bensberg in spring 1942. Most were members of Germanic organizations, including three who were members of the

¹⁶⁷ In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 667.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 793.

¹⁶⁹ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 48.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 51–53.

¹⁷¹ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 161.

Waffen SS. All, save one, were proponents of the Greater Germanic ideal, rather than the *Diets* ideals of the NSB. The lone outlier, the art teacher, seems to have been a complete fluke. It was only when he arrived at Valkenburg that he realized he was working at an explicitly Nazi school, but he stayed on because if he left and was unable to find other work, he could be sent to Germany as part of the forced labor drafts.¹⁷²

The student body was mixed, with sixty-six Germans and fifty-seven Netherlands, which was slightly below the desired two-thirds German preference.¹⁷³ Of those sixty-six German students, thirty-eight had been transferred from the Napola in Bensberg in order to strengthen the German element, especially because the majority of the Dutch students had difficulty with the German language, which was the sole language of instruction.¹⁷⁴ The number of Dutch students actually climbed the following year such that they became a majority, threatening the German nature of the school.¹⁷⁵ The education these students received was also heavily German, that is, German language instruction was given the heaviest emphasis in academic subjects. In addition to German language and physical education, the students also received instruction in music, art, Dutch language, mathematics, history, geography, and English. French language and the hard sciences were not taught at all, while Dutch language was given second footing, with only two lesson hours per week, compared to the five hours given to German language instruction. Physical education, which was also given top billing next to German language, was divided into several different specialties, including light athletics, gymnastics, and even shooting, although shooting was reserved for the higher classes.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 34–35.

¹⁷³ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 161; Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 32.

¹⁷⁴ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 32–33.

¹⁷⁵ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 161.

¹⁷⁶ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 40–43.

Great emphasis was placed upon the military element at the school, which was supposed to foster a sense of community. The students did everything together. They woke together and went to the flag raising in the morning in columns. The students would then eat together, participate in sports together and, of course, go to class together. In the evening it was again a community experience as the flag was lowered together. Even at night, students marched to their dormitories in columns. Military precision was key. In addition, the students were given extraordinary tasks in which they looked after the school and each other. For example, one student would be in charge of making sure that the lights went out at night and that the other students were actually resting during the lights out period. Older students took charge of younger students as well. Even the teachers were included in this, for they too lived on site, and were required to be available at any and all times. The teachers were to act as models for the good behavior of the students, especially those who were at any given time tasked with supervising the daily operations of the school and the students, a position which rotated among the teachers every couple of days.¹⁷⁷

Once the children got older, they were expected to go out into the world and fulfill a *Landdienst*,¹⁷⁸ which was a requirement of the upper levels of the Napolas in Germany as well. In the last year of the *Reichsschule* for boys, the highest levels, those students who were seventeen and eighteen, were actually sent to the Warthegau to help with the harvest. So confident were the German supervisors that they sent the boys not to politically reliable farmers, but to those who were politically suspect, believing that the hard-working boys of the *Reichsschule* would bring their suspicious hosts around to the proper way of thinking.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 38–39.

¹⁷⁸ Service in the countryside.

¹⁷⁹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 39.

The parents, too, were largely happy with the education provided for their children, establishing a parents' committee that raised additional funds for the school. Of course, part of this was also likely because their children no longer had to endure harassment at regular Dutch schools by their fellow students and teachers, as all of the children at the *Reichsschule* were pro-German.¹⁸⁰ In fact, the school was so highly thought of that it received visits from all of the major players of the Dutch occupation. Seyss-Inquart, Wimmer, Schwarz, *Reichserziehungsminister* Rust and Heissmeyer all paid visits to the school. In February 1944, even the *Reichsführer-SS* himself, Heinrich Himmler, visited the school. By nearly everyone's estimation, the *Reichsschule* in Valkenburg was a stunning success.¹⁸¹

But the glossy picture painted by the *Reichskommissariat* and the SS was hiding deeper problems. As might be expected, the NSB largely opposed the school. Its opposition only grew when, after the initial class was matriculated, the majority of those students who had previously belonged to the NJS were recruited to the Hitler Youth. This was all the more problematic because Hitler Youth membership had previously been limited to German students, so the inclusion of Dutch students, which Debusmann had advocated for, angered the NSB even more.¹⁸² Van Genechten, who had been opposed to the use of German language as the primary instruction language at the NIVO was equally opposed to the *Reichsschule* for the same reason. He was not wrong that it was causing problems, for many of the Dutch students did not have the necessary command of the German language, and it was feared that their education was being hurt as a result; his objections were ignored.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 56.

¹⁸¹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 44–46.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 33, 39.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 33–34.

There were also concerns on the German side that the SS was not influential enough, despite the fact that the head of the school was himself an SS man. Heissmeyer wanted to make sure that all decisions regarding students and teachers went through the *SS-Hauptamt* in Berlin, while all other matters went through his own office, and not through the *Reichskommissariat*, which was footing the bill. In his reply, which seems to have satisfied Heissmeyer, Klemperer noted that the question of choosing teachers and selecting students was run through the hand-selected deputy of Rauter, who himself was Himmler's personal representative and protege in the Netherlands. Despite the strict selection criteria that were used in the selection of teachers, Debusmann, the school's chief of staff, complained in his initial report to The Hague that the teachers treated the students as a junior officer might treat raw recruits. One teacher even resorted to punching and kicking children to get them into line.¹⁸⁴

Despite the difficulties that the school faced initially, it did manage to function adequately for two full years. It probably would have continued to function except that by summer 1944, Allied armies were firmly established in Northern France. Valkenburg, situated as it was in the very south of the Netherlands, was quite exposed to Allied forces, and so the Germans decided to evacuate the students and teachers to Germany. Before the beginning of the 1944-45 school year, the school was evacuated in its entirety first to Napola Bensberg, and eventually to the Napola Naumburg am Saale, southwest of Leipzig, where the teachers and students stayed until further Allied advances pushed them north to the Napola Plön in Schleswig-Holstein. It was there that the remaining students experienced the German defeat.¹⁸⁵ But in what must truly stand as a testament to the success of the education the students at Valkenburg received, at least nine of the older boys opted to join the *Waffen-SS* in January 1945. Even

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 29–32.

¹⁸⁵ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 162; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 163–74.

though the noose was clearly closing in on Germany's neck, true faith in the ultimate Nazi victory could still be found.¹⁸⁶

The *Reichsschule* at Valkenburg was accompanied by a similarly named institution for girls at Heythuysen, just to the northwest of Roermond. But if the school in Valkenburg was a relative success, the girls' school was an abject failure. For the most part, the blame for this lay with the person chosen to direct the school, Julia op ten Noort. Op ten Noort was the daughter of a minor noble house; her brother was also active in Nazi politics and, in addition to working with the Royal Marechaussee was appointed to head the Sub-Department Higher Education in the Education Department in fall 1941.¹⁸⁷ Julia op ten Noort had a long history in Nazi politics as well, dating to well before the Nazi invasion. In the split in the NSB that occurred between the *Diets* and *Groot-Germaans* wings of the party in the latter half of the thirties, op ten Noort stood solidly on Rost van Tonningen's Greater Germanic side. It had been her, she claimed, that had arranged the first meeting between Rost and Heinrich Himmler in 1937.¹⁸⁸ She had also been instrumental in to the creation of the Dutch *Nationaal-Socialistische Vrouwenorganisatie* which was officially separate from the NSB.¹⁸⁹ Op ten Noort hoped to bring this organization around to the Greater Germanic thinking as well, which would have stood in direct conflict with the NSB's *Diets* ideology, but was unsuccessful in doing so, eventually being pushed out of the organization in early 1941.¹⁹⁰ Finally, along with Rost, op ten Noort attempted to create a separate youth organization, *De Nederlandsche Jeugd*, a co-educational organization oriented along Greater Germanic lines, and even accompanied fifty former NJS members to Berlin in

¹⁸⁶ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 47.

¹⁸⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/575.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., IV/237.

¹⁸⁹ National Socialist Women's Organization. Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 48–49.

summer 1940, but that effort too fizzled out. The children were not as enthusiastic about the Greater Germanic concept as op ten Noort herself was.¹⁹¹

Later in 1941, as plans were being made for the NIVO, Himmler, who had a soft spot for the baroness, interceded with van Dam, via Rauter and Wimmer, to get op ten Noort appointed to lead the planned NIVO for girls. The problem was, however, that she had absolutely no experience in the education realm beyond the three years of gymnasium she completed as a child. She had never attended higher education, taught, or directed a school in any way, but she had good contacts with high ranking Nazis and the right ideological outlook and so she got the job.¹⁹² Because of her lack of necessary experience, she was shipped to Germany to take a crash course at the two Napolas for girls in order to learn her trade. By the time she had returned, in February 1942, the NIVO experiment had been scrapped in favor of a *Reichsschule*, the directorship of which she also received.¹⁹³

Plans for the establishment of the school had not gone as well as the school for boys and so when the first students arrived in fall 1942 in Heythuysen, they were put to work getting the former monastery—the St. Elizabeth Monastery—ready for use as a school. There were forty students selected from a larger group of six-hundred, fifty applicants, all of whom were selected for their health and racial qualities by the same *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Aust that had been instrumental in selecting the students for Valkenburg.¹⁹⁴ The teachers for the school were selected mostly by op ten Noort herself, which, given her own background, did not bode well for the functioning of the school, even though Kemper took part in the process as well. The average

¹⁹¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/451.

¹⁹² Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 67–68.

¹⁹³ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 49–50.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

teacher at Heythuysen was a young woman under thirty who, like op ten Noort herself, had only a middling education; only two had any academic training.¹⁹⁵

In terms of the education provided for the girls, it was essentially similar to that provided for the students at the Napolas for girls in Germany, and included math, biology, history, physical education, geography, home economics, agriculture, and German. Additionally, there were Dutch language courses for the German students, which stood in stark contrast to the *Reichsschule* in Valkenburg, where the Dutch students had to learn German.¹⁹⁶ The education the girls received at Heythuysen, however, was clearly directed at their planned future place as mothers in the coming Greater Germanic Reich. In an advertisement for the school in the NSB-connected magazine *Werkend Volk*, where education at traditional schools, such as the gymnasium or the HBS were predicated on little difference between men and women:

Education at the *Reichsschule* is, on the other hand, is precisely tailored to that difference. ... Certainly, we imagine the wife as a housewife, but then as head of a family in all daily difficulties, as a comrade of the man whom she promised to follow through life, and who promised to help, to support and to care for her.

...

Sport is also in its entirety adapted to the feminine. Here [there will not be] military exercises as in Valkenburg, here [there will be] no hardening as with the boys. Here the purpose is much more focused on the healthy, flexible, [and] resilient body... A school where children are prepared for life in a way that actually has never been done before...

They will all later play a confident role in society, they will occupy leading roles, but they must be in the first place spouses and mothers—that is thus “women.” This school will make them such, that is its duty to the community of the coming Greater Germanic Reich.¹⁹⁷

Despite the lofty ideals portrayed by the school, however, it was unsuccessful in almost every way.¹⁹⁸ Unlike in Valkenburg, the parents complained about the education given and the building was unkempt such that disease was common forcing some girls to be sent home.¹⁹⁹ NJS students were treated as second-class students; op ten Noort took a provocative attitude in stark

¹⁹⁵ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 71. Not all of the teachers were female. The first biology teacher, for example was male.

¹⁹⁶ *Werkend Volk*, 27 August 1943, quoted in Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 51.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51–52.

¹⁹⁸ Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 74.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 99–101.

contrast to Debusmann at Valkenburg. Both had favored the Hitler Youth over the NJS, but where Debusmann advocated mutual respect between the two groups at the school and for the opening of the Hitler Youth to Dutch students thereby diffusing the tension, op ten Noort enflamed the animosities between the two groups by obviously privileging the League of German Girls over the NJS.²⁰⁰ A former teacher at one of the Napolas in Germany, Elfriede Hiess, was installed as assistant director of the school, and she found that instruction was lacking; the teachers at Heythuysen were as ill-prepared for their functions as op ten Noort was for hers.²⁰¹ In early 1943, op ten Noort followed through in her teachings regarding motherhood when she became pregnant by an unknown SS officer during a visit to Berlin—it was rumored that the father was Himmler himself owing to the child, who was born in early 1944, being named Heinrich. She was sent to a *Lebensborn* house in Bavaria and would not return to the school.²⁰² Directorship of the school was handed over to the assistant for the remainder of the school year, but that was all. When the students were released for summer vacation, plans were made to transfer the school to the Napola for girls at Reichenau on Lake Constance, but only nine of the girls actually went to Germany.²⁰³

Conclusion

The German International Schools, the NIVO, and the *Reichsschulen* were the extent of the “direct route” that the Germans took during the occupation. The German International Schools encountered undeniable success during the occupation, increasing in both total number and student population, receiving benefits from the state, and obtaining full legal equality for the German-style education within the larger Dutch state. On the other hand, this success was

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 76; Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 33,38, 53.

²⁰¹ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 54; Steen, *Keurkinderen*, 104.105.

²⁰² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/250n; In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 492n.

²⁰³ Barnouw, *Van NIVO tot Reichsschule*, 54–55.

directly a result of support offered by the *Reichskommissariat*, not because of any inherent advantages these schools offered their students. This is all the more surprising because of the strict opposition of the NSB to these schools, as NSB children would have been a natural fit for the Dutch element there.²⁰⁴ Had the occupation regime's support for these schools been less, they likely would not have encountered the success they did, instead languishing in the state of relative obscurity and unimportance that they had been in before the occupation began.

For their part, the NIVO and the *Reichsschule* for girls were both failures, while the *Reichsschule* for boys was more of a mixed bag. All three institutions encountered stiff resistance from the NSB and had little support within the Dutch bureaucracy. These were, for all intents and purposes, entirely German affairs. But unlike in Germany, the structural support was not available in the Netherlands. The Netherlands did not have the long history of internment schools or military academies that served as precursors of sorts to the *Napolas* in Germany. Nor did the Nazi regime enjoy the support of the Dutch people in any way similar to the support the Nazi government in Germany received from German citizens. Given these setbacks, the school in Valkenburg, in particular, must be seen as a relative success. In two years, the regime managed to create an institution that was generally well regarded by both the teachers, students, parents, and the regime itself, which was no mean feat, especially considering the fate of the other institutions.

But there was one way in which the direct path was entirely ineffective—as models for Dutch education. This was mostly due to the lack of time involved and the relatively closeted nature of the various institutions. Most of the German International Schools and both of the *Reichsschulen* were located very near the German border, far away from the densely populated

²⁰⁴ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/249; In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 928.

provinces of the Randstad. And while there were German schools in the large cities of the western provinces, they were small in comparison to the much larger numbers of Dutch schools. Furthermore, their ability to serve as models for Dutch schools was limited by the relatively short rule of the German regime in the Netherlands and, especially, the general antipathy the Dutch populace displayed toward their German overlords and any local representatives of that regime. Ultimately, the changing tide of the war brought an end to the direct path toward Germanicization for both the German Schools and the two *Reichsschulen*. The overwhelming majority of the German International Schools closed shortly after the war ended, while the two *Reichsschulen* did not even survive that long.

In the next two chapters, the focus turns to the “indirect route” for the Germanicization of the Netherlands. This path involved the introduction of “reforms” into Dutch schools directly, with the aim of cultivating a new cultural identity among Dutch students. Unfortunately for the German occupiers, their efforts in this realm would be equally ineffective, and because of the increasingly repressive nature of the regime, there would be even less time for the “indirect route” to become effective than for the “direct route” through German institutions.

Chapter 5 - The Indirect Path to Germanicization

We Germans, who go through this land with an eye that is sharpened by understanding for the value of bonds of blood and the decay of blood in a people, rejoice in the Dutch people. We rejoice over the children, we wish, that the boys here become brave, powerful, and energetic and that the girls become happy mothers in large families. -
*Reichskommissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart, May 29, 1940*¹

In his speech to the Dutch nation held in the *Ridderzaal* of the *Binnenhof* in The Hague on May 29, 1940, the newly installed *Reichskommissar* Arthur Seyss-Inquart told the Dutch nation, “We do not come here to oppress and destroy a nation, and to take liberty from a country ... We do not want to imperialistically put this country and its people in a tight spot, nor impose our political convictions on them.”² This would prove to be a hollow promise. Over the next five years, the German occupiers in the Netherlands did make a maximum effort to ingrain within the Dutch populace the notion that they were, like the German nation itself, members of a larger Germanic community of peoples. This expanded community was to be the future leaders of Europe with all other peoples, Slavs, Southern Europeans, and minority populations such as Jews, slated to be, at best, second class citizens in the new Nazi controlled Europe, or, at worst, eliminated entirely.

In the Netherlands, this process took many forms. In his initial mandate from the Nazi leadership in Berlin, Seyss-Inquart was tasked with winning over the Dutch populace through peaceful means. As fellow “Aryans,” the Dutch were to be treated relatively well and they were to be convinced, rather than cajoled, into joining Hitler’s Germanic project or in the words of Schwarz, “to move the Dutch volk to a positive collaboration in the Greater Germanic realm.”³ As a result, the German leadership in the Netherlands initially settled on a course of relatively benign stewardship over the Dutch, Christian population aimed at inculcating Nazi values

¹ “Rijkscommissaris Rijksminister Seyss-Inquart aanvaardt zijn ambt,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, May 30, 1940, sec. Eerste Blad.

² Ibid.

³ NIOD 020/2047.

through various initiatives, but, as the Nazis fully recognized, key among these initiatives was their stewardship of the youth, and key to that was their control of the schools.⁴ As has been noted by other historians, this process, in many ways, mirrored the process of *Gleichschaltung* in Germany itself.⁵ But, as I argue, the process of *gelijkschakeling* in the Netherlands included not only the process of *coordination* as found in Germany, but also a second level of cultural development aimed at turning the independent-minded Dutch nation into members of the Greater Germanic Reich. It was a process aimed at bringing the Dutch back into the Germanic fold from which it had ostensibly deviated, as so many German nationalist and *völkisch* thinkers had argued for decades prior.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the German leadership in the educational realm saw two paths toward the Germanicization of Dutch youth via education. The direct path, which focused on German educational institutions, and the indirect path, which focused on Dutch institutions. This chapter focuses on the administrative and curricular changes that the Germans and their Dutch collaborators introduced during the first year and one half of the occupation that fall along the indirect path that Schwarz envisioned. These included the removal of Jewish persons from the schools, the school book control commission, attempts at suppressing the influence of the confessions in education, and attempts to increase the power of the state apparatus. This chapter further looks at the developments in educational organization, including the attempted reorganization of primary education and the attempts to introduce new subjects while changing the weight other subjects were given in the curriculum.

⁴ NIOD 020/2047.

⁵ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 11–17, 112–13; Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande*; Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 69–108.

Depending on the perspective taken, these efforts can be seen as either an astounding success or a relative failure. The German leadership, especially Schwarz, certainly thought them to be a great achievement, and stated as much in multiple reports back to the Party Chancellery, as well as in letters to other colleagues.⁶ Despite that outlook, however, these attempted changes to education were only a success to the extent that official rules had been changed. When one dives further and looks at whether those changes were actually reflected at the local level through the work of teachers and administrators on the ground, the astounding successes appear much less amazing. Most of the attempted changes were only partially implemented whether because of a lack of necessary resources or because of administrative and logistical restraints. And of course, even when those structural challenges could be overcome, the resistance of teachers and administrators blocked the occupiers' path forward.

Because this chapter focuses on the higher-level attempts by the Germans and their Dutch collaborators to change education in the Netherlands, the focus here will remain on Seyss-Inquart, Friedrich Wimmer, Heinrich Schwarz, and Jan van Dam. Although these individuals had significant support from lower ranking bureaucrats and other individuals, this chapter will not dwell on the efforts of these lower level operatives in detail. A closer look at the events on the ground at the local level, which will include the efforts of the extraordinary school inspectors as well as reactions by Dutch teachers, parents, and students, will follow in chapter seven.

Anti-Jewish Measures

The first incursions of the German occupation into the education sphere were not actually directed at educational institutions specifically. Rather, they were directed at the Netherlands' Jewish population and directly affected education only because some teachers,

⁶ BAL R83-Niederlande/25; NIOD 020/2047.

administrators, and students were Jewish. Using as an excuse that the legal Dutch government had fled to London, Seyss-Inquart decreed on August 20, 1940 that the *Reichskommissariat* could hire and dismiss civil servants as necessary.⁷ A similar order the following month, on September 13, incorporated any institutions that received financial assistance from the state under the purview of the *Reichskommissariat*'s hiring and firing authority—confessional schools were explicitly named as one such institutional form.⁸ In the interim, on August 28, Commissioner-General Wimmer sent instructions to the College of Secretaries-General ordering that no Jewish persons be hired or promoted in the Civil Service, an order that was in direct violation of several clauses of the Dutch constitution, which was quickly noted by the College.⁹ When the obvious questions came regarding who, exactly, was to be considered Jewish, circulars from the *Reichskommissariat* were dispatched on September 30, followed by an official decree October 22, that defined anyone with two Jewish grandparents as Jewish. Those grandparents were considered Jewish if they had taken part in the Jewish religious community.¹⁰

On October 17, the occupation authority sent orders, via the College of Secretaries-General, to all government departments demanding that civil servants fill out one of two forms, declaring whether or not they were “aryan,” specifically asking the respondents whether they had “Jewish blood,” which, according to the instructions forwarded with the forms meant any person with a single grandparent who had been a member of the Jewish community.¹¹ Most civil

⁷ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 108/1940.

⁸ Ibid., 137/1940.

⁹ Specifically, Articles 4 and 5 of the Dutch Constitution of 1917 which guarantee, respectively, equal protection before the law and the right of every Dutch citizen to be appointed to positions within the civil service.

¹⁰ Moore, *Victims and Survivors*, 55; Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 16. Moore and Presser both state that only *one* Jewish grandparent—in Presser's case a Jewish *grandfather*—was required. The official decree of Oct. 22, lists *two* Jewish grandparents. Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 189/1940. Later, in January 1941, when Seyss-Inquart decreed the registration of Jewish individuals, he defined anyone as Jewish who had a single Jewish grandparent. Ibid., 6/1941.

¹¹ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 249–52. The form also asked whether a person was married or engaged to a person “of Jewish blood.” The form is reproduced in its entirety on pages 250–251.

servants, whether Jewish or Gentile, signed the forms without recognizing the danger in helping the occupation create a registry of Jewish civil servants. Despite the willingness of most civil servants to sign the form, the so-called Aryan Attestation was met with some protests in the educational sector. Ben Telders, Professor of International Law at Leiden University, appealed to the High Court in an appeal that went unanswered, while Paul Scholten, Professor of Law at the University of Amsterdam, organized a petition to be sent directly to Seyss-Inquart in protest.¹² It, too, was ignored. At the same time, the teachers and administrators of the Amsterdam Lyceum and one Christian school in The Hague refused to sign the forms as a group. Student groups at various universities across the country sent their own petitions to the *Reichskommissar* protesting the Aryan Attestation, some gaining thousands of signatures, but these petitions had no more effect as Telders's. Protests were not limited to the educational sphere, either, as both the Roman Catholic and Dutch Reformed churches spoke publicly, from the pulpit, in protest. But the protesters were, almost always, a minority among a much larger group of their colleagues all too willing to return the forms back up the chain. Protesting the Aryan Attestation was one thing, but a willingness to quit in the face of the Germans' demands was quite another.¹³

The Aryan Attestation set the stage for the dismissal of Jewish civil servants, including teachers and other instructional faculties, from their posts. This was ordered by Seyss-Inquart, via Wimmer, on November 4, 1940, but, importantly, not as an official decree published in the Official Register for the Occupied Dutch Territories, as other official decrees had been and would continue to be. Rather the order came as a circular to the various departments. It was

¹² Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 20–21.

¹³ Moore, *Victims and Survivors*, 55. Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 20–24.

almost as if he hoped to slide the order in under the door, where it was less likely to be noticed.¹⁴ Almost immediately, in the face of protests from the Secretaries-General, the Germans agreed to making the dismissals “temporary” and allowed the newly dismissed Jewish civil servants to retain some of their pay and pensions. Although this concession did bring the acquiescence of the Secretaries-General, the promises were broken quickly, when in late 1940, the dismissals were made permanent.¹⁵

Public resistance to the dismissals of Jewish civil servants was more widespread than it had been to the Aryan Attestation of the previous month. In perhaps the most famous event, on November 26, three weeks after the circular was published to the various governmental departments, Professor Rudolph Cleveringa, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Leiden University, delivered a damning speech against the dismissal of a Jewish colleague. Held in the main hall of the Academy Building and attended by numerous faculty and students, Cleveringa’s denunciation of the occupiers’ anti-Jewish measures was transcribed by a student in attendance and quickly spread throughout the country. In an attempt to disrupt the Germans’ plans, the students at Leiden erupted in strike shortly thereafter, to which the Germans responded by arresting Cleveringa and shutting down the university entirely on November 27.¹⁶ Although the Schwarz and Wimmer both hoped to use the closure to reconstitute Leiden University as a “Germanic university,” their plans for this reconstitution never materialized.¹⁷ At the same time, van Genechten, head of the NSB’s *Opvoedersgilde* wanted to reopen the university as a “*volksche*” university, that is an NSB-oriented, nazified institution, while van Dam simply hoped

¹⁴ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 335–36.

¹⁵ Moore, *Victims and Survivors*, 55–56. Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 25–27.

¹⁶ NIOD 216e/164

¹⁷ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 106; In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 853n.

to reopen it for reasons of his own prestige.¹⁸ But none of these plans came to fruition, and Leiden University remained closed for the next four years, reopening for classes only after the end of the war for the 1945/1946 winter semester.¹⁹

In contrast to the professors at Leiden, it was the students at the Technical University of Delft who led the anti-dismissal agitation. A few days prior to Cleveringa's speech at Leiden and upon finding the lecture hall of Prof. A.C. Josephus Jitta closed due to his dismissal, one student leader delivered an impromptu speech to his classmates denouncing the Germans' anti-Jewish measures. Later that evening, when other students went to the lecture hall of Professor David van Dantzig, who had also been dismissed, the present students determined that they would strike the following Monday. That Monday, November 25, the student body at Delft erupted in a strike that lasted well into the night and the following day, in what was one of the first public protests of the Nazis' anti-Jewish measures in the Netherlands.²⁰ Just as in Leiden, the Germans reacted harshly with the complete closure of the university. Although it was reopened the following year because the Germans needed trained engineers, the student leader, Frans van Haselt, was later arrested and sent to a concentration camp in Germany, perishing there in 1942.²¹

A smaller protest erupted at Wageningen University but bore little effect, while the rectors at the universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht successfully prevented the students there from engaging in desired strike actions, the former by closing early for the winter holidays, the latter by convincing the students that a more strategically timed action would be more effective, although that better timing never materialized. Protests against the dismissal of Jewish

¹⁸ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 106; Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 270–71.

¹⁹ NIOD 020/2047.

²⁰ Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 27–28.

²¹ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 149.

instructors also took place in high schools across the country, from Friesland in the north, to Tiel in the south, from Amsterdam in the West, to Doetinchem right on the eastern border with Germany.²² Most of the protests were small, with only a handful of students or instructors taking part, but they show that even at this early stage some Netherlands were prepared to resist the imposition of Nazi values upon their country. Only in Leiden and Delft were the protests large enough to engender a significant response by the German occupiers, and in each case, that response was loud and clear. The closure of the oldest and most respected university in the Netherlands at Leiden and the similar fate of the Technical University of Delft sent a direct and very visible message to the Dutch populace that the new occupation authority was willing to take drastic measures to enforce its prerogatives, even in the face of outright revolt and even in this early phase in which Seyss-Inquart still hoped to win the Dutch over to Nazism. Moreover, it would stand as a near constant reminder to everyone else in the educational establishment about the costs of defying the Germans' plans for Dutch education.²³

It would become clear in the near future that the dismissal of Jewish teachers was only a first step in the Germans' anti-Jewish persecutions in the educational realm. On January 10, 1941, Seyss-Inquart required that all Jewish persons in the Netherlands register themselves with the government, decreeing that any person who had a single grandparent who had taken part in the Jewish community was considered Jewish.²⁴ This was followed, on February 11, by the introduction of a *numerus clausus* for Jewish students in higher education and a near ban on new enrollments by Jewish students seeking post-secondary education, all of whom now had to seek the personal approval of the Secretary-General for admission.²⁵ The *Deutsche Zeitung in den*

²² Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 27–28.

²³ See, e.g. “Radiorede prof. dr. J. van Dam.”

²⁴ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 6/11941.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 27–28/1941.

Niederlanden, an organ of the German colony in the Netherlands, noted that the decrees were direct responses to the protest actions in Leiden and Delft two months prior.²⁶

These anti-Jewish actions that affected the educational sector were but a small portion of the Germans' larger efforts at isolating Jewish Netherlands from their Christian co-nationals. Resentment and agitation on the part of the persecuted Jewish minority boiled over later that month, when, on February 19, a German police patrol entered a Jewish owned ice-cream parlor called Koco in Amsterdam. Koco had been a popular locale for both Jews and Gentiles alike, and owing to that popularity, was afforded a sort of clandestine security by neighborhood youth, who fashioned improvised weapons and stood patrol. But as minor successes against Dutch Nazis emboldened them, their attempts at remaining inconspicuous unraveled, leading to direct German intervention. On that fateful February 19, when the German police entered the parlor, they were assaulted with ammonia gas. The German police patrol responded by emptying their guns into the shop and arresting the German-Jewish proprietors.²⁷

Three days later, on Saturday, February 22, the occupation authorities responded even more violently, as *razzia* patrols descended upon the Waterlooplein square, in the heart of the old Jewish Quarter, and rounded up 425 Jewish "hostages," all of whom were promptly shipped off to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.²⁸ It was followed by another *razzia* the next morning which led to even more arrests. But the Germans had overplayed their hand and had not expected the response of the citizenry to this ghastly affront. On the very same Saturday evening as the first *razzia*, Jaap Brandenburg, Amsterdam district leader of the outlawed Communist

²⁶ "Vormachtstellung der Juden an den Hochschulen gebrochen," *Deutsche Zeitung in den Niederlanden*, February 19, 1941, Day edition.

²⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/888-889.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, IV/889-895. The term *razzia*, which originally comes from Arabic to refer to a slave raid, was used in the Netherlands (and Denmark) to refer to police raids aimed at collecting Jews for arrest and deportation.

Party of the Netherlands and witness to the events at the Waterlooplein, used the underground party apparatus to spread the word of the Germans' actions among the working-class community. The following day, other communist functionaries arrived from neighboring towns and agreed to issue a manifesto calling for a general strike. Two local Amsterdam civil servants and communist agitators, Piet Nak and Willem Kraan, took the lead. They arranged a gathering of sympathizers to be held the evening of Monday, February 24, at the Noordermarkt and pushed the entire party apparatus to help spread the word and get attendees there. At the meeting, Nak, Kraan, and other CPN leaders whipped the crowd into a frenzy, declaring that they had seen how the Nazis had acted and that they, the working class of Amsterdam, stood hand in hand with their Jewish friends.²⁹

During the meeting, the recently drawn-up manifesto was distributed among the crowd, which numbered several hundred strong, to spread the word that the following day, the workers of Amsterdam would bring the city to its knees. The next morning, February 25, 1941, the city erupted in anti-German protests. What had begun with tram drivers in the city center spread to all sectors of the populace, as hundreds of thousands of enraged, protesting Netherlands shut down the city. The strike effort quickly spread to other neighboring cities, but was suppressed by German security forces, who managed to reassert control over the next two days. The February Strike of 1941 was the first truly large-scale protest against anti-Jewish efforts in Nazi-occupied Europe and would mark the end of the initial phase of the German occupation of the Netherlands.³⁰ Seyss-Inquart had begun his tenure as *Reichskommissar* hoping to win the Dutch

²⁹ Ibid., IV/913-915.

³⁰ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 80; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 70. Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 12.

over to the German cause through persuasion, but the February Strike proved that this hope was very much in vain.

Although anti-Jewish measures would ramp up over the course of the first full year of the occupation, their effect upon the educational sphere was briefly paused simply because the Germans had not yet specifically targeted Jewish individuals in education. By and large, the only anti-Jewish action up to that point that had directly affected the education realm was the dismissal of Jewish civil servants, and then, it disrupted education not because the Germans were attempting to interfere with education specifically, but because teachers and administrators were civil servants. Seyss-Inquart turned directly to the place of Jewish individuals in schools in summer 1941, when he informed van Dam that Jewish pupils were to be removed from public schools. In an August 16 circular directed at the various community and town councils throughout the country—marked “not for publication in any form”—van Dam asked local authorities across the country to reply with the number of Jewish students in their charge so that he could make the necessary arrangements for the creation of “segregated schools”³¹ for Jewish students.³² Later, on August 25, in a new circular, van Dam informed mayors and town councils that Jewish pupils would no longer be allowed to attend public or confessional schools as of September 1 and further told them that the goal was to establish segregated schools with such speed that Jewish pupils miss no more than four weeks of lessons.³³ On August 29, the news was released to the public, but with a propagandistic twist. Instead of saying outright that Jewish pupils were being removed from public and private schools and forced into their own segregated schools, the occupiers noted that Jewish students would, as of September 1, receive instruction

³¹ *afzonderlijke scholen*.

³² NIOD 216e/14.

³³ NIOD 216e/14.

from Jewish teachers. As reported in the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, “as a consequence, ... the above-mentioned students will no longer be permitted admission in educational institutions, unless the institutions are intended for these students only.”³⁴

Education at the schools for Jewish students was essentially similar in nature to that of the public and confessional schools, such that the exams and diplomas they granted during the war were honored by the post-war Department of Education.³⁵ Dr. Jacob Presser, who after the war would go on to write the leading work on the Nazi persecution of Jewish persons in the Netherlands, was a teacher at the Jewish Lyceum in Amsterdam during the period of segregation and devotes several pages in his magnum opus to that experience. He notes that the organization matched the public schools, religious instruction was optional, and although there were certainly shortages of both school material and qualified teachers, they made do with what they had. But there was one overriding difference that Presser stressed both in his own experience and in that of his colleagues at other schools designated for Jewish pupils: absent students, a normal event for any school, but which were especially troublesome for the Jewish schools, because absent students rarely returned.³⁶ This was, of course, because of the deportations of Jewish individuals that picked up in the first half of 1942. The waves of deportations began by emptying the towns and provinces of their Jewish inhabitants and sending them to Amsterdam, which was followed in the second half of the year by deportations from Amsterdam to Kamp Westerbork in the far northeast of the country, from whence the inmates would be deported “to the east,” usually directly to the extermination centers at Auschwitz and Sobibor, although other camps, such as

³⁴ “Joodsche leerlingen en -leerkrachten worden op scholen geschieden van niet-Joden,” *Algemeen Handelsblad*, August 29, 1941, Evening edition.

³⁵ Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 259.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 257–60.

Bergen-Belsen, and even the Jewish ghetto Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia were occasional destinations.

The schools for Jewish pupils in the provinces were shut down as their students were deported to Amsterdam. Of the two main secondary schools for Jews in Amsterdam, the *Joodse Hogere Burger School* was actually a pre-war invention for Amsterdam's sizable Jewish community. The other, the *Joods Lyceum*, was established in September 1941 specifically as a result of the occupiers' anti-Jewish measures. Although both schools had high enrollments by mid-1942, the weekly deportations to Westerbork took their toll on the student population. Presser reports that by May 1943, only four students remained in his class.³⁷ By September, both schools sat empty and were shuttered by the government. The education of Jewish pupils had long since been removed from the authority of the Education Department, however, when, in November 1942, it was placed under the supervision of the Jewish Council in Amsterdam.³⁸ Education for Jewish pupils continued in Westerbork, in theory if not always in practice, where there were at least three schools, one of which had been founded during the early days of the camp when it was an internment camp for German-Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany in the late 1930s. But schooling in Westerbork was even more difficult on pupils and teachers alike. The school rooms were often requisitioned for other purposes, and all too often, students arrived for school in the morning to find that their teachers had been deported the night before. The regular shipments of new inmates into the camp from Amsterdam, as well as the regular deportation of inmates further east, of both students and teachers, meant that it was rarely possible to offer regular instruction. This, coupled with the total lack of teaching materials, meant that often untrained and unqualified teachers provided lessons to an entirely transient

³⁷ Ibid., 258.

³⁸ Knegtmans, "Jan van Dam und die Reform," 1105.

student body. In Westerbork, despite camp decrees that children attend regular lessons, all semblance of normality in education was gone.³⁹ And so it would remain until the last transports deported the final inmates “to the east” in September 1944.

The removal of Jewish students and teachers from the schools was one of the few changes the German occupiers were able to fully institute. And this success on the part of the Nazis was not limited to the education realm. In fact, throughout the country, the Nazis encountered considerable success in rounding up Jewish individuals and deporting them first to Amsterdam, and from there on to Westerbork and to other camps in Central and Eastern Europe. With more than 100,000 Jewish deportees murdered at the hands of the Nazis, out of a 1940 Jewish population of roughly 140,000, the Netherlands saw, by far, the highest numbers of Jewish Holocaust victims of any Western or Northern European nation, both in real numbers and as a percentage of the pre-war Jewish population.⁴⁰ The legacy of the Holocaust in the tolerant, liberal Netherlands has been a haunting specter over the country for decades, with few satisfying answers as to how or why the Nazis were so successful there, when they were comparatively unsuccessful in other Western and Northern European occupied countries, such as France, Belgium, and Denmark.⁴¹

³⁹ Presser, *Ashes in the Wind*, 445–46.

⁴⁰ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “The Netherlands,” Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005436>. That population figure of 140,000 includes roughly 25,000 German-born Jewish refugees who fled the Hitler regime during the 1930s and settled in the Netherlands, most famously represented by Anne Frank and her family. For this reason, I have used the phrase “Jewish population in the Netherlands” (and similar) over the linguistically more pleasing “Dutch Jewish population.”

⁴¹ According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, of the roughly 350,000 Jewish people living in France in 1940, roughly 77,000 were murdered during the war, including some 25,000 French citizens. In Belgium, out of a prewar Jewish population of about 65,000, roughly 25,000 were murdered, while in Denmark, only about 120 Jewish persons were murdered, out of a 1940 population of roughly 7,500. See United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “France,” Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005429>; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Belgium,” Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005432>; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,

As yet, there is no overriding consensus on why Jewish people in the Netherlands were murdered at comparatively higher rates than their counterparts in other Western and Northern European countries. All of the usual explanations, from the geography of the Netherlands and the collaboration of Dutch authorities, to the deference of the Jewish and Gentile civilian population to authority and the near complete registration of the Jewish population of the Netherlands, lack the necessary nuance to explain why survival rates varied so heavily by particular region. Marnix Croes, of the Research and Documentation Center of the Netherlands Ministry of Justice, offers perhaps the most intriguing explanation that does account for these variably rates of survival. Through the use of statistical analysis, Croes argues that it is likely that significantly larger numbers of Jewish individuals in the Netherlands went into hiding than previously thought, for not all such individuals caught in hiding by the Germans were registered as having gone underground. Croes then argues that the particular success and ferocity of the German *Sicherheitspolizei* and their Dutch collaborators at hunting down and finding hiding Jews was at least partly the cause of the lower Jewish survival rate in the Netherlands, although Croes freely admits that much more research is necessary to come to a fuller understanding of the entire phenomenon.⁴²

The “Cleansing” of anti-German School Books

Although the first major incursions into the educational sector had been directed at Jewish individuals, those efforts were not directed solely at the schools. The extent to which they had affected Dutch education resulted from the presence of Jewish persons in Dutch schools and universities. The first direct action specifically into the realm of education actually occurred

“Denmark,” Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005209>.

⁴² Marnix Croes, “The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20, no. 3 (December 1, 2006): 474–99.

before van Dam was even appointed to the position of Secretary-General, although he was very much involved in the process, for he was the head of the *Commissie van Voorlichting voor Leerboeken*.⁴³

Of all of their goals in the education realm, the Germans put forth the most strenuous efforts into making sure the published materials fit the occupiers' ideological outlook. This started almost immediately after the Dutch surrendered on May 14, 1940. Just a week later, on May 20, Willi Janke, who would later become the Chief of the Press Department in Seyss-Inquart's personal staff, met with officials from various publishing associations to inform them that the sale of any and all anti-German books, pamphlets, or brochures, as well as French and English newspapers was now banned. He further informed his audience that that the attitude of the German authorities would largely depend on the loyalty of the Dutch publishing industry, bookstores, and libraries.⁴⁴ There would be no mistaking the Germans' demands in this matter.

Very quickly after the installation of the *Reichskommissariat*, the new German civilian leadership in the Netherlands became aware of anti-German school textbooks. This took many forms. First and foremost were any books that had negative statements regarding Germany, National Socialism, the NSDAP or its leaders, or fascism more generally. Already on August 3, 1940, Seyss-Inquart's representative in the province of Groningen sent a letter to Wimmer reporting anti-Hitler statements in a school history book.⁴⁵ In response, on August 8, Wimmer sent instructions banning anti-German text books from the schools to the then Secretary-General of Education, Gerrit van Poelje, wondering in the process how such a state of affairs was ever

⁴³ Information Commission on Textbooks.

⁴⁴ Dirk Foeke Koldijk, "Het literatuurboek Duits voor scholen van het VH. en MO. HAVO en VWO in de periode van 1920 tot 1975: geschiedenis, ontwikkeling en canonvorming" (University of Amsterdam, 1990), 52–53.

⁴⁵ NIOD 020/409.

left to be in the first place.⁴⁶ In the same note, he warned van Poelje that any oral transmission of said views or material by teachers at public or private schools or universities was also banned.

Two weeks later, on August 23, Wimmer sent another letter to van Poelje that was similar in content but harsher in tone.⁴⁷ Importantly, whereas in the previous note of August 8 Wimmer had only questioned why anti-German books had not been pulled from use, the harsher note of August 23 made mention of a larger-scale operation: the “cleansing” of school books:

I would have taken it for granted that the Dutch school inspectorates would, on their own initiative, take into account the changing circumstances of the occupation in every way and, immediately after checking the teaching materials of all schools, take every precaution to cleanse all the hints, indications, allegations and suspicions, that degrade or are apt to degrade the Greater German Reich and its development, regarding the German people in all of its strains, as well as regarding its national socialist leadership and worldview.⁴⁸

Moreover, to the extent that any school books discuss:

racial or *völkisch*, historical, geographic, political, cultural, or economic states of the Greater German Reich and its people, they should take the form such that a worthy attitude regarding the German occupation is guaranteed and such that they are suitable for bringing forth a better attitude toward the German people.⁴⁹

To make sure that these changes were made, Wimmer further made van Poelje personally responsible for the implementation of book cleansing and promised to hold him responsible should the necessary changes not be made.

At the same time, Wimmer sent a circular to the college of Secretaries-General informing them that similar books should be taken out of circulation where ever they might be found, such as in departmental libraries, giving the Secretaries-General four weeks to comply.⁵⁰ Just in case things were not clear, Albrecht, who worked in Wimmer’s *Generalkommissariat*, sent along further instructions to van Poelje listing a few dozen authors whose books were to be removed from use in the classroom and from school libraries, although he did make an exception for

⁴⁶ NIOD 020/409.

⁴⁷ Koldijk, “Het literatuurboek Duits,” 59.

⁴⁸ NIOD 020/409; NA 2.14.37/706.

⁴⁹ NIOD 020/409; NA 2.14.37/706.

⁵⁰ NIOD 020/2046.

certain works by authors who would otherwise be proscribed, such as Marx and Freud, but only in the case that those works were used for purely scientific purposes, with the further limitation that they could not be taken off library premises.⁵¹ Originally, Wimmer had wanted to make the individual school heads themselves responsible for removing the newly banned books from circulation, but van Poelje's successor as interim Secretary-General of the Education Department Hendrik Reinink, in consultation with both Schwarz and Albrecht, advised against it. It was feared that the resulting large influx of letters from school officials asking for clarification would overwhelm the resources of the department. Instead, they decided to turn direct responsibility for the physical removal of school books over to the local school inspectors.⁵²

Van Poelje went right to work on this much larger project that Wimmer understood should have naturally come from the initiative of the Dutch bureaucracy and established a departmental commission to look into the matter, although it was Reinink who gave the commission the direct task of censoring school books, as van Poelje was sacked on August 31. Probably on the advice of Snijder, who was always willing to recommend van Dam to the Germans as a willing collaborator, Wimmer appointed van Dam to lead the commission.⁵³ Van Dam got to work quickly as he and the seventeen other members of the commission went through thousands and thousands of school books, removing more than four hundred from circulation in 1940 alone. By summer 1941, that number had climbed to more than seven hundred. Lists of authors were handed down whose works were to be removed.⁵⁴ Of course, Jewish authors were prominent on the lists, but others, such as the now highly regarded Thomas

⁵¹ NA 2.14.37/706.

⁵² NA 2.14.37/706.

⁵³ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 32–35; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 248–49; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 224.

⁵⁴ NIOD 216e/52.

Mann, who was an outspoken critic of National Socialism, and the rest of his family were also included.⁵⁵ By 1942, the list of banned literature included any and all books by Jewish, Marxist, anti-German, and or anti-national socialist authors, while later that year, many books that were considered “liberal” or “democratic” were added to the lists of banned books.⁵⁶

This ended up causing several problems, as questions began coming in to the department in droves. One secondary school director in Tiel noted that almost all history books were not directly based on national socialist ideals and questioned whether those could be considered as “anti-national socialist.” Moreover, he questioned what, exactly, “literature” entailed. Van Dam replied by noting that banned literature written by Jewish authors was meant to include those works that exhibit a “Jewish spirit,” although he did not define, what, exactly that meant, while, at the same time noting that his commission had cleansed the extant history books such that they should not cause any problems.⁵⁷ In another case, a historical atlas that included a Jewish co-author was simply recommended by van Dam to have that author’s name stripped and replaced by a non-Jewish coworker.⁵⁸ Similar questions were often posed regarding socialist and/or Marxist authors, such as one school director questioned whether a history book on Renaissance art written by a known Marxist fell under the ban (it did not). The questions were so common that the replies took on the appearance of a form letter.⁵⁹

In some cases, the removal of the book was not desirable, if for no other reason than the offending passages being short and not entirely germane to the rest of the work. Or, especially as the war went on and paper shortages became more pronounced, it would have been a waste to

⁵⁵ NA 2.14.37/706.

⁵⁶ NA 2.14.37/713. Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 224–25.

⁵⁷ NA 2.14.37/713. In fact, the school book cleansing would have such a detrimental effect on history books that the Germans and their Dutch helpers would resort to the creation of entirely new history texts for school instruction. See chapter six.

⁵⁸ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/57.

⁵⁹ NA 2.14.37/713.

replace those books that contained only short, offending passages with more suitable new works.⁶⁰ In these cases, the book control commission resorted to gluing over the offending passages and putting more ideologically favorable statements in their place. For example, in one history book used in confessional schools, a passage regarding Jewish people in the Middle Ages was replaced with more ideologically fitting material. Originally, it had read, not entirely innocently: “The Jewish diaspora surely rests upon God’s judgment, but no one is innocent who persecutes Israel.” The commission replaced it with:

These vagrants were hated and persecuted the world over in the Middle Ages for their rule over money. Therefore, the diligence of the Church came to convert them, which was always done with great vigor. Against the authority of the princes and the clerics, they maintained their finely woven ruses; against the power of steel, the power of silver.⁶¹

In another instance, the new government-approved passages took on an overtly political tone. For example, in one book on recent history, a passage over the inauguration of Queen Wilhelmina in 1898 was changed to emphasize what the Germans saw as the slow death of the Dutch Royal House. Originally, the passage read: “Then the entire Dutch people celebrated enthusiastically. There was joy in the heart of Queen Emma and there was joy in the heart of her people. Joy—about our first Orange queen.” This was changed to the much less festive, “Now there were two royal women who survived the last Prince of Orange: mother and daughter. The Orange tree had almost stopped blooming. Would God allow further growth? ...”⁶² As Loe de Jong notes, these changes were not limited to historical instruction, but could be found in many subjects. So, for example, in a textbook for beginning English instruction, in which the passage had originally read: “*Immediately (fill in: after or before) the peace, the Germans began to*

⁶⁰ NA. 2.14.37/697.

⁶¹ Quoted in De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 35.

⁶² Quoted in Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 224.

prepare themselves for a new war,” was replaced with “*Immediately (fill in: after or before) the shipwreck the sailors were taken to hospital (sic).*”⁶³

In other cases, schools were simply instructed to cut the offending passages from the books entirely, such that the resulting book had gaps in pages.⁶⁴ Again, De Jong offers several examples that range from the obviously political to the not so obviously antagonistic. In one history book for secondary schools, a passage regarding anti-Jewish measures in Germany since 1933 was removed entirely. Similarly, in a Dutch language grammar textbook for primary school students, several individual sentences had to be removed, such as one sentence that read: “The German armies devastated and burned the wealthiest cities and the most flourishing villages of Belgium,” or another that simply stated: “On Queen’s Day [the national holiday] everyone wears orange.” In other instances, songs used in musical instruction were removed from instruction booklets, even those traditionally sung in confessional schools.⁶⁵

In some instances, van Dam even got help from members of the general public in his efforts at “cleansing” textbooks. For example, in November 1943, he and Goedewaagen received a letter from one F. J. Meijer, who was the director of an insurance cooperative, that noted that one history book used in a primary school in The Hague contained such “true nonsense” about the Germanics that he lacked for both time and paper to explain it all, although he did, apparently, have enough time and paper to explain that the teacher of that particular class found it necessary to exaggerate and claim that the Germanics made hammers from the thigh bones of their defeated enemies and pendants from collar bones. The archival file does not make clear how this insurance cooperative director was aware of such claims made by the teacher,

⁶³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/344.

⁶⁴ NIOD 216e/52. A list of those books which had pages removed can be found in Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/459.

⁶⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/344.

although it seems likely that he had a child in the class. Either way, he requested an update on what actions Goedewaagen and van Dam had taken.⁶⁶

Not only did van Dam's committee inspect existing books, as of fall 1941 it also censored newly published works.⁶⁷ In order to pass the censors, no book could contain anti-German sentiments, whether about the German people; its leadership; or its past, present, or future. Such books could also not glorify the House of Orange, pacifism, or Marxism. The League of Nations, should it be addressed, must be addressed only as a historical artifact. And of course, no books may be printed (or reprinted) that were written by Jewish or emigrant authors (that is authors who fled Nazi-controlled Europe).⁶⁸ Along with these limitations outlined in van Dam's guidelines came inclusive points that books should contain. They should "fit into the framework of the present times" by being "conducive to the pursuit of unity in our people" while also lacking anything that might "awaken or accentuate disunity"—the latter elements almost certainly referring to Marxism, democracy, or the pillars. Further, they should "acknowledge the scope of the developments in the Netherlands and Europe, which are aimed at achieving the idea of the ethnic community."⁶⁹ This was, however, less important after January 1942, when the publication of most, but by no means all, new school books ceased.⁷⁰ As will be shown in the following chapter, some efforts to produce new school books, especially those explicitly designed by the occupiers or their Dutch collaborators did indeed continue.

Over the course of the occupation, van Dam's school book commission would censor thousands of books.⁷¹ Given the limits of what was acceptable, it is no surprise that many history

⁶⁶ NIOD 114b/38.

⁶⁷ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/54.

⁶⁸ NA 2.14.37/692.

⁶⁹ NA 2.14.37/692.

⁷⁰ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/54.

⁷¹ Specific numbers can be found in Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 815, note 163. De Jong suggests the number ranges above twelve thousand. See De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/342-343.

books fell victim to the “cleansing.”⁷² Noting that the list of book characteristics that would make a work inappropriate for use in the classroom was growing ungainly, the commission began to establish a catalog of books that *could* be used in instruction and libraries.⁷³ The catalog, which contained roughly nine thousand titles that were “indispensable” for educational purposes, included the only books that were allowable after that point. While it was not ordered that schools must use books from the catalog, all others were to be considered banned from use in instruction, making the choice to use other works technically impossible.⁷⁴

Despite the incredible effort of the *Commissie van Voorlichting voor Leerboeken*, there was only so much they could do to prevent anti-German books from being used in the classroom. As with other new regulations promulgated by the occupation regime, the prohibition against anti-German textbooks was exceedingly difficult to actually enforce. The most offensively anti-German books were, by and large, successfully removed from the classroom, but those were only a small portion of banned books. Schools across the country continued to use the same liberal and democratically oriented books they always had.⁷⁵ Even when offending passages were glued over, that was hardly enough to keep students’ prying eyes from looking underneath.

This problem was not helped by the lack of punishment meted out by the government. When a teacher at the Marnix Gymnasium in Rotterdam continued to use a geography book with anti-national socialist passages in early 1941, Albrecht only issued a warning.⁷⁶ Later that year, at a public gymnasium in ‘s-Hertogenbosch several teachers had continued to use banned books. As a result, the mayor, whom van Dam tasked with investigating the use of prohibited books

⁷² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/342-343.

⁷³ NA 2.14.38/692.

⁷⁴ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/343.

⁷⁵ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 225.

⁷⁶ NA 2.14.37/450.

there, passed around a pledge that multiple teachers signed stating that they would follow the rules regarding banned book going forward, which van Dam accepted as a reasonable reaction.⁷⁷ Similarly, the director of the Catholic boys school in Wijk, near Duurstede, refused to implement the orders of the van Dam's book "cleansing" commission. He kept the school library entirely intact and reportedly told the "willing public" of the area that the new regulations were in conflict with the constitution and that the occupation authority should not concern itself with such matters. When questioned by the local school inspector, the head noted that he had not noticed any books in the library that fell under the ban, although he himself did not supervise the library—that responsibility fell to another teacher. The inspector saw right through this rather hollow excuse but declined to press the issue any further than by telling the school head he needed to get his act together or face actual consequences.⁷⁸

Because of the unwillingness of the government come down hard on teachers and schools that violated the rules regarding prohibited textbooks, the work of van Dam's school book commission was only half effective. While it managed to censor thousands upon thousands of books over the course of the occupation, its work was, in many cases, for naught. Even book publishers did not always follow the rules, likely because they did not want to spend the money necessary to convert already published books into acceptable versions.⁷⁹ As would happen again and again over the course of the first couple of years of the occupation, the German occupation authority and its Dutch helpers would establish new rules for the educational sphere, rules that were often simply ignored at the local level.

⁷⁷ NA 2.14.37/511.

⁷⁸ NA 2.14.37/483.

⁷⁹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/343.

Increasing the Influence of the State and the Appointment Decrees

Censoring offensive text books was only the first step in coordinating the educational sphere. On November 15, 1940, Seyss-Inquart took further action toward bringing the educational sphere—that is the sector that provided for Dutch Gentile students—to heel with the appointment of secondary school teacher and NSB functionary Piet van Rossem as “Authorized Representative of the *Reichskommissar* for the Supervision of Peace and Order in the Schools.”⁸⁰ Although van Rossem was a member of the NSB, he was not close to Mussert or van Genechten, head of the *Opvoedersgilde*, and was seen, much like van Dam as not being under the influence of the NSB, and so he could be counted on as reliable from the German point of view.⁸¹ Van Rossem’s appointment carried great authority and he became a sort of all-purpose inspector of primary and secondary education throughout the country. Along with two deputies, he was afforded the right of entry into and inspection of all schools, including the right to sit in and observe classroom instruction at both public and confessional schools; the right to inspect the files of all school heads, teachers, and other personnel; to carry out any investigations he deemed necessary in furtherance of his mandate; and he was to be afforded any and all assistance he deemed necessary by school heads, teachers, and other organs of the state.⁸² The position of school inspector, itself, was not a new invention of the occupation regime—such offices had existed for several decades and served the central government in its efforts to better control provincial schools. However, van Rossem’s positioning as a representative of the *Reichskommissar* himself, outside of the authority of the Department of Education, Arts, and Sciences, most certainly was a new development.

⁸⁰ NIOD 114a/5; NA 2.14.37/414.

⁸¹ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 48–49.

⁸² NIOD 114a/5; 216e/12; NA 2.14.37/414

Seyss-Inquart had seen in van Rossem a useful tool for the quick nazification of the Dutch educational establishment, and his appointment was, essentially, an attempt by Seyss-Inquart to have “two irons in the fire.”⁸³ Van Rossem and his two deputies, Dr. J. J. Valkenburg and Dr. P. Dijkema, exercised an out-sized influence in the educational sector for the first six months after their appointment, but the vociferousness with which the three men worked engendered significant resistance on the part of all sides of the educational establishment, including van Dam. Van Dam had been angling for some time to gain administrative control over van Rossem, but those efforts were always rejected by the Authorized Representative. By May, van Dam had convinced Schwarz that, if van Rossem and his subordinates continued on the path they had started down, a general revolt of teachers and administrators would follow.⁸⁴ Schwarz then convinced Wimmer of the need to sack van Rossem, ordered van Dam to take the necessary steps, drafted the dismissal order, and personally put it in front of Seyss-Inquart for his signature. Seyss-Inquart’s reaction to Schwarz’s actions remain unknown, but he signed the dismissal notice in any event. Van Rossem and his deputies were dismissed on May 26, 1941 and, in accordance with the instructions Schwarz had given him, van Dam laid the groundwork for a replacement.⁸⁵ This new inspector responsible for maintaining peace and order in the schools would be subordinate to van Dam directly, not to the *Reichskommissar*, and was filled in late June 1941 by Dr. D. G. Noordijk, a German language teacher from The Hague who was also an old professional acquaintance of van Dam’s.⁸⁶ The actions of the two extraordinary school inspectors will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven, but it is important to note here that the first major inroad into the realm of education specifically that the German occupation

⁸³ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 48.

⁸⁴ BAL R83-Niederlande/25; NA 214.37/414.

⁸⁵ NA 214.37/414.

⁸⁶ P.S.A. Goedbloed, “Regeling voor den Inspecteur van het onderwijs in algemeenen dienst.”

authorities made was both direct and far reaching. There would be no mistaking that the occupation authorities viewed the schools as an area of immense importance for the future of the Netherlands, and they—the Germans—were more than willing to side-step the traditional channels in order to carry out their aims in the education realm.

Shortly after van Rossem's appointment, Seyss-Inquart made direct changes to the Dutch bureaucracy itself when he split the pre-war Department of Education, Arts, and Sciences into two new departments - the Department Education, Science, and Cultural Administration and the Department of Public Enlightenment and Arts.⁸⁷ As this proved to be the only major bureaucratic restructuring of a pre-war Dutch ministry, its importance should not be overlooked. In both new departments, an emphasis was placed upon the development of the Dutch nation for the future, and this is borne out even in the names of the two new departments. While the pre-war department had used the more innocuous *onderwijs* to refer to education, the new department referred to education as *opvoeding*, a term which carries with it the connotation of social and cultural development. In this way, it is similar to the German term *Bildung*, which also can be translated as both *education* and as *cultural development*.

Moreover, the new Education Department also received a third titled section, to replace the lost Arts of the pre-war department, in *Cultuurbescherming*, or *Cultural Administration*. The Dutch term *bescherming* carries dual meanings, including *administration* and *protection*. In this way, it is a sort of combination of the two German words *Verwaltung*, which means *administration*, and *Beschirmung*, which means *protection*. Although the German language name for this department used the term *Kulturverwaltung*, or *Cultural Administration*, the Germans were not entirely unaware of the dual meaning of the term, such that, occasionally,

⁸⁷ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 211/1940.

even they used the German term *Kulturschutz*, which also translates to *Cultural Protection*, in their internal paperwork.⁸⁸ Under the auspices of *Cultural Administration*, a new Bureau of Folk Culture and People's Development was established that was tasked with supervising courses in folk music, folk dance, and the *volksuniversiteiten* which were dedicated to adult and continuing education.⁸⁹ Additionally, the bureau had oversight of all non-commercial and non-scientific libraries.⁹⁰ The new Education Department was accompanied by what was essentially a Propaganda Department, ostensibly named the Department of Public Enlightenment and Arts, but which was, in reality, a near carbon copy of Josef Goebbels's *Propagandaministerium* in Berlin. The leadership of these two new departments was entrusted to the *völkisch* minded Dutch intellectuals Dr. Jan van Dam and Dr. Tobie Goedewaagen.⁹¹

Van Dam's stewardship of the Education Department, which began on November 25, 1940, would last for the remainder of the war, but it was during the first two and one-half years in the position of Secretary-General that he had the most impact. He wasted little time in implementing the "reform" proposals he had outlined earlier in the year in his *Gedanken und Vorschläge* and *Reform* pieces.⁹² The first major initiative van Dam undertook was directed at confessional schools. There are several reasons why this would be an initial step, but first and foremost was that this was seen as a necessary first step by the German authorities themselves. In his initial report back the office of Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess, whose office had been

⁸⁸ The German language term *Kulturschutz* ("Cultural Protection") is used to refer to the department, for example, in a report over van Dam's introduction of the new curriculum in June 1941. NIOD 020/2062. To this end, some historians have chosen to translate the name of the department as *Education, Science, and Protection of Culture* throughout their work. See, e.g. Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 36.

⁸⁹ *Volksuniversiteiten* in the Netherlands are analogous to German *Volkshochschulen*, and perform a similar role to American community colleges.

⁹⁰ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 211/1940.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*; NIOD 020/2062.

⁹² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338; Knegtmans, "Jan van Dam und die Reform," 1094–97; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245–49; Alberts and Zuidervaart, *De KNAW en de Nederlandse Wetenschap Tussen 1930 en 1960*, 18–19; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 40–41.

responsible for Schwarz's appointment to the Netherlands, Schwarz noted that, astonishingly, some two thirds of all Dutch students attended confessional primary schools, and, to make matters worse, roughly eighty-five per cent of the costs for those schools was paid by the state in some way, but the state had little control over either the personnel or the curriculum of these confessional schools. For the deeply anti-clerical Schwarz, as well as for the rest of the Nazi leadership in The Hague, this situation was untenable.⁹³ In a follow-up report dated March 22, 1941, Schwarz notes that breaking the confessional dominance in the education sector was of primary importance for the furtherance of his duties in the Netherlands—"to move the Dutch volk toward positive collaboration in the Greater Germanic sphere."⁹⁴

Already in mid-December, only weeks after he took office, van Dam floated the idea at a departmental leadership meeting of possible ways to increase the influence of the state on confessional education, which he proposed doing by giving the department the duty to confirm or veto the hiring choices of school boards and local councils.⁹⁵ Recognizing that this might encroach upon the authority given by the *Reichskommissar* to van Rossem's office, he suggested that the various sub-departmental leaders think over their options and get back to him with suggestions.⁹⁶ Over the next month, little appears to have actually taken place, however, as correspondence between Wimmer and Schwarz shows they were discussing the option of simply taking over the appointment of all teachers directly. Schwarz suggested to Wimmer that this was,

⁹³ NIOD 020/2047.

⁹⁴ NIOD 020/2047.

⁹⁵ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 58. A note on the terminology: Direct supervision of public schools fell to the local government, usually in the form the municipal council, but sometimes also representatives appointed by the mayor. Although they were required to carry out the decrees of the Education Department, the day-to-day operation was handled at the local level. Confessional (*bijzonder*) schools were supervised by private school boards made up of clerics, parents, and other interested parties. See De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/359.

⁹⁶ NA 2.14.37/60.

ultimately, van Dam's goal and that this would be the end result over the course of the next year.⁹⁷

In the meantime, Seyss-Inquart was making plans of his own. When the Catholic Church began using the pulpit to agitate against the NSB in January 1941, Seyss-Inquart decided that the Church needed to be punished and came up with three proposals, each more severe than the last. He suggested an across-the-board reduction in the pay of clerical school instructors, the firing of said instructors, or the complete dissolution of clerical schools and their absorption by the state. Van Dam recognized immediately that the third option was untenable, as it would cause an outright revolt among the Protestant churches, to say nothing of the reaction by the Catholic Church, and he was able to persuade Seyss-Inquart of this apparent fact. Seyss-Inquart, however, saw a mere reduction on clerical teaching salaries as not going far enough, and so decided on the second option of firing all clerical teachers, a suggestion, it should be remembered, that was contained in van Dam's "reform" proposals the previous autumn. But this too would cause many problems. Given that there were some five thousand clerics teaching at Catholic schools in the Netherlands, firing them would create huge shortages among teachers at these schools that could not easily be replaced. Non-Catholic teachers were a non-starter. The whole idea of Catholic parents being able to choose Catholic schools in which instruction was given by Catholic teachers had been one of the fundamental demands of the Catholic pillar during the School Struggle. This meant that an outright dismissal of Catholic teachers would force many Catholic schools to close outright, thereby shifting much of their student bodies into the public schools. Van Dam recognized that this might lead to a re-igniting of the School Struggle and would likely

⁹⁷ NA 2.14.37/193.

lead to a unification of efforts among the Catholic and Protestant churches in the field of education, which would be dangerous for van Dam's and the Germans' "reform" efforts.⁹⁸

During the drafting of the order, protests from within the Education Department grew so strong that van Dam decided he needed to revisit the issue with Seyss-Inquart. He delivered his objections to Schwarz, who, along with Wimmer, interceded with Seyss-Inquart. The internal departmental memos went through various alterations to the proposed changes, but eventually, on February 14, settled on a final form, or so van Dam thought. Clerics were to be removed as school heads, while clerical teachers were to receive a forty per cent salary deduction, which would then be used for other educational purposes, specifically the reduction of class sizes and the hiring of new, young teachers to help alleviate the unemployment rate in that group.⁹⁹ This latter effect was especially welcome in the eyes of Schwarz, who believed that it was the youngest cohort of educators that could be most easily co-opted for the Germanic cause because of their miserable economic situation.¹⁰⁰ During the resulting meeting, which was attended by Seyss-Inquart, Wimmer, Schwarz, and van Dam, this compromise was agreed to and was made possible by removing state subsidies that had previously been granted to Catholic schools.¹⁰¹

The decision was somewhat of a political coup for van Dam. Although he had already suggested in his *Gedanken und Vorschläge* and *Reform* pieces the previous fall that clerical instructors should be released entirely to free up much needed funds for other areas, van Dam correctly recognized that there was a real difference between suggesting such a move to a few high ranking German administrators and actually carrying out such a change in public. The salary reduction was the next best option and it still gave him the ability to use those funds for

⁹⁸ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 258.

⁹⁹ NIOD 020/417

¹⁰⁰ NIOD 020/2047.

¹⁰¹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 258.

other projects. Chief among these other projects was the hiring of more teachers, the unemployment of whom had been high during the 1930s, and the consequential reduction in class sizes. Furthermore, because the order had come from Seyss-Inquart, not from van Dam himself, he was able to distance himself from the new orders that had actually originally been his proposal in the first place.¹⁰² The penalties against clerical instructors were made public on February 23 during van Dam's second radio address to the Dutch nation.¹⁰³ In the speech, which lasted about fifteen minutes, Van Dam noted that he did not wish to put forward his program for the educational sector the previous November because he was unsure whether he would be able to carry it out. During the present speech in February, however, he did feel he could go into more details, but only about those points which he was confident he could carry out. They numbered six in total: the place of the Dutch language, the strengthening of state influence upon the schools, universities, physical education, teacher training, and the position of the occupation toward education law.

As regarded Dutch language instruction, van Dam noted that lesson hours must be expanded and its implementation carefully administered via a shortly forthcoming manual on the topic. Dutch language instruction should be geared toward increasing the student's love of his or her mother tongue and the cultural values expressed through it. The Dutch language was now more than ever exposed to danger and the correct education of the youth must awaken knowledge of that danger. For this reason, van Dam announced that he planned to establish a scientific center for the study of Dutch language and *heemkunde*, that would influence the

¹⁰² Knechtmans, "Jan van Dam und die Reform," 1098–99.

¹⁰³ "Nederlands onderwijs in nieuwe banen - Prof. Van Dam over de arbeid van zijn Departement," *Het Volk*, February 24, 1941, Morning edition. Although I have used newspaper reports as the basis for the following discussion of van Dam's speech, the entire speech, in the form of a German language draft forwarded by Schwarz to Wimmer, can also be found in NIOD 020/2062. For a discussion of van Dam's first speech, see chapter three.

development of the Dutch language and the education thereof. Finally, he noted that, although it was not an easy task, he hoped to eliminate the differences between the spelling of Dutch taught in the schools and that used in official documents.¹⁰⁴

He went on to note that his second program point would be received with distrust by some Netherlanders, but that the strengthening of the influence of the state upon education was a necessity. Van Dam recognized that he was entering a minefield with this part of his program, but defended it by noting that the state, as yet, had little influence upon education beyond footing the bill. The current situation of unrest among parents and students, as well as the increasing political activity of the students demanded, he argued, that the state have other recourses beyond calling the police. For this reason, he was preparing a decree that gave the state the right of approval of all appointments, and, as it concerned the universities, the right of the Dutch administration to make appointments. The universities must, he claimed, have a stronger central authority so as to prevent a repeat of the situations that occurred in Leiden and Delft, although van Dam did not state, explicitly, how the decree he was preparing for this would work.¹⁰⁵

Regarding the universities specifically, there were two major questions of import. The first was the position of Jewish students, which van Dam argued was solely the purview of the German occupiers. Given that, he argued it was better to sacrifice the future attendance of Jewish students so as to allow current Jewish students to finish their studies and take their exams. The second was the fate of the universities of Leiden and Delft. Van Dam bemoaned some “fools or malicious people” who had demanded via an ultimatum that the occupiers reopen the university in Leiden. This was, van Dam noted, the worst possible way to achieve this goal.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Van Dam's fourth point focused on physical education. Because physical education was only made a mandatory subject on January 1, he noted that it was important that P.E. teachers were properly qualified and that he was undertaking the necessary steps to make that a reality. Whereas currently, a teacher could achieve the right to teach P.E. based on his/her abilities in the "so-called intellectual subjects, while the examinees [i.e., the teachers being examined for their competency in specific subjects] are completely incompetent to teach the subject [of physical education]." ¹⁰⁷ Finally, all students should know how to swim, not just from a health perspective, but also as a point of safety.

The last two sections, on the betterment of teachers and their training and the position of the occupation vis-à-vis the education sector, took up an out-sized proportion of his speech and testify to the importance van Dam placed in them. The training of apprentice teachers was to be increased to four years, but the curriculum would not change, such that teachers-in-training would be able to spend more time learning the material fully. As a result of this lengthening of the teacher training college study period, there would be no final exams held in 1942. ¹⁰⁸ Here, it is important to note that during the 1930s, owing to the Great Depression, a financial crisis hit the educational sector in the Netherlands. As a result, thousands of teachers, called *kweekelingen-met-akte* ("apprentices with certificate"), taught in primary schools for significantly reduced pay, sometimes even without financial remuneration at all. The problem of the *kweekelingen-met-akte* had caused much consternation among the Dutch populace in the 1930s. Van Dam's changes in the teacher training schedule were meant partially to solve this problem by temporarily decreasing the number of new teachers, while allowing regular turnover

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

to increase the number of vacant, paid positions, thereby reducing the overall unemployment among teachers.

But this was not a complete solution, either. Van Dam reckoned that he could add some 4150 new positions to the payroll through various restructuring efforts. The holdover of the 1942 cohort of new teachers from the *Kweekscholen* (teacher training colleges), would open up 1500 new positions. This was in addition to the two thousand positions that currently stood vacant because of financial constraints at the local level, which were not already filled by the *kweekelingen-met-akte*. Moreover, because school boards and municipalities shifted students to save costs, classes were larger. Once this practice was ended, another 650 positions would open up, van Dam calculated. These more than 4000 new teaching positions could be, at least partially, paid for by the forty per cent reduction in the pay of clerical instructors, who numbered about 5000 throughout the country. He was certain to note that this particular measure had been ordered directly by the *Reichskommissar*, omitting, of course, that his own proposal prior to assuming his office had been to fire them outright. Finally, van Dam explained that he intended to significantly reduce the teacher training colleges and the use of apprentice teachers, because once his “reforms” had been implemented, the budgetary crisis that had precipitated their existence would have been solved, which, he noted, would be regretted by no one.¹⁰⁹ Van Dam’s numbers were somewhat off, as there were, at that time, some six thousand such *kweekelingen-met-akte* in the Netherlands, and so his budgetary restructuring would not completely solve the crisis, but it was a good start toward that end. Although it took some time, the use of *kweekelingen-met-akte* was finally, completely phased out in January 1943.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 260–61.

The entire speech can rightfully be seen as a sort of carrot and stick arrangement. On the one hand, van Dam meant to overshadow the negative aspects of his proposals, such as the reduction in clerical salaries, and the recent dismissal of clerical school heads and Jewish school teachers, both of which went entirely unmentioned in the speech. On the other hand, he hid these destructive changes with the positives of reducing (non-clerical) teacher unemployment, increasing teacher pay, reducing class sizes, and getting rid of the teacher training colleges that had caused such consternation during the 1930s.¹¹¹ It should also be noted that, although he did not say as much, these points all came, more or less, directly from his *Reform* and *Gedanken und Vorschläge* pieces written the previous fall, even if, as was the case with the reduction in clerical pay, he tried to cloak his position as the originator of these policies. This would be the tenor of van Dam's first year on the job. He was able to push through various "reforms," such as the institution of mandatory physical education, the increase of state influence over the school system, and the increased emphasis on Dutch language instruction while claiming, in the event he expected these changes to be negatively received, that he had been forced to implement them by the occupation authority. But despite his decrees, whether originating from him or from the Germans, the institution of his "reform" plans were not always successful.

Van Dam scored a political victory with the restrictions on clerical salaries, since he had been able to push through his own ideas while gaining credit both within the department by working against Seyss-Inquart's worst impulses and with the public by noting that he was only carrying out Seyss-Inquart's orders. But this was quickly followed up by a major political defeat. Shortly after his second radio address, the Germans finally got back to him about the question of teaching appointments.¹¹² He had mentioned in his radio address that a new decree would be

¹¹¹ Knechtmans, "Jan van Dam und die Reform," 1098–99.

¹¹² De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 59.

coming regarding the appointment of teachers, but did not go into any details beyond reassuring his listeners that there was no intention of making teaching appointments the sole prerogative of the state.¹¹³ He was able to keep that promise in the new decree. The political defeat came from the fact that he was forced by Seyss-Inquart to issue it himself.¹¹⁴

On April 9, about six weeks after his radio address, van Dam issued the first appointment decree.¹¹⁵ The order called for the local authorities—whether school heads, municipal councils, or school boards in the case of confessional schools—to put forth a list of three proposed candidates to be approved by the Secretary-General or his designated representative. Should the Secretary-General have reservations about one or more of the candidates, he could strike that person from the list, making them ineligible for appointment. Should all three candidates be found undesirable by the Education Department, then a second list of three candidates could be proposed, and should those three be rejected, then local authorities would have to proceed with individual nominations. Van Dam gave himself six weeks to reply to any appointment proposals, meaning that the failure of school boards, local councils, or school heads to propose appointees who were acceptable to the Secretary-General would cause longer teaching vacancies. The only apparent loop-hole in the order was that the right of appointment oversight was limited to those positions that were longer than four months.¹¹⁶

At the same time, van Dam gave himself limited authority over the firing of any school personnel, which also had to be approved by the Secretary-General or his appointed representatives. This was, of course, meant to prevent school heads or school boards from firing those teachers who had shown themselves to be in any way unacceptable to local administrations

¹¹³ “Nederlands onderwijs in nieuwe banen - Prof. Van Dam over de arbeid van zijn Departement.”

¹¹⁴ Knechtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 260.

¹¹⁵ NIOD 216e/14; Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 73/1941.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

(that is due to their pro-German, pro-Nazi, or pro-NSB attitudes).¹¹⁷ The appointment decree did not, however, give him the right to fire teachers as he saw fit. Although the department did have the authority to fire teachers for certain reasons, through the office of the school inspectors, that right was not absolute. It was expanded, however, in January 1942, when van Dam gained that right through two new decrees issued by Seyss-Inquart.¹¹⁸ The first of the two new decrees, known as the second appointment decree, allowed the Education Department to directly appoint teachers when the first two rounds of suggested appointments were both rejected. The second allowed van Dam to fire inspectors and teachers, an authority he would quickly delegated to Noordijk as Educational Inspector in General Service. It was with this new authority, combined with an already existing authority of the Department to punish schools which did not follow the orders of the central government that dated back to the early days of the occupation, as well as his authority to change the curriculum, gained in July 1941, that van Dam gained near complete, legal control over education, subject, of course, to veto by his superiors in the *Reichskommissariat* itself.¹¹⁹

Although the Appointment Decrees gave the government technical control over personnel questions in the schools, they were, mostly, unsuccessful. Confessional schools, which were the real targets of the decree, did not take the issuance of the Appointment Decree lying down.¹²⁰ In many cases, school boards simply appointed teachers for four-month periods over and over. When this finally became untenable, they simply stopped sending the lists of suggested appointees to The Hague for approval. For example, in the 1942-1943 school year, 672 teaching appointments were made throughout the nation, but only 212 of those were forwarded to the

¹¹⁷ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 47.

¹¹⁸ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 4–5/1942.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23/1940; 137/1941.

¹²⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/737-738.

Education Department for approval, about thirty per cent of the total.¹²¹ Additionally, the problem arose that the local school inspectors, to whom in practice the suggested appointments were made, did not always have the local authority to push through their influence. In Assen, in the province of Drenthe, the local supervising inspector of primary education noted in a report to van Dam in November 1941, that the appointment decree is understood to be nothing more than the department “blowing smoke” and that local mayors (who appointed teachers in this town) would propose a list of candidates, as the law required, but then simply pick which ever one the mayor had originally intended to hire in the first place, without any input from the school inspector.¹²² At least in part, this was a result of the greenness of some local inspectors, who, being new to the job, were reliant upon the mayor to smooth over any difficulties, which those mayors then used to their advantage to make appointments as they saw fit. As the supervising school inspector put it: “the state has little influence on the lists of candidates and appointments of teachers in the public schools, and absolutely no influence on appointments in private schools.”¹²³ In a similar vein, the dismissal of clerical school heads was only half effective. While some forty-eight such clerics were successfully dismissed by the government or stepped down from their positions as school directors, at least fifty stayed on in defiance of the new regulations.¹²⁴

Finally, in spring 1943, an attempt was made to impose a reduction in funding for some of those confessional schools that had defied the appointment decrees. At first, van Dam wanted to remove state subsidies from those schools entirely, but his chief of staff De Bloc convinced

¹²¹ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 232–33; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 260.

¹²² *blauer Dunst*.

¹²³ NIOD 020/416

¹²⁴ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 260.

him only to reduce the subsidies, and even then, the reductions were not always implemented. Later that year, the department, at the *Reichskommissariat*'s behest, threatened to send teachers in violation of the appointment decrees to work in Germany as part of the forced labor service. Again, resistance came from De Bloc, who managed to slip a list of the proposed deportees to the Dutch resistance, giving those teachers time to go underground.¹²⁵ When the German leadership decided to apply further pressure to van Dam to punish the school boards for refusing to abide by the rules, he turned the cases over to Jap Schrieke, the Secretary-General of Justice, for prosecution. Although criminal investigators were dispatched to look into the issue, no prosecutions resulted from the inquiries, despite Wimmer's demands. Schrieke tried to throw van Dam under the bus for the failures, but in reality, the Department of Justice simply failed to adequately engage the issue and Schrieke was not competent enough to oversee the prosecutions dutifully, and so they never moved forward, sitting in limbo. By August 1944, Wimmer declared that the instructors who had not been adequately approved were no longer teaching anyway and that the schools had received enough of a punishment through the reductions in funding.¹²⁶ Wimmer essentially swept the issue under the rug, which is not terribly unsurprising, given the approaching Allied armies, which were already in Belgium. By this point, Wimmer had bigger problems to worry about.

The issuance of the April 1941 Appointment Decree was a singular political defeat for van Dam in this early phase of the occupation during which he had otherwise enjoyed much success. To be certain the general idea of the decree was suggested by van Dam himself in his *Gedanken und Vorschläge* and *Reform* writings. It was not the content of the decree that made its issuance a political problem for the Secretary-General, to say nothing of the fact that it was not

¹²⁵ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 311–12.

¹²⁶ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 162–66.

always, and often never would be, followed by municipal councils, school boards, and mayors on the ground. Rather, the problem lay in the very fact that he was forced to issue it himself, rather than it being issued by the *Reichskommissar*. With the other politically problematic decrees that had been issued thus far, van Dam was able to keep his own name out of the fray, such as with the dismissal of Jewish civil servants—which van Dam protested in writing along with every other member of the College of Secretaries-General, including the antisemitic Goedewaagen—or the regulation cutting the salaries of clerical instructors.¹²⁷ Because he could argue that he was merely carrying out the orders the *Reichskommissar*, even if those orders had originated in his own writings, in whole or in part, van Dam was able to save face with both his colleagues in the College of Secretaries-General and with the wider public. He had even passed along the protests regarding anti-clerical moves up the chain and managed to obtain minor concessions, despite the fact that Seyss-Inquart's original intention to dismiss clerical instructors outright was exactly what van Dam had suggested in his *Reform* and *Gedanken und Vorschläge* pieces. These actions gained van Dam a certain amount of credit among the other Secretaries-General, which would allow him, after the war during his trial, to argue that he had always had the best interests of the Dutch populace at heart. But despite these political successes, van Dam was reminded, after co-signing the protest letter against the dismissal of Jewish civil servants, that his position was tenuous.¹²⁸ He had been appointed by Seyss-Inquart and was serving at the pleasure of the *Reichskommissar*. Should his efforts not be pleasing to the Germans, he could be sacked at any time. His room for maneuver was thus extremely limited.

¹²⁷ NIOD 216/6.

¹²⁸ Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 261–62.

Physical Education

Physical education was one of the many subjects that van Dam laid emphasis on in his *Gedanken und Vorschläge* and *Reform* pieces. Of course, van Dam was not the only education specialist who supported the introduction of P.E. into the schools as a mandatory subject. The various members of the NSB's *Opvoedersgilde* were also in support. For many of these *völkisch* thinkers, physical education was a completely indispensable part of total education. Physically fit members of society helped make society a more healthy, organic whole. As such physical education and sporting activities were fully one half of the “psycho-physical totality” that encompassed the individual. But health was not the only reason many such thinkers supported physical education. P.E. gave students concrete knowledge and experience that not all humans were equal—some simply were *better* than others, which of course was part and parcel to the larger racist thinking of National Socialism. Furthermore, much as in Germany, where physical education took on a pseudo-militaristic form, *völkisch* thinkers in the Netherlands also saw P.E. as a way of solidifying the *volksgemeenschap* upon which society was based. Finally, physical education led students to recognize the beauty in their own bodies, and hence their race.¹²⁹ Naturally, this was above and beyond the more pedestrian reasons one might support physical education as a mandatory subject in the schools, such as for personal safety, as in the case of making certain all students could swim in this nation of seafarers and canals, which van Dam used as justification during his second radio address to the nation in February 1941.¹³⁰

Although physical education was not unknown in the Netherlands before the war, it had never been a core subject in any Dutch schools prior to the occupation. On January 1, 1941, a little more than a month after van Dam took charge of the Education Department, it was made

¹²⁹ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 64–65.

¹³⁰ “Nederlands onderwijs in nieuwe banen - Prof. Van Dam over de arbeid van zijn Departement.”

mandatory in all Dutch primary schools. At the same time, the Education Department erected the new sub-department of Physical Education and Sport in order to oversee the introduction of the subject and a separate inspectorate was established exclusively for physical education.¹³¹ But despite this, the implementation of P.E. in the primary schools encountered various problems. First and foremost was the lack of qualified teachers and space. Because it had never been a required subject at the primary school level, few teachers possessed the necessary qualifications to teach the subject. As such, many teachers were granted the right to teach P.E. based upon their mastery of so-called intellectual subjects.

The Germans got right to work on training P.E. teachers. Shortly after the implementation of the requirement to teach P.E. the Germans established a training seminar in Neustrelitz, in Mecklenburg, for the training of Dutch physical education teachers along German lines. By June, it had admitted one hundred applicants. While most of these applicants were simply to return to their schools to give sport instruction, forty of them were intended to fill out the new role of inspector for physical education and sport, which would observe instruction in P.E. at Dutch schools to make sure that those teachers were passing muster.¹³² The P.E. training seminars in Neustrelitz continued regularly until at least November 1943, training hundreds of Dutch teachers in the finer points of physical education in the German sense, when the records of those seminars end.¹³³ As of July 1, 1941, physical education was also given increased prominence at the Dutch teacher training institute in Oldenburg, Germany, receiving more hours of instruction than any other subject, even pedagogy.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 261.

¹³² NIOD 020/2047.

¹³³ BAL R83/32.

¹³⁴ BAL R83/34.

More problematic was the lack of physical space in which to give lessons in physical education. Generally speaking, this was not a huge problem for those schools in the countryside where students could simply go outside to a nearby field to perform their exercises, at least when it was warm. But no such options were available during the winter months, when it was raining, or for those students who went to school in the larger towns and cities of the western part of the country along the coast, where the majority of the population lived. For students in The Hague, Amsterdam, or Rotterdam, there were no fields near enough to their schools, and given the population densities, building new P.E. halls was both expensive and time consuming. And this was before the ban on new school buildings went into effect on June 1, 1942.¹³⁵

This was coupled with the fact that the department did not give sufficient financial support for physical education, certainly nothing in proportion to the ideological importance that *völkisch* thinkers placed upon the subject. In 1942, about one million guilders was reserved for physical education and sport, totaling about one-half of one per cent of the total budget. In 1943 and 1944, those numbers shrank significantly.¹³⁶ Given the initial outlays for physical education, the timing of the cuts, the very high costs of building new sport fields and gymnasiums, the effort to train new P.E. inspectors and teachers, and the near universal support for physical education among the NSB, the German occupiers, and Van Dam, it is likely that the budget cuts were purely financial. By the latter half of the occupation, there simply was not enough money to go around when the Germans were most interested in extracting resources from the Netherlands in furtherance of the war effort. Nonetheless, according to the inspectors for Physical Education and Sport many schools made do with what they had and did the best that they could.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ BAL R83/10.

¹³⁶ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 236.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The introduction of Physical Education as a required subject in primary schools was somewhat of an outlier in the “reforms” van Dam implemented. Unlike many of the other “reforms” he would implement, it was actually relatively popular among the population as a whole. It was seen as so useful, in fact, that after the war ended and democratic rule returned to the country, the newly elected government did not roll back the clock on physical education instruction, but rather gave renewed support for the further implementation of the subject, and eventually expanded its mandatory status to secondary schools as well. This stands in contrast to almost every other change van Dam and the German occupiers implemented in the field of education during the war, which were thrown out almost entirely by the country’s new democratic government.

A Change in Course

As noted above, the February Strike of 1941 is often seen by historians as a turning point in the occupation.¹³⁸ Protests up to this point had been localized to specific places or sectors of society—such as the student protests at Leiden and Delft. Henceforth, protests were no longer regional. The February Strike, which started in Amsterdam but quickly spread across the nation, shows that large segments of the population were willing to take to the streets to agitate against German domination generally, and their anti-Jewish measures specifically. Two weeks after the strike, on March 12, 1941, Seyss-Inquart spoke at a large gathering of the North Holland branch of the *Arbeitsbereich der NSDAP in den Niederlanden*¹³⁹ held in the Amsterdam Concert House.

¹³⁸ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 80; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 70; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 12.

¹³⁹ “Workspace of the Nazi Party in the Netherlands,” the German Nazi Party’s apparatus in the Netherlands.

In his speech, which lasted almost two hours and was covered by newspapers around the country, Seyss-Inquart stressed the close relationship of the Dutch and German peoples.¹⁴⁰ They were not to become one people, but rather, on the basis of their racial and blood ties, were to “build a new community of fate that encompasses all Germanic peoples.”¹⁴¹ The independent spirit of the Dutch, which had led to the recent anti-German provocations, was a result of historical circumstance. Whereas the German people was mostly surrounded by “foreign” elements, the Dutch were not surrounded by those of foreign blood, but rather by their racial kin. This geographic position, combined with the Netherlands’ large empire, led the Dutch toward a feeling of complacent self-fulfillment and a desire to maintain peaceful relations at all costs. But this “Dutch culture” was, essentially, Seyss-Inquart intoned, *un-völkisch* and a result of the “liberal-international Jewish-influenced spirit” which dominated in the Netherlands.¹⁴² But the Dutch need not worry, because “while the power of the Reich is expressed through the Wehrmacht, National Socialism convinces through the power of its ideals.”¹⁴³ The German invasion allegedly allowed the Netherlands to be “awoken from a centuries-long dream,” and “it is self-evident, that the terroristic spirit, which has at the moment broken out in all liberal-democratic nations against national socialist movements after National Socialism came to power in Germany, will be broken in the Netherlands.”¹⁴⁴ But Seyss-Inquart also noted that, “we do not

¹⁴⁰ “De rede van den Rijkscommissaris,” *Delftsche Courant*, March 13, 1941, sec. Tweede Blad; “De Rijkscommissaris Over Nederlands Toekomst,” *Arnhemsche Courant*, March 13, 1941, sec. Tweede Blad; “De Rijkscommissaris spreekt over: Nederlands Verleden en Toekomst,” *De Telegraaf*, March 13, 1941, Morning edition; “Rede van Rijkscommissaris Dr. Seyss-Inquart,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, March 13, 1941; “Belangrijke rede van den Rijkscommissaris,” *Nieuwsblad van Friesland*, March 14, 1941, sec. Vierde Blad.

¹⁴¹ “Reichskommissar Reichsminister Seyss-Inquart: ‘Wir haben auf diesen Boden einen geschichtlichen Auftrag zu erfüllen,’” *Deutsche Zeitung in den Niederlanden*, March 13, 1941, Day edition. “*eine Schicksalsgemeinschaft bilden, die alle germanischen Völker umfasst.*”

¹⁴² “Belangrijke rede van den Rijkscommissaris.”

¹⁴³ “Reichskommissar Reichsminister Seyss-Inquart: ‘Wir haben auf diesen Boden einen geschichtlichen Auftrag zu erfüllen.’”

¹⁴⁴ “Belangrijke rede van den Rijkscommissaris.”

want in the least to remain in the country as the occupying power forever. We want that the Dutch, from inner persuasion and with their whole being, join in the great work of building of our Germanic community area and therewith a new Europe.”¹⁴⁵

The rest of Seyss-Inquart’s speech touched upon various topics meant to reassure his listeners in the Concert Hall and those reading the speech in the newspaper the next day, that Germany had the best interests of the Dutch at heart. Regarding the food supply, he noted that if the English repeated the blockade of the First World War, the Dutch would have just as much food as the Germans. *Winterhulp*—a charity organization aimed at creating a sense of solidarity among the *Volksgemeinschaft* and which had been exported to the Netherlands after the invasion—had, according to Seyss-Inquart, nothing to do with charity, but with the responsibility of racial comrades and the fulfillment of a higher duty. Germany did not consider Jews to be members of the Dutch people; they were the enemy with whom there could be neither a ceasefire nor peace. Industrial orders were being sent from Germany with the aim of increasing employment and keeping people at work. Taxes had gone up, yes, but because they had been reorganized along social norms, a household with three children would now pay less than previously under the “liberal, capitalist, and class-based” system, while the bicycle usage tax was to be rescinded entirely. And lest anyone fear that these changes were not to last, Seyss-Inquart reassured his audience that England would not win the war, and Europe would never return to the situation of September 1939.¹⁴⁶

But in addition to these various topics, Seyss-Inquart spent considerable time discussing education in its various forms. He noted that the *Opbouwdienst*, the reconstruction service aimed at rebuilding after the invasion, was really an educational institution meant to foster the “*völkisch*

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

solidification of the nation.”¹⁴⁷ It did this by focusing on the “basic element of work on the ground and in the soil.” But Seyss-Inquart’s reassurances hinted at the Dutch populace’s already fraught relationship with the labor service. Negative beliefs about the labor service had circulated in the Netherlands even before it became mandatory for young people to register for the *Arbeidsdienst*, the successor to the *Opbouwdienst*, and only increased after compulsory registration began in 1942. By the end of the occupation period, more Dutch Gentile youth would be in hiding from the labor service than Jewish people hiding from deportation “to the east.” Nonetheless, Seyss-Inquart hoped to reassure his listeners that there was nothing nefarious about the labor service and that, far from being a negative experience, it would return every young Dutchman “feeling himself as a young man of his people, for whom an appreciation of actual work had been instilled.”¹⁴⁸ Moreover, it was a training course for future leaders, “because we cannot give them a right to lead in absence of Germanic substance. The *Arbeidsdienst* is really an excellent training for leaders.”¹⁴⁹

After justifying the reduction in clerical teaching salaries with the audacious reasoning that clerics had taken vows of poverty and that there was no use in using state funds to circumvent the clerics’ own vows, he noted that the reduction in clerical salaries would allow for the installation of new teachers, a decrease in class sizes, and the ability of young men to start a family.¹⁵⁰ He then moved on to language instruction. Much like the rest of his speech, his focus on language at first was presented as beneficial, but then showed a truer motive. As he understood it, there was a great need for spelling reform in the Dutch language,¹⁵¹ and once this

¹⁴⁷ “De rede van den Rijkscommissaris.”

¹⁴⁸ “Belangrijke rede van den Rijkscommissaris.”

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ “De rede van den Rijkscommissaris.”

¹⁵¹ Seyss-Inquart was not wrong on this point either. Dutch orthography was a mess.

was completed and the education of Dutch children in the Dutch language and its associated cultural treasures was guaranteed, it would be possible to teach Dutch children in the German language, which “is the leading language of the coming Germanic community.”¹⁵² He justified this by accurately comparing the much larger German-speaking population with the comparatively smaller Dutch-speaking population, but then suggested that instruction in the German language was for the benefit of the Dutch, because it would allow for future freedom of movement in Europe, where German would certainly be the leading language, and perhaps even the entire world. Thus, German, he said, should not be limited to those who were able to attend higher education or the children of the elites, but rather should be available to all.¹⁵³ What Seyss-Inquart did not say, but would become clear soon enough, was that the occupation authority planned to introduce German language instruction in primary schools.

German language instruction, which was mentioned only as a vague thought in the speech, was not meant to take away from the Dutch character, however. Seyss-Inquart noted that his previous praise of Dutch history, colonialism, sea-faring, etc., showed that he truly understood the Dutch. But he then returned to the complacency that he attacked at the beginning of his speech, exhorting his audience not to fall for the trap of trying to work through a “so-called Fatherland Front,” by which he meant the *Nederlandsche Unie*—a conglomeration of the established parties aimed at reaching a middle ground between collaboration and accommodation—as had been attempted in Austria.¹⁵⁴ The problem with such an organization is

¹⁵² “Rede van Rijkscommissaris Dr. Seyss-Inquart.”

¹⁵³ “De Rijkscommissaris Over Nederlands Toekomst.”

¹⁵⁴ Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 79. For a full recounting of the *Nederlandsche Unie*, see pp. 66–86.

that it did not give enough weight, and could even act against, the *völkisch* interests, which were, Seyss-Inquart argued, the future of the Dutch nation.¹⁵⁵

The tenor of Seyss-Inquart's speech was clear; he stated it directly: "with us or against us."¹⁵⁶ The Dutch public could not have missed that the *Reichskommissar* had veiled direct threats to the Dutch nation with platitudes about its past greatness. But in the event some people missed it, the free press was quick to remind them. As, for example, the underground newspaper *Het Parool* noted, it was:

all lies about the increased prosperity in our country, about our livelihood, the reduction of unemployment, the "voluntary nature" in which our workers go to Germany, the false representation of our free political will, which will only be allowed if they adapt to the principles of the most despised people in Holland, namely the traitors of the N.S.B. We want to be free, [and] to the extent that we have been secured in the dungeon of National Socialism, we can still move.¹⁵⁷

The authors of the illegal paper promised the *Reichskommissar* to fulfill his previous promise that the Germans would not leave unless they are cut to pieces. "If you give us no other choice - well now, we assure you: then your will shall be done."¹⁵⁸

Where the underground press took a much more combative tone, the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, published for the Dutch community in Batavia and thus outside of the control of the *Reichskommissariat*, decided to mock Seyss-Inquart:

He knows the cheese head so much better! Seyss Inquart [sic] held a speech in the Concert Hall this afternoon in which he varied threats with flatteries, fury, or fear, promises of political freedom with the announcement of a Dutch incorporation in the Greater German Reich. In summary, the reason was the impression of great weakness, above all of confusion.¹⁵⁹

If the *Reichskommissar* had hoped to reinvigorate the process of self-nazification with which he had begun his tenure in The Hague, then the reaction to his speech must have been disappointing.

¹⁵⁵ "De rede van den Rijkscommissaris."

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ "De Rijkscommissaris houdt een rede," *Het Parool*, March 17, 1941.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ "Seyss Inquart spreekt over een 'Germaanschen Randstaat,'" *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, March 14, 1941, Morning edition. Cheese Head, or *Kaaskop*, is a translation of the German *Käsekopf*, a derogatory term for Netherlanders.

The February Strike had emboldened the Dutch nation and from this point forward, things went slowly but surely downhill.

German Language Instruction and an Eighth School Year

The most important educational “reform” that Seyss-Inquart had hinted at in his March 12 speech was the future introduction of German language instruction in primary schools. By May 1941, Schwarz and van Dam were working on that very effort at “reforming” the curriculum to better meet the needs of the German occupier. In van Dam’s view, German language instruction was meant to strengthen Dutch interests, which only coincidentally, by nature of the seemingly secure political position of Nazi Germany in Europe, were directly aligned with those of the Germans. The introduction of German as primary school subject had, after all, been one of the central proposals in van Dam’s *Gedanken und Vorschläge* and *Reform* pieces the previous fall.¹⁶⁰ Regardless, van Dam had two primary concerns. First, he recognized that he did not actually have the authority to change the curriculum in confessional schools. Traditionally, the number of hours afforded to any particular subject was left to local administrators. Van Dam believed that he could persuade school administrators and local councils to agree to the proposed three hours per week of German language instruction, but recognized that, in the event that was not possible, a change in the law would be necessary. Second was the question of teaching material, as there was no such German language instruction book available.¹⁶¹

On May 12, 1941, a meeting was held with all of the important players concerning the newest school subject. Seyss-Inquart; Commissioners-General Wimmer, Schmidt, and

¹⁶⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338; Knegtmans, “Jan van Dam und die Reform,” 1094–97; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245–49; Alberts and Zuidervaart, *De KNAW en de Nederlandse Wetenschap Tussen 1930 en 1960*, 18–19; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 40–41.

¹⁶¹ BAL R83/25.

Fischböck; Secretaries-General van Dam and Rost van Tonningen; and Schwarz together came up with a two-part plan for the introduction of the new subject. As of September 1, 1941, German would be introduced in Dutch primary schools, while on September 1, 1942, an eighth school year would be introduced to help further the goal of teaching every Dutch child the German language.¹⁶² With the support of everyone of importance secured, Schwarz proposed to Seyss-Inquart that the *Reichskommissariat* produce a German language instruction book designed for primary school students, the costs of which would be borne by the government. It had actually been van Dam's idea for the government to pay for the new book; he hoped the financial savings would smooth over the adoption of the book when it was, at this point, still not within his legal power to enforce its use writ large. While Seyss-Inquart agreed on the production of such an instruction book, he deferred the costs to Dutch parents. The creation of the new school book would be supervised, on the government's side, by Dr. Noordijk, the newly appointed School Inspector in General Service who had been trained as a German language instructor for secondary schools, while the authorship was left to G. F. E. Blijdenstein and K. E. König.¹⁶³

By mid-summer 1941, van Dam's plans for "reforming" the education curriculum, which he had been working on during the first half of the year, were finally coming to fruition. In a radio interview on July 4, 1941, van Dam made public the first of the curriculum changes he intended to implement.¹⁶⁴ Most important were the changes to Dutch language instruction, which van Dam wanted to increase. Gymnasiums and *Hogere Burger Scholen* would increase the total number of hours per week of Dutch language instruction, beginning in the 1941/42 school year

¹⁶² NIOD 216e/90.

¹⁶³ BAL R83/25.

¹⁶⁴ "Vraaggesprek met prof. van Dam," *De Zuidwillemsvaart/Nieuwe Helmondsche Courant*, July 8, 1941, Day edition, sec. Eerste Blad.

by at least five and two hours respectively.¹⁶⁵ While this would, at this point, surprise no one listening, given van Dam's previous pronouncements about the importance of Dutch language education for Dutch youths, the next change would have been somewhat abrupt. Going against all tradition in Dutch schools, German language instruction was to be increased at the expense of French language instruction.

The question was then immediately put to van Dam what might happen with the Dutch school system's tradition of learning three foreign languages, to which the Secretary-General responded that he had no intention of changing this time-honored tradition, only the importance of those languages traditionally taught. French, which had enjoyed a preeminent position as the first foreign language in Dutch schools was relegated to third place behind German and English. German, which had traditionally been the second foreign language, was slated to become the first taught foreign language. Although these changes in hours were meant to apply to secondary education only, van Dam also noted that the teaching of French in primary schools would be ended entirely.¹⁶⁶ What he did not say, but would become public about a month later, was that German would take the place of first foreign language in primary education as well, while in addition to French, English language instruction in primary schools would also end, although he was clear to note that this change in the hours afforded certain subjects was not the totality of the reforms he had planned.¹⁶⁷

In addition to changes in language instruction, van Dam noted that physical education hours would be expanded, which he more or less correctly viewed as a rather uncontroversial

¹⁶⁵ In fact, the *Hogere Burger Scholen* had two tracks, only one of which was to have two extra hours of Dutch language instruction. The second track gained five extra hours, just as in the *Gymnasium*.

¹⁶⁶ "Vraaggesprek met prof. van Dam."

¹⁶⁷ "De Nieuwe Urentabel voor HBS en Gymnasium," *Twentsch Dagblad Tubantia*, July 7, 1941, Day edition, sec. Tweede Blad; On the end of English language instruction, see Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 267.

topic. He then announced that, although he was hoping to have announced his changes earlier, he did so at this date so that schools could prepare for the following school year by hiring the necessary teachers of German and Dutch language to make up for the increase in hours. Recognizing that this could be problematic, however, he noted that the changes would only take effect for the first two grades of secondary education, with the rest of the higher grades having their hours increased annually as each age cohort moved up the ladder.¹⁶⁸

On July 25, 1941, through an order of Seyss-Inquart, van Dam was empowered to make direct changes to the curriculum of confessional schools, giving van Dam complete personal authority, limited only by the superior authority of the *Reichskommissariat*, over the lesson plan in all Dutch primary and secondary schools.¹⁶⁹ Should school boards try to hinder van Dam in these efforts, the latter was empowered to appoint representatives who could take control on the ground, and should that not suffice, van Dam was given the authority to shutter the offending schools entirely. Van Dam did not wait long make changes to the education curriculum.

About a month after his radio interview, in an address broadcast to the Dutch nation on August 12 that had gone through the rounds of the *Reichskommissariat* for approval of various officials including Wimmer and Schwarz,¹⁷⁰ van Dam announced a second round of changes that would be carried out in the curriculum and applied to both public and confessional schools.¹⁷¹ He justified these changes as being necessary given the new situation in Europe:

The leaders of the spiritual and political movement of today are aware that for the construction of the world, which after this war will no doubt be different from the previous one, it will be necessary to have a young generation, which is conscious of the ideas and ideals which are the basis of this newly constructed world and who have assumed these as their own viewpoint. I have the difficult, but for the future of our

¹⁶⁸ “De Nieuwe Urentabel voor HBS en Gymnasium.”

¹⁶⁹ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 137/1941.

¹⁷⁰ NIOD 020/2062. In fact, the notes in the file show that Schwarz had a significant hand in crafting the speech, with multiple drafts containing sections he had crossed out and notes for rephrasings.

¹⁷¹ “Prof. van Dam over de wijzingen in het Onderwijs,” *Limbursch Dagblad*, August 13, 1941, Day edition, sec. Eerste Blad.

volk fruitful, task to steer in this direction the education of the youth, which will, in my estimation, lead to this goal.¹⁷²

After noting that he had received from the *Reichskommissar* complete understanding for the necessity of these changes, he implored his audience to trust in him that he was making these changes for the benefit of the Dutch nation, that “we correct ourselves in various points” in order to achieve the “fruitful future” that he envisioned and which was based squarely on “Dutch interests [and a] Dutch future.”¹⁷³

The changes that van Dam planned to make were of a “general administrative-technical” nature and should not be seen as undermining the freedom of education that was the basis of the Dutch educational establishment that resulted from the struggles of the previous century. It was under this guise that he characterized the appointment and dismissal decrees, which he freely admitted were aimed at confessional education, and which, in his estimation, had caused little trouble in the intervening months. But these steps were not enough, according to van Dam. Further changes were necessary in two directions. First was the maintenance of peace and order in the schools, while the second encompassed changes to the curriculum and school books. Regarding the former, he noted that Seyss-Inquart has already afforded him significant leverage, above and beyond the authority previously granted to the Education Department, to enforce rules in the schools, both public and private, up to the closing of offending institutions should they refuse to submit to the central authority. As part of this effort, he had appointed Dr. D. G.

¹⁷² NIOD 020/2062. The quoted passage, which was approved by Wimmer, has significant input from Schwarz, mostly concerning the tone of the writing, but with some substantive edits as well. Van Dam’s original draft reads: “The leaders of the spiritual and political movement of today are aware that for the construction of the world, which after this war will doubtless resurface in a different form than in the earlier period, it will be necessary to have a young generation which has consciously conceived of the ideas, and has taken its point of view in the ideals which are conducive to the reconstruction of the world. Therefore, the Reichskommissar and his staff devote great attention to education. I now have the, in many respects unwelcome and in other respects very welcome task, to act as an intermediary between the German authorities and the Dutch people, and to try to find, in many cases, a solution which serves the interests of both parties and the conceptions on both sides: that this is extremely difficult, will be evident to every insider.”

¹⁷³ NIOD 020/2062.

Noordijk as “School Inspector in General Service,” whose aim it was to enforce peace and order in the schools and carry out the orders of the Education Department in those areas of the country that were otherwise resistant to van Dam’s “reforms.”¹⁷⁴

Noordijk, it should be recalled, was a replacement for the fired P. A. van Rossem, the former “Authorized Representative of the *Reichskommissar*” tasked with the very same goals and who had made himself and his subordinates much resented during his six months on the job. Importantly, Noordijk was subject to van Dam’s authority, whereas van Rossem was, at least initially, administratively stationed outside of the purview of the Education Department. But van Dam was clear to stress that he did not desire to use the new powers granted him, especially those harsher punishments which allowed him to shutter schools entirely. Rather, he appears to have hoped that the threat of such action would force the offending parties into line.

The announcement regarding Noordijk’s appointment was of secondary importance in van Dam’s radio speech, however. It was the changes to the curriculum that was the real news of the day.¹⁷⁵ After having noted that much discussion had taken place over the preceding month following his radio interview in which he announced the increased hours for German language instruction and physical education in secondary education, he went right in for the kill. German language would be taught at primary schools in the Netherlands as the first and most important foreign language. Initially, in discussions with his superiors in the *Reichskommissariat*, van Dam had suggested three hours of German language instruction per week in the primary schools, but when questions arose from Schwarz about whether even more hours could be devoted to German

¹⁷⁴ NIOD 020/2062.

¹⁷⁵ While most papers mentioned the issue of peace and order in the schools in their coverage of the changes van Dam was implementing, which found its way into dozens of national and regional newspapers over the following few days, several did not mention Dr. Noordijk at all. See e.g. “Reorganisatie van het onderwijs,” *Provinciale Overijsselsche en Zwolsche Courant*, August 13, 1941, Day edition; “Nieuwe wijzigingen in het onderwijs aangekondigd.”

language instruction, van Dam suggested that the draft law be amended to read “at least” three hours per week. Schwarz enthusiastically agreed.¹⁷⁶ Schwarz’s desire for increased German language instruction could also be found in his insistence that the new subject be taught in the third year of primary education, but in that case too, van Dam was able to convince his superiors that such an early introduction would be problematic, to say the least.¹⁷⁷

Van Dam informed his audience that his reasons for the introduction of German language instruction in primary schools were multiple. Knowledge of German would allow for greater contact between the Dutch and the Germans, which of course was necessary given the new order that ruled Europe (and which was certain, in van Dam’s view, to remain). German language skills would also alleviate unemployment by allowing Netherlands to go to Germany for work. Moreover, it would allow for ease of travel from the Netherlands to Germany. But most important in van Dam’s eyes was that increased German language instruction would actually bolster Netherlands’ knowledge of the *Dutch language*. He reasoned that, given the similarities of the two languages and the increasing influence of the German language upon the Dutch language, which, he argued was growing every day, if every Netherlander learned German, it would allow the Dutch to maintain the distinctiveness of their own mother tongue, by learning, via German language instruction, both the similarities and the differences of the two languages. As he informed his listeners, “this influence can only be combated and put to good use if one knows the German language.”¹⁷⁸

Whether van Dam actually believed that learning German would help Dutch students with the Dutch language is unknown. On its face, the argument is not entirely implausible,

¹⁷⁶ BAL R83/14.

¹⁷⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/344.

¹⁷⁸ NIOD 020/2062.

although it disregards the totality of effects that his reorganization of the curriculum was aimed at: a closer cultural association of the Dutch with Germany and the European, Germanic new order. The Germans authorities, however, were clear in their understanding of the importance of German language instruction. For example, Dr. Wimmer, Commissioner-General for Administration and Justice, noted in a letter to various *Gauleiters* in August 1942, in which he requested additional teachers to help fill vacancies in the German Schools in the Netherlands, that:

The Dutch, already very difficult to influence by nature, and made bourgeois by an almost uninterrupted 250-year period of peace and prosperity, are predisposed to conservatism and are hardly amenable to new developments. In such an attitude, the adult Dutch people are often unable to reach the Reich at all. It is more promising to deal with the youth; which have not yet consciously experienced the peaceful state of satiety, nor have they acknowledged it as the inner foundation of their existence. They are also hard to get a grip on, because ... the schools, as the only opportunity to reach the entirety of the youth, have long been recognized by our political opponents, especially the confessions, as the best source of influence upon the youth, and therefore are stubbornly obscured against our influence.

We have already done a great deal by regulating the rule of the churches over the schools, by bringing Dutch National Socialist schoolmasters and teachers to the crucial positions in school organizations and of the actual education system, and to a large extent cleansed the teaching material.

But it is also a question of instituting reforms *in our interests*. In order not to enter into an open cultural struggle, the reforms have to be tackled mainly from the pedagogic point of view, and thus the practical use for the population must be clearly shown. Toward this end, the introduction of the compulsory teaching subject in [the] German [language] will have an effect in the primary school, which has already taken place in the past school year and will be significantly expanded in the coming year.¹⁷⁹

While van Dam might have understood the introduction of German language instruction as a method to increase the independence of Dutch culture and to bolster the population's knowledge of the Dutch language, the upper echelons of the German leadership in the Netherlands had no such ideas. German language instruction was aimed at converting the independent-minded Dutch toward *German interests*, which included the incorporation of the Netherlands into the Greater Germanic Reich that would rule the future of Europe.

¹⁷⁹ BAL R83/29. Emphasis mine. The expansion Wimmer speaks of regards the 8th primary school year, which was to be instituted in the 1942/43 school year.

In addition to the introduction of German language instruction into primary education, van Dam also announced in his August 1941 speech that primary schools would, through a massive reorganization, be extended to an eighth year, which was to be introduced for the 1942/43 school year.¹⁸⁰ Seyss-Inquart ordered van Dam to begin preparations for the introduction of the eighth year of primary school in April 1942, and van Dam got right to work along with his subordinates in the department. After much discussion from within the department and between van Dam and his superiors at the *Hauptabteilung Erziehung und Kirchen*, van Dam released two decrees, dated August 26, 1942, which changed the 1920 Education Law to include both the lengthening of compulsory education through the eighth school year, although with some exceptions, and the introduction of the new eighth year of primary education.¹⁸¹

Previously, primary education had stopped after the seventh year, and of those, only the first six were entirely compulsory, meaning a child could leave school when they turned fourteen. Van Dam, like Mussert and many educators, saw this as problematic on a fundamental level. As it stood, there was a significant drop off in attendance for the seventh school year of primary education, which van Dam reckoned to be between seventy and eighty per cent. Those students who did not attend the seventh year of primary education either dropped out of school entirely or went to one of the various secondary schools available to them, whether the Gymnasium, the *Hogere Burger School*, or extended primary education, the so-called MULO schools, which were similar in nature to the German *Hauptschule*.¹⁸² Because of the significant

¹⁸⁰ NIOD 020/2062.

¹⁸¹ NIOD 020/425; Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 95–96/1942.

¹⁸² MULO or (*Meer*) *Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs* (“more advanced primary education”) was vocational education. It has since been replaced by VMBO, or *Voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs* (“preparatory secondary vocational education”).

drop in attendance rates for the ordinary primary schools, many municipalities concentrated all students in the seventh year of primary education into a single school for ease of teaching, which, van Dam proffered, would make the addition of an eighth year relatively easy to accomplish.¹⁸³ This new school, which van Dam called *voortgezet gewoon onderwijs*¹⁸⁴ was meant to catch those students who dropped out entirely after the sixth school year and those students who continued on to the seventh year of primary education but did not attend one of the various types of secondary schools. Because of the niveau of students that would attend the continuing primary education school, the focus of these years was to be life skills, but with a special emphasis on the worker and his wife's place in the *Volksgemeenschap*:

The school will thus become an instrument for influencing the Netherlander of the future, in so far as the education of Dutch self-awareness, the shared community of fate with the German people, and Germanic-European bonds will be at the forefront.¹⁸⁵

The extension of primary education to an eighth year, along with the consequent lengthening of compulsory education through a child's fifteenth year (which would include that eighth year of primary education for most students), as well as the introduction of German language instruction into the curriculum meant that there would be a shortage of both teachers and learning material for this purpose.¹⁸⁶ Regarding the shortage of teachers, van Dam gave little insight into his thinking save to mention that the department recognized it might be necessary for schools to share German language teachers.¹⁸⁷ The latter problem of teaching material could not be solved by simple means because there was, as yet, no material designed for teaching German to primary school children and so van Dam announced that a new German language instruction book would be prepared. In fact, by this point, the preparation for the *Deutsches Lehr- und*

¹⁸³ NIOD 020/425.

¹⁸⁴ Continuing primary education.

¹⁸⁵ NIOD 020/425.

¹⁸⁶ NIOD 020/425.

¹⁸⁷ NIOD 020/2062.

Lesebuch für die niederländische Volksschule were well underway under the supervision of Dr. Noordijk such that the book was expected to be ready for use by the 1941-42 school year for the 7th year of primary school education.¹⁸⁸ Van Dam promised that this new book would be free of any sort of political or ideological indoctrination and would focus purely on teaching the basics of the German language.¹⁸⁹

Only half of van Dam's expectations came true. The *Deutsches Lehr- und Lesebuch* was only first published in March 1942, which meant that German language education had to be put off until the 1942/43 school year. On the other hand, König and Blijdenstein, the book's authors, stuck with van Dam's promise to avoid any sort of ideological indoctrination. The instruction book takes a straight-forward approach to teaching German language that focuses on children's rhymes, songs, and games aimed at making learning German both fun for the students and useful for establishing a basic understanding of the language.¹⁹⁰ The only content that could be, in theory, conceived of as ideological, was to be found in the included songs that were suggested for use in lessons, many of which were religious in nature, especially Christmas songs such as *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht*, but that would not have been out of the ordinary for the time. Even so, their inclusion certainly could not be accurately construed as Nazi-oriented pieces.¹⁹¹

Like so many of the other changes to education introduced by the occupiers and their Dutch helpers, German language instruction and the extension of primary education to an eighth school year were not entirely successful. German language instruction, while technically mandatory, could not always be adequately enforced. Teachers could easily keep teaching the

¹⁸⁸ BAL R83/25; G. F. E Blijdenstein and H. E. König, *Deutsches Lehr- und Lesebuch für die niederländische Volksschule* (Den Haag: N.V. Uitgevers-Maatschappij "Oceanus," 1942).

¹⁸⁹ NIOD 020/2062.

¹⁹⁰ G.F.E Blijdenstein and K.E König, *Deutsches Lehr- und Lesebuch für die niederländische Volksschule: Lehrerheft* (Den Haag: Oceanus, 1942), 3–10.

¹⁹¹ The song, known in English as *Silent Night*, predates the Nazi movement by over a century.

same foreign languages they always had, as a local inspector noted in Apeldoorn.¹⁹² Only a little subterfuge was necessary to make it appear as though German language was being taught when, in reality, it was not at all. Part of the problem was that the NSB was against the introduction of German language instruction, for the party feared that it was a further step toward Germanization.¹⁹³ Had it been more supportive of the effort, it is likely that German language instruction would have, at least, been more successful in those towns controlled by NSB mayors and in those inspectorates staffed by NSB inspectors. But given that both the populace and the majority of Dutch collaborators were against it, German language instruction did not really stand a chance.

As it stood, there were simply not enough inspectors who were both willing and able to enforce the mandated changes. It was not a question of whether inspectors were falling for teachers' ruses. Many local inspectors very clearly knew that German was not being taught. As the inspector in Helmond noted:

Education in the German language in this inspectorate has become a giant farce ... Instruction is for all intents and purposes not given. Always there are a few sentences and words on the board, but always the same ones. A few nice, innocent German songs are taught. Everything in case of inspection."¹⁹⁴

Or as Terpstra, the chief of the Sub-Department Primary Education, noted at one school he visited in 's-Hertogenbosch:

there is reason here to surmise that [teaching] is not proceeding with the necessary diligence, by the way of the school director [who taught the class and] gave the impression even during our visit, that the educational material interested him so little, that he had trouble keeping his eyes open.¹⁹⁵

Because German language instruction was seen as an imposition by most people, according to the inspector in Arnhem, "nowhere is [German] taught with enthusiasm, and in almost half of the

¹⁹² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/347.

¹⁹³ Knechtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 268.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 311.

¹⁹⁵ NIOD 216e/90.

schools in the Arnhem inspectorate, there is simply no German taught at all.”¹⁹⁶ Such was the case throughout much of the country.¹⁹⁷

And unwillingness of many teachers was not the only hindrance for German language instruction. Somewhat counter-intuitively, there were numerous teachers who actually wanted to teach German language, but these teachers were simply unable, for lack of proper training and German language skills. The reason behind such an odd situation was the importance placed upon German language instruction by the government. It exempted German language instructors from foreign labor service or re-internment as prisoners of war, thus making the position quite popular among teachers. The inspector in Zwolle summed up the odd nature of German language instruction after the war:

Very little or nothing came of the education itself ... Yet that measure [German language instruction] of the occupier is one, perhaps the only one, for which we could be thankful. It did no damage, it did not bring the Dutch youth a step closer to Germandom, to the contrary. But it did provide an unbeatable opportunity to indemnify dozens of teachers from re-internment as POWs or from [having to go] underground.¹⁹⁸

Even if the introduction of German language instruction can be seen as at least partially successful, the expansion of primary education to an eighth year certainly cannot. The necessary reorganization of the educational system proved too difficult to implement by the 1942-43 school year. Although the law had been altered to require the introduction of the new continuing primary education schools no later than September 1, 1942, exceptions were made allowing those municipalities that were unable to implement the new orders by the beginning of the 1942-1943 school year to delay its introduction until the 1943-44 school year.¹⁹⁹ The problems in implementation of the eighth school year were multiple. There was a shortage of teachers qualified to teach the subject even for seventh year students, let alone for eighth year students.

¹⁹⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/347.

¹⁹⁷ Koldijk, “Het literatuurboek Duits,” 51.

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 52.

¹⁹⁹ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 95–96/1942.

There was a shortage of classrooms in which the lessons could be taught, which was exacerbated by the ban on new school construction aimed at saving valuable building resources.²⁰⁰ At the same time, shortages of paper and other learning materials had begun to be felt within the department, while, by this time, the confessional schools were in open revolt against the Education Department and the “reforms,” especially the appointment decrees, it had instituted. Moreover, the extension of compulsory education through a child’s fifteenth year was met with significant resistance, especially in the countryside where those students were often expected to begin working instead of returning to school.²⁰¹ Finally, and in reversal of their previous position, Mussert and the NSB actually came out against the lengthening of compulsory education, fearing that it would, just like German language instruction, lead to an increased Germanization of the population.²⁰²

1942 had been unfavorable for the introduction of an eighth school year, but by 1943, it was nearly impossible. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, *Sicherheitsdienst* reports show an uptick in belief among the population that the Germans would eventually lose the war, and the subsequent defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, where hundreds of thousands of German troops were captured, meant even greater numbers of forced laborers would be sent to Germany.²⁰³ At the same time, material shortages became worse as almost anything of value was deemed necessary for the war effort, which included the more mundane

²⁰⁰ BAL R83/10.

²⁰¹ NA 2.14.37/697.

²⁰² Knechtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 268; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 168–72. In fact, much to Schwarz’s consternation, many of the German-backed initiatives, including the introduction of German in primary schools, were met with suspicion by the NSB leadership. In a letter to the Office of the Deputy Fuehrer, dated May 16, 1941, that almost any measures the Germans instituted were received as detrimental to the NSB by its leadership. Apparently, Schwarz had not gotten the memo regarding the renaming of the Office of the Deputy Führer to the Office of the Party Chancellery, which had taken place a few days prior. See NIOD 020/2047.

²⁰³ BAL R58/161.

items, such as paper.²⁰⁴ The entry of the United States into the war in late 1941, coupled with the German defeat at El-Alamein in late 1942 and at Stalingrad in early 1943 led to a large increase in resistance activity among the Dutch, which further exacerbated labor shortages by drawing otherwise working age adults into resistance networks and away from German labor service. During 1941, it had appeared to most people paying attention that the Germans were the uncontested masters of Europe and would not be leaving any time soon. This had, of course, been one of the primary motivations van Dam himself repeatedly gave for his cooperation with the Nazis, both during and after the war. But by early 1943, German domination of Europe was not nearly as certain. The resulting increase in resistance activity, along with the loss of the Dutch East Indies to Japanese occupation in spring 1942 and the ever-increasing need for labor from the Netherlands following the German defeats of winter 1942/43, led the German occupiers to increase repression of the Dutch population. The tenor of the occupation had changed significantly and caught in the crossfire, among many other elements, was the introduction of German language instruction and the eighth school year.

Stichting Nederlandsche Onderwijs Film

At around the same time that van Dam and Schwarz were making their initial arrangements for the introduction of German language instruction, in May 1941, A. A. Schoevers founded the Dutch Educational Film Foundation (*Stichting Nederlandsche Onderwijs Film*) in The Hague. The idea of such a foundation reached back at least to January 1941, when Schwarz put Schoevers into contact with Dr. K. Zierold, an official at the *Reichserziehungsministerium* in Berlin. Ostensibly, the foundation was tasked with using the new medium of film as a tool for education in the schools, but the propagandistic opportunity

²⁰⁴ NA 2.14.37/697.

was hard to pass up. Technically placed under the purview of the Dutch Education Department, and therefore under van Dam's authority, the foundation nonetheless received significant support from the *Hauptabteilung Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* in the *Generalkommissariat zur besonderen Verwendung*, led by Commissioner-General Fritz Schmidt and which was tasked with the ideological coordination of the Dutch public with National Socialism.²⁰⁵ Regardless of where, administratively, it was placed within the Dutch bureaucracy, the leadership and control of the foundation was strictly in German hands.²⁰⁶

The foundation had a dual purpose to fulfill. On the one hand, it was tasked with importing films from the German Education Ministry for use in Dutch schools. In the first year alone, it obtained more than four thousand copies of German films used in education for Dutch schools, in addition to some seven hundred, fifty film projectors. On the other, it was supposed to create new films on Dutch culture and history that could be used in the classroom. Mostly these dealt with geography and the natural sciences. It was the latter subjects that the Germans thought would be most useful for their propagandistic purposes as they could be used to counter the religious education given in the confessional schools. Schwarz, in one of his many reports back to the Office of the Deputy Führer/Party Chancellery noted that in the confessional schools, "every technical innovation [i.e., film] and the clarification of natural laws are treated as the devil's work."²⁰⁷ But as far as Schwarz was concerned, anything that hurt or hindered the confessions in carrying out their work was a benefit to the Reich.

Despite the benefit the Germans saw in using film in the classroom as an educational tool, the foundation experienced considerable difficulties in obtaining the necessary materials to

²⁰⁵ NA 2.14.68/1.

²⁰⁶ NIOD 020/2047.

²⁰⁷ NIOD 020/2047.

further its intended purpose. Shortly after its foundation, it ordered forty thousand meters of blank film for use in copying German films and for shooting new material, deliverable in monthly installments of ten thousand meters. A year later, it had received only a fraction of that from the Kodak factory in occupied Paris where the film was produced. This was mostly a result of infighting among the German administrations in the Netherlands and in occupied France, with both administrations claiming a higher need for very limited amounts of film. In the end, the foundation was forced to make due with a monthly allowance of only three thousand meters of film.²⁰⁸

Despite this, the Dutch Educational Film Foundation managed to produce a relatively stunning number of films for use in Dutch schools, many complete with teachers' manuals designed to help teachers in using these films to their fullest extent in the classroom.²⁰⁹ Entire film series were produced on topics ranging from geography to traffic management, from botany and biology to winter sporting activities. Noticeably absent from the catalog of produced films are any that have to do with politics, history, or "racial studies," subjects that one might more regularly expect of an institution with an overtly propagandistic purpose.²¹⁰ Likely for this reason, those few works that have looked at propaganda in the schools during the occupation have left the foundation completely out of their works, or, in a single instance, discounted it as nothing more than a sideshow with little effect.²¹¹ But despite the dismissal of later historians of the work of the foundation, it is clear from the historical record that the Germans themselves saw the film foundation as a propaganda tool worthy of their support. Schwarz, for example, lists it in

²⁰⁸ NA 2.14.68/1.

²⁰⁹ NA 2.14.68/50-51.

²¹⁰ NA 2.14.68/50.

²¹¹ De Pater and Knegtman don't even mention the foundation in their writings on education during the occupation (nor do, for that matter, in 't Veld or de Jong). The lone work that does call the *Stichting Nederlandsche Onderwijs Film* a propaganda institution spends only a single paragraph on it, and then, focuses mostly on its effect in confessional education. Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 246–47.

every report back to Berlin as one of the accomplishments he oversaw during his time leading the Main Department of Education and Churches in the *Reichskommissariat*, while the officials in the Main Department Enlightenment and Propaganda repeatedly refer to the propagandistic nature of the foundation in their letters in support of obtaining more film for the foundation's use.²¹² So while more research on this particular area is needed, outright dismissal of the work of the foundation would be a mistake.

Conclusion

By the end of Schwarz's first year in office, the situation was looking relatively good from the German perspective. He noted to a colleague, Dr. Benze of the *Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht* in Berlin in a letter dated March 12, 1941, that the "reform" of Dutch education along the German model had only just begun, but that he was hopeful that, in the very near future, these changes would reap dividends.²¹³ In his activity report dated July 31, 1941 he reported back to the Party Chancellery the state of affairs in the Netherlands as concerned his Main Department Education and Churches. Among the positive developments in the realm of Dutch education, Schwarz counted German control of the curriculum, personnel, and school books; the introduction of German in the 7th and 8th school years as the first and most heavily taught foreign language; general school reforms along German guidelines; the introduction of German educational/propaganda films; the introduction of equivalency between German and Dutch school finishing exams; the lengthening of teacher training; the removal of anti-German school inspectors and their replacement with German-friendly inspectors; the guarantee of peace order in the schools via the introduction of a General Inspector; the removal of clerical school heads and the reduction of clerical teaching salaries by

²¹² NIOD 020/2047; NA 2.14.68/1.

²¹³ BAL R83-Niederlande/25. *The German Central Institute for Education and Instruction*.

forty per cent; the removal or cleansing of anti-German school books; and the forced relocation of Jewish students to Jewish schools.²¹⁴ In previous reports, but left out of the July report, he had also emphasized the establishment of physical education as a required subject in the schools. And that was only in the realm of primary and secondary education in Dutch schools.

In Dutch universities, he counted further successes, including state control of private universities; cleansing of the personnel; the appointment of three German and six Dutch national socialists as Professors; the establishment of an *SS-Kameradschaftshaus* (SS-Camaraderie House) in Leiden and the concentration of national socialist students there; exchanges of Dutch and German students via the German Academic Exchange Service; the introduction of the Führer principle in the universities through the strengthening of the curators and rectors; the closing of new enrollments to Jewish students; and the limitation of Jewish students to no more than two per cent of the total, all of whom were confined to Amsterdam.²¹⁵ Finally, he noted great gains in the area of German Schools in the Netherlands, which had been increased in number from eight to forty-one, with triple the number of attending students, of whom about a third were Dutch, a third *Reichsdeutsche* (Germans from Germany), and a third *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans).²¹⁶ This was helped by the removal of parental costs for the intuitions (which were now subsidized by the Dutch state), and the granting of equivalency between German and Dutch schools. Moreover, a shortage of teachers had been overcome through the hiring of ninety Dutch teachers for the German schools, many of whom had completed a teacher training course in Oldenburg, Germany designed for this purpose. Student difficulties with the German language were being

²¹⁴ NIOD 020/2047. For more on the school inspectors, see Chapter 7.

²¹⁵ NIOD 020/2047.

²¹⁶ For the efforts regarding German Schools, the NIVO, and the *Reichsschulen*, see Chapter 6.

overcome through the establishment of special summer courses designed to improve these students' facility with German.²¹⁷

By most measures, these changes must be understood as an astounding success on the part of the Germans. Schwarz certainly believed them to be, noting in a previous report that many of these advancements were simply unimaginable given the state of Dutch education prior to the German invasion.²¹⁸ The Dutch had, after all, engaged in a long fight amongst themselves regarding the nature of education, one that lasted the better part of a century and that concluded with a system that was both varied and mostly out of the control of the Dutch state. The Germans had managed to completely upend this system in a little over 15 months and without even encountering the level of resistance they had originally expected.²¹⁹ But the successes of the German occupier during the first war were also superficial in nature, as they amounted, mostly, only to the introduction of new regulations. Only in the removal of Jewish students and teachers could the Germans claim real success; every other initiative was limited in some significant way, while the hoped-for introduction of *heemkunde* was never even attempted.²²⁰ As the occupation went on, the implementation of these new regulations proved ever more challenging at the local level. Sometimes the hurdles were structural, as was the case with the introduction of physical education, propaganda films, and the eighth school year. Other times outright resistance on the part of local officials and teachers was the cause of the ineffectiveness of the new regulations. This was especially true of the appointment decrees, the use of banned school books, and the

²¹⁷ NIOD 020/2047.

²¹⁸ NIOD 020/2047.

²¹⁹ NIOD 020/2047.

²²⁰ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 236. Van Dam did actually make overtures toward the introduction of *heemkunde* in late 1944, but they came to nothing and were quickly dropped.

introduction of German language instruction. In reality, despite Schwarz's glowing reports, the successes of the *Reichskommissariat* and its Dutch helpers were much more limited.

In the following chapter, the focus changes slightly to look at one specific subject—history. Historical instruction was seen as especially important by the German occupiers and their Dutch collaborators, which was, for example, why so many history books had been affected by van Dam's textbook censorship committee. But removing offensive material was problematic in two ways. First, so much was deemed offensive to the occupiers that it left few acceptable history books available. More importantly, however, the occupiers and the local collaborators recognized that historical instruction could, and should, be used to help them in their goals. Merely removing material was insufficient from an ideological point of view.²²¹ In order to infuse a more Germanic view of history into the education of the youth, the German occupiers and their Dutch helpers attempted to introduce several *völkisch* history textbooks into the classroom. Some were more successful than others, but all shared in the same essential purpose of fostering a Germanic identity in the Dutch.

²²¹ NIOD 020/436.

Chapter 6 - Changes in Historical Instruction

With this booklet we want to demonstrate on the basis of facts that the Germanics were, neither in [the stone age] nor long before, “wild, uncivilized, nomadic hordes,” but peasants with a high culture connected to the soil. The reader can then judge [for] himself about the boisterousness of the inhabitants of these lands at the beginning of our era, which these days the youth are so often forced to accept. - F. E. Farwerck, *Het is anders dan men ons leerde*, 1938¹

One Europe will finally emerge from this war. But was there no Europe [before]? No! There were only a number of European states. ... Now there will be one Europe, a European togetherness, led by the Germanics. - Anonymous author of *Over Volk en Vaderland - Geschiedenis voor het lager onderwijs*, 1944²

In the previous chapter, the focus remained on the administrative apparatus of the German occupation and the Dutch Education Department. Most of the changes discussed there focused on the higher levels of the administrative state's attempts to inject a national socialist and Germanic theme into instruction and school administration. This included attempts by the government to gain control over confessional education, attempts to remove both Jewish pupils and Jewish instructors from the schools, the censorship of school books, the introduction of German language instruction, physical education, propaganda films, and the attempted extension of primary education to an eighth school year. When the focus did turn to actual changes in classroom instruction, such as the introduction of physical education as a required subject, the attempted introduction German propaganda films into the classroom, or the introduction of German language instruction, it was noted that these efforts were met with little relative success, despite the Germans' and their Dutch collaborators' best efforts. Mostly, this lack of success stemmed from two major factors. The first were institutional hurdles that the government was unable to overcome. The fate of physical education and the *Stichting Nederlandsche Onderwijs*

¹ F. E. Farwerck, *Het is anders dan men ons leerde* (Amsterdam: Der Vaderen Erfdeel, 1938), 6. It is different than they taught us.

² On *Volk* and *Fatherland*: History for primary education. The unpublished manuscript is located in NIOD 216e/187.

Film are prime examples here, as in both cases, material shortages hampered the occupiers' efforts before any significant traction could be made.³

On the other hand, both passive and active resistance from local administrators and teachers was the cause of the failure to fully implement the book cleansing regime or to gain control of confessional education.⁴ In these cases, it was a matter more of the affected groups, by and large, not being willing to follow the new rules placed upon them. At the same time, the extension of primary education to an eighth school year failed as a result of both major factors, as shortages in classrooms, teachers, and paper were combined with resistance on the part of confessional schools and even the NSB, such that the eighth school year had to be continually pushed back as the occupation progressed and was eventually scrapped altogether.⁵

The Germans and their Dutch collaborators did experience some success with the introduction of German language instruction, to the extent that it became an official subject, a book was produced and sometimes actually used, but even here, resistance from teachers, school heads, and local administrators meant that many, if not most, students received only cursory instruction in the German language, and certainly nothing at the level that was intended.⁶ Only in the removal of Jewish individuals from the schools did the Germans experience any real measure of success in their efforts, and in this case, it must be noted, they were all too successful. But even in this instance, the impetus was not confined to the educational sector, but rather the effects of the Germans' actions were felt in the educational sector simply because Jewish people could be found in the halls and classrooms of the nation's educational establishments. Indeed,

³ For *Stichting Nederlandsche Onderwijs Film*, see NA 2.14.68/1; For P.E., see Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 236, 246–47.

⁴ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 495–501; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 229–30.

⁵ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 268; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 168–72.

⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/343–348.

throughout occupied Europe, the Germans put great emphasis, sometimes even to the detriment of the war effort itself, to affect their genocide of Europe's Jewish population, so it is unsurprising that they were equally effective in these efforts in the Netherlands.⁷

But there was one other area in which the government enjoyed comparatively greater success in its efforts to change classroom instruction—historical education. This chapter focuses on the question of historical instruction through an examination of history textbooks designed for school instruction that offered a view of Dutch history from a national socialist perspective. These works, by and large, were representative of the larger body of Nazi scholarship that viewed the Netherlands as a Germanic nation whose history and destiny was tied forever to that of the German Reich and whose people were essentially Germanic brothers. This view as promoted by national socialist thinkers and, as portrayed in history textbooks intended for adoption in the schools, was largely incompatible with the type of historical instruction taught in Dutch schools prior to the invasion. The final section of the chapter focuses on an older historical textbook that was used prior to and during the early years of the occupation that was specifically singled out by the occupation authorities as being anti-German and deemed inappropriate for use in the schools.

Although the introduction of a new form of history education was comparatively more successful than other attempted “reforms,” it should be noted from the outset that this greater measure of success was still extremely limited in nature. Significant opposition occurred at the local level, such that the implementation of the government's “reforms” was just as hampered as the occupiers' attempts to, for example, gain control over appointments in confessional education. Nonetheless, these attempts at re-forming Dutch history deserve a closer look for two

⁷ In fact, the Germans were more successful in liquidating the Jewish population of the Netherlands than they were in other Western European nations. See Croes, “The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival.”

reasons. First, attempts to alter history textbooks and introduce replacement texts more favorable to a Germanic worldview explicitly lay out the occupiers' plans for the future of Dutch education *and* the new national identity historical education was meant to foster. While bureaucrats like Schwarz could, and did, argue in their writings that their efforts at reform at the administrative level were aimed at instilling a more *völkisch*, Germanic mindset in Dutch youth, beyond their own words indicating as much, there is in many cases little that differentiates their "reforms" from the liberal efforts of the previous century.⁸ But in the area of historical instruction, these differences are much more obvious, and in this case, the end goal of fostering a more Germanic identity can most readily be shown. Second, unlike many other efforts, the Germans and their Dutch collaborators viewed historical instruction itself as one of the most important aspects of their educational agenda, and so put comparatively greater efforts toward its "reform."⁹

A New Historical Instruction

Although van Dam's censorship committee had done much work on historical texts by erasing offensive passages, removing certain works from circulation, and censoring new publications, this was not entirely sufficient. As one complainant noted, almost all historical works might be considered anti-national socialist in their basic foundations, at least to the extent that they were not based on the racist and chauvinistic tenets of the ideology. The school book cleansing commission had been so thorough in their efforts regarding history books that a near emergency resulted because of a lack of acceptable history texts.¹⁰ The German occupiers were well aware of this problem, as were their collaborators in the Dutch government. As F. J. Los

⁸ NIOD 020/2047.

⁹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/348; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 267; Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/58.

¹⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/342-343.

noted in the *völkisch*, Nazi publication *Volksche Wacht* in 1941, “None of the subjects taught ... needs reform in objectives and methodology [as much] as the subject of history.”¹¹ For this reason, several attempts were made to write new history books that would more effectively instill among the student population the national socialist view of history. The most successful of these was Prof. Jan de Vries’s *Onze Voorouders*.¹²

De Vries was a well-known intellectual and member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, and as such, was in many ways an excellent candidate for writing a new national socialist history textbook. He had been a Professor of Old Germanic Literature and Languages at Leiden University since 1925 and was an active participant in the small *völkisch* movement in the Netherlands during the 1930s. With the coming of the occupation, became even more influential. In 1942, he was appointed vice president of the *Nederlandsche Kultuurraad*,¹³ which was headed by G. A. S. Snijder, and tasked with paving the way for National Socialism in scientific and cultural life in the Netherlands. Later that year, he was appointed vice president of the *Nederlandsche Kulturkamer*,¹⁴ which was led by Dr. Tobie Goedewaagen, who was also the Secretary-General of the Department of Arts and People’s Enlightenment. That body was tasked with the general cultural coordination of Dutch society. Also, in 1942, he was appointed to head the Institute for Dutch Language and Folk Culture in The Hague, the Dutch language institute that had first been proposed by van Dam in his inaugural radio address. He was also one of the main Dutch intellectuals who worked with the *SS-Ahnenerbe* research institute, although in some *Ahnenerbe* circles, he was seen as insufficiently committed to the cause.¹⁵ Regardless of this

¹¹ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/58.

¹² Jan De Vries, *Onze voorouders* (’s-Gravenhage: De Schouw, 1942). *Our Forefathers*.

¹³ Dutch Cultural Council.

¹⁴ Dutch Cultural Chamber.

¹⁵ Stefanie Würth, “Vorwort zum Nachdruck,” in *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, by Jan de Vries, 3rd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), xiii–xiv. Officially the *Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe e. V.*, or the Research Group of German Ancestral Heritage, was the main SS office dedicated to researching the history of the Aryan race.

relative mistrust he received by some workers at the *Ahnenerbe*, his work was continually financed by the German leadership and he never lost the respect of the higher levels of the Dutch, *völkisch* elite in the Netherlands.

The impetus for the book reached back, at least, to December 1941, when van Dam exchanged notes with Goedewaagen regarding the creation of two history books designed for use in the classroom.¹⁶ *Onze Voorouders* was the first of the two, and the only one that would make it to publication. By June 1942, de Vries had finished the work and passed it along to Goedewaagen, who then sent copies to van Dam to proof so that van Dam could, should he see fit, test its use in the schools. After seeing the book first hand, van Dam appears to have had varied reactions. At first, he declined to put it to use in the schools as a textbook, but only as an instructional manual for teachers. But he quickly reversed himself, noting that the book was “topnotch,” and decided that it could be made compulsory throughout the education system, although he wanted to wait and see if any objections materialized. However, he again walked back that choice as well, noting that because of Article 200 of the Basic Law, confessional schools retained the right to choose their own school books.¹⁷ Of course, he certainly could have asked Seyss-Inquart to make the necessary changes to the law, but apparently decided against it, likely for political reasons. Regardless, he did inform Goedewaagen that he would suggest its use in public schools and would make it required for the two *Reichsschulen*, but even then, not as a text book, but only as an instruction manual for teachers. He did not have to wait long for the response from the confessions to the examples he sent out requesting feedback. Representatives

¹⁶ NA 2.14.37/587.

¹⁷ NA 2.14.37/698. To be clear, van Dam had the authority to choose which subjects were taught in schools, as of July 1941, which allowed him to introduce German as a required subject at the primary school level. He was arguing to Goedewaagen that he did not have the authority to choose which books were used, although that was sleight of hand to a certain extent, as he did have the authority to ban books. Had he wished it, he almost certainly could have pushed through the de jure requirement to use de Vries’s book in all schools. His refusal to make the book mandatory was, therefore, a political calculation.

of both the Catholic and Protestant communities objected to the book, and it was made clear that were the book made compulsory, resistance to its use would be palpable. Specifically, the Protestant side objected to the idyllic portrayal of the Germanic past which, when one read between the lines, clearly argued that Christianity disturbed this idyll.¹⁸

Over the next several weeks, both Schwarz and Wimmer requested copies of the work for their own perusal, and by the end of November, Schwarz specifically was in agreement with the current state of the project and its use in the schools, although he did note that he thought it necessary to create a new history book specifically for primary education, as de Vries's book was intended for the middle grades, whether the extended primary education schools or the first classes of secondary education. By December, van Dam had apparently changed his mind again, although the cause of this change of course is unclear, it was likely because of pressure from Schwarz. Regardless, he determined that the book should be prescribed for *Reichsschulen*, the seventh and eighth year of extended primary education, expanded primary education schools, the first years of secondary education, and the teacher training colleges, although, when it came to confessional education, he only strongly encouraged its use. It was this final version of the requirement that was published on January 15, 1943.¹⁹ Despite this requirement, however, the publisher of the work wrote to van Dam in May 1944 noting that he still had some 100,000 copies of the book for sale, although at least some of the difference in sales versus expected sales can be attributed to financial shortages on the part of the various municipalities. Several mayors wrote directly to the Secretary-General noting that their budgets for school books had already been maxed out.²⁰ Presumably, many more asked their local school inspectors directly, as would

¹⁸ NA 2.14.37/698.

¹⁹ NA 2.14.37/698.

²⁰ NA 2.14.37/698.

be the usual way of making such inquiries. Regardless, given that many schools, by this point in the war, were controlled by NSB-affiliated mayors, it is likely that usage of the book in schools was relatively widespread.²¹

The second work that Goedewaagen and van Dam envisioned for use in the classroom was to be written by Dr. H. Krekel. Krekel had previously worked for the newspaper *Het Vaderland*²² but was fired from his position after making some positive comments about Hitler in 1939, although he was allowed to retake his position after the German invasion, as the paper was interested in currying more favor with the occupier.²³ In the autumn of 1940, Wimmer had hoped to appoint Krekel, along with van Genechten and Goedewaagen, to professorships at Leiden University, but their appointments were voted down by the faculty. That plan would have to wait until the following summer to be pushed through, but pushed through it was.²⁴ An NSBer, Krekel became a member of the *Nederlandsche Kultuurraad*, along with both Snijder and de Vries when that body was established in 1942.

Krekel's dissertation had focused on English foreign policy during the late nineteenth century, and so, he was not entirely unqualified to discuss the history of recent events in Europe after the end of the First World War. Regardless, however, he believed that in order to give a full recounting of the important events of the previous two decades, it would be necessary to stretch his history back, at least, to the foundation of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in the immediate aftermath of Napoleon's defeat. But he did not feel himself entirely up to that task. By mid-1943, had only completed a rough outline of the material, portions of some

²¹ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/60.

²² The Fatherland.

²³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/13.

²⁴ Ibid., V/576, 580; Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 106.

chapters, and various notes, which, he admitted to van Dam, could not be brought together as a competent and complete work.²⁵

Moreover, he noted that “no one at the moment desires a purely factual consideration [of the material]. I can, however, not give any other form of work than factual.”²⁶ Although Krekel did not spell out, exactly, what he meant by “factual” and how the Germans’ and their Dutch collaborators’ desires were not “factual,” the difference probably lies in the fact that Krekel was a supporter of the Diets ideology that called for a Greater Netherlands.²⁷ He had been one of a number of signatories, over one hundred forty, who had put their name to a “Greater Netherlands Declaration” in May 1940 that called for “a secure Greater-Netherlandic community in a reorganized Europe,” although that declaration never managed to gain any traction.²⁸ Given this, it is somewhat surprising that he was chosen in the first place, although his close connection with Goedewaagen may have been a factor. Either way, the ultimate approval of the works rested with van Dam (and necessarily therefore also with Schwarz), which had been one of van Dam’s conditions for going along with the project in the first place.²⁹ Had the resulting work been too heavily influenced by a Diets ideology, it could have still been scrapped. As a result of Krekel’s admitted inability to complete the new history book, van Dam advised Schwarz that they must free Krekel from the task at hand and find a replacement. Van Dam then turned to his SS colleague Henk Feldmeijer, the leader of the Germanic SS in the Netherlands, in the hope that he might know of someone capable of taking up the task of writing an acceptable history book but

²⁵ NA 2.14.37/702.

²⁶ NA 2.14.37/702.

²⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/426.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, IV/426-427.

²⁹ NA 2.14.37/587.

the request was either never answered or the reply went missing.³⁰ Either way, the book was never completed, whether by Krekel or any other author.

In addition to these two efforts, the German occupiers and their Dutch collaborators put forth several other attempts, as did other organs not directly affiliated with the occupation regime, such as Nazi-oriented publishing houses. A closer look at some of these works will show that they are all of a basic type, that is, intended to foster a new Germanic identity among their student readers.

Onze Voorouders

Although *Onze Voorouders* was not included in every classroom across the nation, nor is it entirely possible given the extant records to know in how many Dutch classrooms the book was used, it can be easily surmised that it found its way into many schools given its mandatory status, even if those schools were in the minority, which seems likely given the large numbers of extra copies that remained with the publisher. Regardless, the work is an important example of *how* the Germans and their Dutch collaborators hoped to change historical instruction.

De Vries begins his work—which at only thirty-four pages hardly deserves to be called a book in the first place—by trying to define what Germanics are. He begins with a short overview of the Germanics in the Roman period, noting that the Romans were well aware of Germanic peoples living from Eastern Gaul well past the Oder River in Central Europe and further north into the Scandinavian Peninsula. These Germanics began as a small people on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, according to de Vries, and spread out from there until they covered the major portion of Central and Northern Europe. Quoting Tacitus, de Vries notes that the Germanics had bright blue eyes, red-blond hair, and strong bodies, which are “to this day the

³⁰ As of mid-October, van Dam had not received a reply to his September request to Feldmeijer. The folder ends there. NA 2.14.37/702.

characteristics of the Germanics living in Scandinavia and on the North Sea coast; thus these people have best preserved the old properties.”³¹ De Vries goes on to note that this Nordic race, according to classical authors, stretched much further south, and that “they were probably in these parts the rulers of an older population, with whom they intermixed over the course of the centuries.”³² He ends his first chapter by contesting the contention made by classical authors that the Germanics were a wild, nomadic people, which he steadfastly denies. Rather, they were farmers who “for many thousands of years ... have made their living by working the earth with plows and scythes.”³³ Already in the first three pages of text, de Vries hit upon several of the major themes of *völkisch* ideology. Blond-haired, blue-eyed farmers, living in concert with the earth have kept their blood pure and free of mixing with other peoples. They were a war-like people who managed to hold their own and force the Romans to keep their border at that most German of rivers, the Rhine. The message the author intended his school-aged readers to take away from the work could not be clearer.

De Vries spends his second chapter going into further detail about why the Germanics should not be thought of as primitive barbarians by looking at, in turn, their buildings, clothing, tools, armaments, and ship building capabilities. In those areas where the Romans contrasted their more developed civilization with their Germanic neighbors, such as through their urban lifestyles with large amphitheaters, palaces, and aqueducts, de Vries is sure to note that the Germanics were every bit as praiseworthy, noting that the Romans’ outlook toward the Germanics was just as bothersome as the urban dwellers of the twentieth century looking down on the simple farming life of the countryside. Yes, the Germanics made their houses out of

³¹ De Vries, *Onze voorouders*, 3.

³² *Ibid.*, 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

wood, not of stone, but that was only because stone was not abundant in Northern Europe. But their wood dwellings were both large and ornate, proper farm buildings made by skilled carpenters which caused the Germanics to want for nothing. Where the Romans described the Germanics as half-naked wild men, in truth, de Vries argued, they had ornate clothing made from wool and cloth, including belts of woven and patterned bands with hanging tassels, which of course was a skill not lost over time, as evidenced by the wool working and cloth spinning industries of the early modern period in the Low Countries. Their tools were also advanced for the period. Their plow was better than the Roman plow and their wheels were spoked wheels, which were more modern than the flat wooden disks that were used in Eastern Europe into de Vries's own time. Their armaments and ships were also advanced for the period, with the use of chain mail and sailed ships that could reach speeds of ten or eleven knots. In case the students reading de Vries's work were unable to imagine his descriptions, there were several pictures that had been mocked up to help them visualize these advanced characteristics.³⁴

De Vries's adulation for the lives of the Germanics continues into his third chapter, in which he discusses the society of these peoples. Naturally, the most basic unit of society was the family, but not the family of the modern period, rather larger blood-based kinship groups. These extended kinship groups often lived together, with the oldest male in the central line leading the family, which would pass to the oldest son each generation. These oldest men were given the right to vote upon the future of the community in a democratic fashion, with the leading families, over generations, turning into a nobility of sorts. From this nobility, in time, a king might be elected to lead the community in times of war. At the same time, in some societies, powerful men in leading families might assemble around them an entourage, made up of both family

³⁴ Ibid., 6–10.

members and those from other families, bound through mutual love and devotion. This leading group could then assert its power over the rest of the community, establishing the leading man as a sort of prince. Thus, owing to the varied states of community organization over the centuries, the Germanics experienced all sorts of government forms, from nearly democratic to purely monarchical. But during all of these periods, the family, tied as it was by blood, was always the basis of the larger community.³⁵

The rest of the work is of a similar nature. De Vries consistently argues that the Germanics were not the backward people he assumes his readers have been taught, but rather, were actually a more advanced civilization, taking on the tone of a pure apology of their society and culture. For example, in the fourth chapter, which covers Germanic writing and poetry, he notes that the Germanics did not write on parchment or paper, not because they did not have access to those technologies, but because they simply had no need of those surfaces for writing. After noting that the runic alphabet the Germanics used was best suited for wooden and stone surfaces, rather than the curved letters found in the Latin alphabet, he goes on to suggest that wooden and stone tablets were perfectly suitable for the short messages the Germanics thought necessary to preserve. For longer works, such as heroic poetry, these ancient peoples had professional bards who could, with complete accuracy, recount long poems and songs generation after generation, until, eventually, they were written down in the medieval period. De Vries does not appear to see the irony in his own argument, however, when he notes in the very next sentence, that the poems and songs of the Batavians are now lost to the modern reader and knowledge of those works is available to us only through written Roman sources.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 11–13.

³⁶ Ibid., 14, 16.

The author moves next to the artwork of the Germanics, arguing that these naturally gifted artists preferred to take their inspiration not from nature but from their own imagination. De Vries is careful to note that much of their art is lost to the modern viewer, he assumes because it was mostly made up of wooden works that have not stood the test of time. And although he discusses a recently discovered shipwreck in Norway which does contain many carved animals and figures, after noting the high quality of these artistic representations, he returns to his contention that the Germans preferred more abstract works, including bronze carvings with ornate designs. These elaborate patterns, which often took the form of concentric circles that appeared to be only a “chaos of lines, a confusing entanglement of seemingly goalless garlands, but behind the chaos, an orderly principle is still hidden, and these artists indeed have a plan and goal, even if they are covered by whimsical accessory lines.”³⁷

De Vries’s most flattering words for the Germanics come in his chapter on Germanic virtue. He couches his analysis in supposed objectivity, however. He reminds his readers that the Romans saw the Germanics as, first and foremost, “dangerous enemies” whose “irresistible power” was overcome only because they soon lost their resolve during large undertakings. But this was, de Vries notes, only because, as per the old Germanic idiom, “the brave bide their time.”³⁸ Foremost among the virtues of the Germanics were, in de Vries’s eyes, their courage, faithfulness, and gentleness, all of which the Germanics saw as the height of virtue. But lest his reader think he would paint the Germanic as the ideal person, he then discusses the two main vices of those peoples, specifically excess and gambling.

As far as excess goes, he limits it only to consuming alcohol, but further notes that this was most common during festivals and feasts, and de Vries further argues that even in the

³⁷ Ibid., 18–22, quote on 22.

³⁸ Ibid., 25.

present day, the 1940s, similar features could be ascribed to the rural population, but that “no one would conclude, that drunkenness was a distinguishing mark of our farming population.”³⁹ As for gambling, he first notes that this is one tradition that does not persist to the modern period, but suggests that, despite this, the modern reader should not discount Tacitus’s descriptions of such a practice as being completely untrue. Rather, de Vries argues, Tacitus likely misunderstood religious practices, such as a sort of divination practice used by priests to predict the future and determine how the gods would prefer men to proceed in a given circumstance.⁴⁰

To the extent that the Germanics had other weaknesses, however, their description by de Vries is entirely didactic:

The Germanics were not ideal people, but they were a tough and healthy race, distinguished by indomitable courage, but no less by an iron energy. ... Remarkable as well is their open-mindedness, through which they accepted and used everything that was foreign to them, but which they also independently worked themselves and further developed. However, there was also a danger that lurked here, to which the Germanics often fell [victim]. They let themselves be blinded by the exotic and thereby underestimated themselves. The tribes who lived in our country did this as well; is it not a matter of fact that the Batavian freedom hero carries the Latin name Claudius (actually Julius) Civilis? Here lurks the danger that many Germanic tribes had become corrupt.

This is most evident when, during the Migration Period, Germanic peoples settled in the area of the Roman Empire; after a few generations they had already adopted much from Roman culture. Also, in our own history, we can see multiple examples of a repeated, exaggerated tendency to follow foreign peoples.⁴¹

This is, of course, what in many cases happened to Germanic tribes, especially those that later settled in the areas controlled by Rome, and who, after the fall of the Western Empire established petty kingdoms in Italy, France, Spain, and North Africa. It was, according to de Vries, a boon for the Roman peoples who lived there and who were thus “strengthened by the virtue of a strong Germanic element.” But these Roman peoples nonetheless managed to maintain their Latin languages and civilizations instead of adopting that of their conquerors. Regardless of the benefits afforded to the newly conquered peoples, however, de Vries maintains that for the

³⁹ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 26–27.

⁴¹ Ibid., 27. This was a not so veiled reference to the French and the English.

Germanic peoples themselves, this intermixing was, ultimately, the cause of their downfall in these regions.⁴²

The only part of the text in which de Vries does not bestow greatness upon the Germanics of the Classical Age is that which concerns their religion. Here he contents himself to describe the ways in which the Romans compared their own gods to those of the Germans, which he does by both excusing this practice—he finds it reasonable that Roman authors saw Germanic gods as their own gods in different names—and by noting that the Romans were not always correct in assuming a one to one correlation between the two groups. Otherwise, the chapter on the religious practices of the Germanics is mostly descriptive.⁴³ This is, given the Christian nature of the Netherlands in the twentieth century, not entirely surprising. Where everything else about the Germanics showed their greatness compared to both their contemporaries and, in some cases, even people in the modern age, in their religious practices, he sticks to a purely neutral tone, lest he offend the religious sensibilities of his readers, or their parents.

The entirety of de Vries's history of the Germanic peoples, with the sole exception being his discussion of Germanic religion, is clearly meant to engender respect and awe for these ancient peoples, and by extension, for the Germanic peoples of the twentieth century, including the Dutch. The Germanics of the Classical Age were, after all, "Our Forefathers," and it was those forefathers whose work resulted in "an important part of what has been achieved in our continent." "The awesome colonization work done by the Dutch and the English and the development of modern technology, which is founded in significant part upon the work of

⁴² Ibid., 28–30, quote on 28.

⁴³ Ibid., 23–24.

Germanic researchers” are but a few examples de Vries cites of the important and lasting influence that these ancient peoples contributed to the modern world.⁴⁴

This was the type of history that both the German occupiers and their Dutch collaborators thought was most relevant for school instruction; this was what “top-notch” history looked like. That van Dam ultimately decided to make it a compulsory text in many classrooms, and available for use in those schools in which it was not compulsory, reveals the conception of history that the Nazis hoped to foster in the Netherlands. The focus is on the heroic, ancient race, which through its virtues created much of what was good in the world. Its downfall, such as it was, was said to be a result of racial mixing with other peoples, which caused the Germanics to lose sight of their own culture and be subsumed into that of the Romans. And this is all polished with the veneer of objectivity. The author is certain to point out certain flaws of the Germanic peoples, but then consistently notes that they are either not really flaws at all, such as their excessive drinking, or that they are merely misunderstandings of the Roman writers, especially Tacitus, whose writings form the bulk of de Vries’s written source material. Importantly, de Vries’s work also makes clear that the various Germanic peoples of modern Europe are also the direct descendants of these ancient Germanics. The English, Icelandic, Scandinavians, Germans, Danes, and Dutch all share the same past and are, therefore, part of the same larger family. Only in these places was the Nordic Race not polluted with the racial element of foreign peoples. These peoples, therefore, are the inheritors of all that was good in the Ancient World as part of a single, Germanic family of peoples.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 30.

Over Volk en Vaderland

Onze Voorouders had been intended for the middle grades, whether the final years of primary education or the initial years of secondary school. It had not been intended for the earlier years of primary school, and as such, a new Nazi-oriented history textbook was needed to reach those students. In 1943, in an effort to rectify this shortage, van Dam decreed that a competition would be necessary. Under the auspices of the Department of Primary Education (one of the sub-departments of the Education Department), such a competition was established, through which a jury of experts would judge submissions for eventual use in the classroom. The jury, the composition of which was the subject of some debate within the department, ultimately consisted of Chairman G. F. Vlekke, a Dutch Nazi pedagogue and Chief Inspector of Education in the First Main Inspectorate, which covered the provinces of Gelderland, North Brabant, and Limburg; Dr. Paulina Havelaar, a *völkisch* minded Dutch historian who had appeared in various Nazi-oriented publications; and Dr. Johan Theunisz, a secondary school teacher in Zwolle who also had a long history of publishing in national socialist, *völkisch* publications.⁴⁵ On February 15, 1944, this jury council met and developed a six-point criteria for the to-be-completed history book that included: 1) the book should be between one hundred and one hundred twenty pages, 2) a broad view of history, including prehistory, must be presented, 3) it should be, in the first place, a *volksche* and not mainly a political history, 4) separate lessons should be devoted to individuals, who through their character, have influenced the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of the Dutch volk, 5) the book should not just cover the history of Holland, and 6)

⁴⁵ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/64; Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 114, 331–32.

the book should emphasize the shared destiny of the Dutch volk and the larger Germanic whole.⁴⁶

The selection process had specifically excluded the names of the authors and instead mottos were used to identify the works. For this reason, the ultimate author of the winning work, entitled *Over Volk en Vaderland: Geschiedenis voor het Lager Onderwijs*,⁴⁷ is not known for certain, although Ivo Schöffers suggests that the author was Dr. M. O. Albers, a historian by training and frequent contributor to *Opvoeding in volkschen geest*, the NSB education periodical.⁴⁸ Other scholars are not so sure of Schöffers's contention, while the NIOD archive that houses the manuscript states only that the author is not known.⁴⁹ Had the work eventually been published, that information would have come to light, but as it remained in manuscript form, the ultimate author will likely never be known with absolute certainty. Regardless, both its selection by the jury as well as its approval by van Dam strongly suggest that it was considered an acceptable work for introduction into the school system, even if the jury had suggested that the manuscript needed to be reworked with expert guidance, as it contained too many shortcomings and even some unacceptable mistakes.⁵⁰ In fact, the manuscript itself contains numerous deletions, additions, and other changes, summarized in a list format at the beginning. Because it is unlikely that the author would have submitted a manuscript with entire sections crossed out in red ink or with penciled in marginal question marks, it is likely that many of these edits were made either by the jury or by an expert on behalf of the jury or van Dam.⁵¹ But

⁴⁶ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/64.

⁴⁷ *About Volk and Fatherland: History for Primary Education*

⁴⁸ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 114. The unpublished manuscript *Over volk en vaderland* is located in NIOD 216e/187, hereafter "OVV."

⁴⁹ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/64. NIOD 216e/187.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ NIOD 216e/187. The edits come from at least two different hands. One was likely the author, the other either a jury member or a subsequent expert. Edits made by the author include some corrections to spelling as well as additions included in later pages meant for earlier sections. These are made exclusively in black ink. Alternatively,

despite these edits, the manuscript never went any further in the development and publication process. By this point in the occupation, Allied armies had already stormed the beaches of Normandy and begun the liberation of France, which meant that questions of school textbooks were simply not a priority for anyone of importance.⁵² Nonetheless, the stillborn manuscript offers yet another view into what the German occupiers and their Dutch collaborators, in this case especially those in *völkisch* NSB circles, had in mind for historical education in the Netherlands. Furthermore, because this is the only work that was both intended for school instruction and that covers the modern period, it deserves a closer look.

Over Volk en Vaderland contains seven chapters spread out over 126 manuscript pages, including deleted sections but not later additions, ranging from the first human inhabitants of the Rhine Valley clear through to Second World War, and thus spanned tens of thousands of years. It begins with a short recounting of the “person from Hengelo,” a set of human remains discovered along the eastern border by excavators building a new canal in that town. Noting that this person was most likely a forefather of the modern Dutchman, the author then goes into the life of the people who lived at this period. With vivid imagery, the author relates how these ancient people would have set traps for mammoths and hunted reindeer, while their womenfolk and children gathered fruits and greens from the surrounding area. To put emphasis on the violent nature of this lifestyle, the author stresses “from the very beginning, was conflict.”⁵³

there are marginalia written in pencil, including numerous question marks that likely indicate confusion on the part of a reader, as well as red ink deletions and additions on entirely separate pieces of paper marked with red ink indicating where in the text the new additions are meant to be placed. These pencil and red ink edits were likely not made by the original author, for page 98 contains an entire page of deleted text, which simply could have been discarded by the author had he made that edit since the pages are numbered (and renumbered) by hand. Whether the edits in pencil or red ink were made by a member of the jury, a later editor, or some combination, remains unknown. For ease, I will refer to these edits as having been made by *the editor*.

⁵² Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/64. De Jong argues that van Dam, too, had issues with the book, see De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/343.

⁵³ OVV, 1-2, quote on 2.

After noting that there is much that cannot be known about pre-history, the author, without any hint of intended irony, moves into the development of the Nordic race, which he or she argues originated in either Denmark or southern Sweden, and which owes it vitality to the harsh climate which allowed only the fittest to survive. These people, who originated some six thousand years before the author's day, were livestock breeders and farmers who kept a variety of animals and developed various grains. And then they conquered the world!

They spread out from Northern Europe to Persia, Greece, Italy, Egypt, China, and India, the latter group taking the name *Aryans*, or rulers. And although these Nordic peoples ruled over other peoples for centuries, because they were small in number, they eventually succumbed to intermixing with their charges and thus, the Nordics vanished from most of the world. But they left behind hints of their greatness, through language, literature, and art, whether in India, Persia, Greece, or Italy.⁵⁴ After a short section on stone age peoples, including the Funnelbeaker and Beaker cultures, the author ends the first chapter by noting that "the Nordic race made great conquests and laid therewith the way for the later dominion of Europe over the world. The greatest steps toward the current situation were caused already in pre-history."⁵⁵

The second chapter of *Over Volk en Vaderland* covers the "Germanic period," which is roughly defined as the period from 2000 BCE through 1000 CE. The Germanics, according to the author are the descendants of the Nordic race that remained in their original homeland of Denmark, northern Germany, and southern Sweden. Like their Nordic ancestors, these Germanics:

... had excellent qualities of body, head and heart. They were powerful and hardened. They were clever and resourceful. They were simple, laborious, brave and faithful. We must therefore regard it as a great honor to descend from such forefathers. In many things they have been the teachers of the world, e.g., in agriculture, handicrafts and shipping.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ OVV, 2-3. Their influence was, apparently, not as lasting in Egypt or China.

⁵⁵ OVV, 5.

⁵⁶ OVV, 6. It should be noted that the editor placed a question mark next to this last sentence.

In their religion, they worshiped the sun, whose most common symbol is the swastika, but additionally worshiped man-like gods, the greatest of whom was Odin, the father of gods and men. The daily life of a Germanic person, shown through vignettes about an imagined young man named Segismund, focuses on hard work as a farmer and sporting events such as racing that acted as entertainment. Segismund's father, who stood in for the head of the Germanic household, lived on a homestead which would pass to Segismund's older brother. As a result, Segismund would have to venture off to claim his own homestead, thus expanding the Germanic presence. As a result, "all of us, without exception, are descended from farmers."⁵⁷

But Segismund and the Germanics were not *just* farmers. They were also warriors who would conquer man, beast, and nature. Strong Germanics like Segismund marched outward from their homelands and conquered neighboring peoples. After their conquest, they returned to the lands of their fathers, gathered their brides and children, wagons and breeding stock and ventured out to settle their newly conquered homelands. "Thus, the Germanics spread out over the course of centuries over the North of Europe."⁵⁸ And it was these Germanics that soon encountered the Romans.

The Romans, of course, were also partially descended from the Nordic Race. It was this Nordic blood that had allowed the Romans to conquer the entire Mediterranean, but by the time of the fall of the Republic, that blood had been lost, and instead of fighting for themselves, they let those whom they conquered do their fighting for them. It was this sort of Roman army that encountered Arminius in the Teutoburger Forest. Arminius, the son of a Germanic prince, was an officer in the Roman army and so learned their strategy and tactics. And as a result of his

⁵⁷ OVV, 6-10, quote on 10.

⁵⁸ OVV, 10-11, quote on 11.

learning, he was able to lead the Germanics to victory against the Romans, freeing Germania, “once and for all.”⁵⁹ Shortly after securing Germania proper, Germanics on the left side of the Rhine rose in revolt, this time led by the Batavian chief Claudius Civilis. Civilis’s plans started with great success. He had allied his Batavian people with both Germanics from across the Rhine as well as a cohort of Gallic peoples, and everywhere they beat back the Romans. But Civilis’s fatal flaw was trusting his Gallic allies, whom he had instructed to occupy Alpine passes to prevent Roman reinforcements from Italy reaching Gaul. They failed in this mission and eventually turned against the Germanics, allowing the Romans to eventually prevail. Despite the ultimate defeat, which was not even Civilis’s own fault, “we like to consider Claudius Civilis as the first great hero in our history.”⁶⁰

This was, however, only a temporary setback, for soon the Roman Empire fell and the “Germanics conquered the world.” This conquest, which is how the author describes the Germanic migrations of Late Antiquity, saw the Germanics spread out through all of Europe and into North Africa. But just as the Nordics of pre-history had intermixed with those they conquered, so did the Germanics, with only England retaining a pure Germanic character.⁶¹ This was the fate of the great Frankish empire as well. Up through the period of Charlemagne, the Franks had remained true to their Germanic heritage, but “under his successors, it was completely different. The memory of the old Germanic life was canceled out as much as possible and the assembled sagas were destroyed.”⁶² It was also in this period that Christianity first became entrenched among the Germanics. Initially resistant, the new religion was forced

⁵⁹ OVV, 11-13, quote on 13.

⁶⁰ OVV, 113-14, quote on 14.

⁶¹ OVV, 15-16. This section of the manuscript has several marginal notes indicating that the editor found problems with the text, including the statement that only in England did the Germanic character remain pure.

⁶² OVV, 16.

upon them at the point of a sword. Thousands died staying true to their old customs, but eventually Christianity won out over the pagan religions of old. But in order to put as positive a spin on it as possible, the author notes that “Christianity could only fully unfold on Germanic soil. The pure and simple Germanic national character gave the new leather a cleaner and deeper shine.”⁶³

And then the Germanics conquered the world—again. This time it was the Vikings, with their various conquests and settlements from England to the Mediterranean to the Russian steppe. Like the Nordics before them and the Germanics of the great migration period, the Vikings left their mark, just as the Dutch would do in the future during the age of European imperialism. It was all one and the same:

But the nature of our fathers lives on in us! Like them, we too will be able to build a new future. Every boy and every girl must make an effort to do so with all their strength. Our own happiness should not be our goal, but a glorious recovery of the Netherlands.⁶⁴

The section on the Middle Ages, which takes up the third chapter of *Over Volk en Vaderland*, contains many more edits than the previous chapters, and is the first to include additions proposed for it, likely by the editor or the selection jury. After a short description of the basic tenets of feudalism, which stressed the transformation of farmers into “serfs and slaves,” the author moves into the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire. He notes, in what is a gross oversimplification of the *Diploma Ottonianum*, that Otto, the first Holy Roman Emperor, forced Pope John XII to swear him fealty, thus making the Emperor supreme on the continent.⁶⁵ But this supreme authority waned as generations passed both through the machinations of German princes, “the old Germanic fault,” as well as rebellions by Italian cities

⁶³ OVV, 17.

⁶⁴ OVV, 18-19, quote on 19.

⁶⁵ OVV, 21. The *Diploma Ottonianum* and the agreements made surrounding it are much more complex and included oaths of fealty and protection on the part of both men.

and later Popes, the latter eventually coming under the sway of the French throne during the Babylonian Captivity.⁶⁶ It is here that the editor inserted the first major addition to the text, which was clearly meant to highlight the extraordinary character of the Holy Roman Empire as compared to the other states and empires of the age:

We cannot look at the Reich as a state like others. It had from antiquity an assignment to fulfill in Europe, as the leading, protecting, and ordering power. Through internal disunity, however, it could not answer this call. Now it is again awakened to a new strength.⁶⁷

The following pages take a look at each of the major duchies, counties and bishoprics in the Low Countries that is mostly traditional in its outlook. Stress is placed upon the major events in medieval Low Countries history, such as the Hook and Cod Wars in the County of Holland, the First War of the Guelderian Succession, the slow decline in power of the Bishops of Utrecht, or the Battle of the Golden Spurs between the French crown and the County of Flanders. This latter event at Kortrijk induced the editor to make his second major addition, noting that the battle must be stressed because the Flemish, “as the furthest forward outpost of the Germanics,” had successfully defeated a Romanesque army.⁶⁸

The rest of the chapter focuses on the Middle Ages and is cursory in nature. There is a basic description of the three estates, city life, and a short mention of the Crusades, with emphasis upon the Third Crusade, led by Frederick Barbarossa and, especially the Fifth Crusade, led by William I, Count of Holland, which sacked the Egyptian city of Damietta.⁶⁹ In the end though, the author sums up the Crusades as “a new series of Germanic heroic journeys,” which earns a large, marginal question mark from the editor.⁷⁰ Apparently there was such a thing as too

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ OVV, 21 addendum.

⁶⁸ OVV, 22-24, quote on 23 addendum. Romanesque here, means an army of the King of France.

⁶⁹ To be clear, William was a leader of one contingent of crusaders during the Fifth Crusade but was not the overall leader of the crusading armies.

⁷⁰ OVV, 27.

much historical revisionism, and this was it. After a short recounting of the Baltic Crusades, which were really just continuations of the Germanic and the Nordic customs of conquest, the author notes that by the end of the Middle Ages, the Netherlands had become wholly different from the German Reich. The Dutch had their own language and felt as a separate people, even if a feeling of community continued to exist between the two peoples. But then the author notes that this separation brought no advantage for the Netherlands, far from it:

With a powerful Germany behind us, we would have not needed to fight the Eighty Years' War against Spain. With a powerful Germany behind us, we would have been able to retain our later conquests in North America, Brazil, South Africa, and India. We would have established a lasting world empire. But then there was no strong Germany. The Empire had become powerless. Our volk had to trust their own strength. There was no other choice. The power of the united Germanic peoples would be irresistible.⁷¹

It is only with coverage of the modern period that the author begins to write his history in greater detail. So, while the first three chapters had covered Dutch history from pre-historical times through to the Middle Ages, the fourth chapter focuses only on the Eighty Years' War, while subsequent chapters cover the rise and fall of the Dutch Golden Age, the Nineteenth Century, and the Twentieth Century respectively. The chapter on the Eighty Years' War is broken into three main parts. The first part details the early of the Dutch Revolt and takes on a proudly patriotic veneer. The focus, in tune with the original mandate for the textbook, is on the actions of particular individuals and their heroism. Naturally, William the Silent, he "of German blood," plays a large role, but so too do lesser individuals, such as Jan Haring, whose exploits during the Battle of the Zuiderzee are given two full pages.⁷² Other events that receive special attention include the entire town of Haarlem, which struggled valiantly against the Spanish during the 1572-73 siege of that city, and Adriaan van Bergen and his crew's exploits during the sack of Breda in 1590.⁷³ Although the recounting of events is entirely patriotic in form, which is

⁷¹ OVV, 34.

⁷² OVV, 38-40, 40 addendum. "Of German blood" is a quote from *Het Wilhelmus*, the Dutch national anthem.

⁷³ OVV, 37-38, 42-44.

unsurprising given that it is a Dutch history book, it is not as overtly *völkisch* or politically charged as previous sections. The editor also seems to have had little qualms about the subject matter, save for one section he struck that mentions the last words of Balthasar Gerard, assassin of William the Silent, asking God to take pity on Gerard and the poor people.⁷⁴

The second section of the chapter focuses on the discovery of the New World and various Dutch exploration ventures, with extended focus placed upon Willem Barentsz's exploration of the Arctic and the creation of the United East Indian Company, before turning back in the final section to the period of the Dutch Revolt that occurred after 1600. Just as in the first section, this latter section focuses on the exploits of individuals, in this case Maurice of Nassau, younger brother of William the Silent and newly installed Prince of Orange. Particular focus is placed upon his actions at the 1600 Battle of Nieuwpoort.⁷⁵ In contrast to the first section of the chapter, in which multiple heroic events are described in great, yet mostly contrived, detail, the second half of the Dutch Revolt, covering the years 1609 through 1648, is wrapped up in just three pages.⁷⁶ The third section ends with a very short explanation of how the southern provinces, which had originally bravely fought alongside the northern provinces, remained under Spanish control after the fall of Antwerp in 1585 and Oostende in 1604.⁷⁷

In the concluding portion, a subsection entitled "Look into the Past and the Future" which closes each of the seven chapters, the author notes that the Eighty Years' War and the Peace of Münster had a dark side. Yes, this was the period during which the Netherlands gained independence, and this independence would usher in the Golden Age of the Seven United Provinces, but there were still members of the Dutch volk who were not yet free, specifically

⁷⁴ OVV, 41.

⁷⁵ OVV, 48-49

⁷⁶ OVV, 49-52.

⁷⁷ OVV, 52.

those of the southern provinces. Moreover, the greatness of the new young republic would be tested in the coming years through wars with both England and France, and it would be shown to not be nearly as powerful as it had hoped. What was worse, the German Reich, which had declined in power since the late Middle Ages, was beset by problems both within and without. The same treaty that had given the Dutch their independence had ended the Thirty Years War, in which the population of the Reich dropped from twenty million to six million.⁷⁸ “But in 1870 a powerful empire arose again and is now more powerful than ever. The possibility for new collaboration is present again. The future will certainly lead us in this direction.”⁷⁹

The following chapter on the Dutch Golden Age and the Eighteenth Century has a dual focus. On the one hand, it celebrates the greatness of the Seven United Provinces, but, at the same time, warns against the downfall of the Seven United Provinces before the strength of the European Great Powers. The Golden Age, the author tells the reader was the result of the flourishing culture of the seventeenth century. Artists, poets, architects, jurists, scientists, and smiths called the Netherlands, both the northern and southern provinces, home. But the greatness of this age was soon eclipsed by the various wars in which the Dutch found themselves engaged. True, the Dutch acquitted themselves well in the three Anglo-Dutch Wars, and even against more powerful France, the Dutch Republic fared relatively well in the Franco-Dutch War and the War of the League of Augsburg, with the author noting repeatedly about the two outcomes: “He [Louis XIV] sued for peace.”⁸⁰ At the same time, the Netherlands had heroes they could be proud of, especially De Ruyter, Tromp, the Evertsen brothers, and William III,

⁷⁸ This is a gross overestimation. Modern scholars place the upper limit of population losses at around fifty per cent, and then usually only locally.

⁷⁹ OVV, 53.

⁸⁰ OVV, 64.

who later went on to become the King of England, and “one of the greatest of his family.”⁸¹ But the success of these heroes could not prevent the ultimate defeat. By the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, the outcome was much different: “Peace was concluded in Utrecht in 1713, wherein the Republic was handled with such disrespect that a French delegate dared to say: ‘We negotiate for you, about you, and without you.’”⁸²

The rest of the chapter comprises a series of vignettes through which the author attempts to show the decline of the republic, entitled “rest and decay.” The first such section is nothing more than a vignette in which a son does not wish to carry on the hard work of his father, preferring a life of relative comfort that had been provided to him by his father.⁸³ The second section recounts the defeat by the British in the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, which the author blames squarely on the role of the regents and commercial elites who have neglected the maintenance of the Dutch military. Try as he might, the Stadtholder-King William IV could not undo this decline.⁸⁴ It was, the author argues, a great disappointment:

At the Peace of Münster we were a people in the fullest blossoming of prosperity, science and art. Our ships sailed all seas, our trade spanned the whole earth. ... We were one of the strongest states. We resisted the united power of England and France. We decided partly on the fate of Europe and of the world. But in the eighteenth century we had become weak and easy-going, and we were glad if we were left alone. Obediently our little boat sailed in the wake of England. If foreign powers threatened us, we had to seek help from our neighbors. We were not able to protect ourselves, as in the past. After all, we ended up in foreign bondage and there followed a period of French domination. And even after the departure of the French, the old spirit power has not yet returned soon enough.⁸⁵

If the eighteenth century had been one of decline and decay, the nineteenth century was one of absolute disaster in the author’s eyes. It began with the French Revolution based on the misguided notions of popular sovereignty, freedom, and equality, all of which were wrong-headed, although the author’s strongest invective was used against equality: “It does not work, to

⁸¹ OVV, 58b.

⁸² OVV, 65.

⁸³ OVV, 65-67.

⁸⁴ OVV, 67-68.

⁸⁵ OVV, 69-70.

assign the same rights and duties to a professor as to an idiot, to a breadwinner as to a loafer, to a powerful man as to a gray beard.”⁸⁶ And of course, this equality was enforced with the “equality machine,” which took the heads of thousands.⁸⁷ But despite these misguided ideas, the French were successful in imposing them upon Europe during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. This French domination of Europe was especially bad for the Netherlands, the author argues, as it forced the Dutch into yet another war with the English which led to the temporary loss of its overseas colonies, including South Africa. But this was all ended when the peoples of Europe awoke to their desire for self-determination. Strongest in Germany, this feeling of nationalism, supported by brave soldiers like Blücher, helped cast off the French yoke, even if their desires for a united Germany were undermined by the diplomats at Vienna.⁸⁸

One thing that the diplomats did get right, however, was the creation of a United Kingdom of the Netherlands, even if “it was a pity for us that it was not born out of our own strength, but only from English self-interest.”⁸⁹ Despite the new-found unity of the Low Countries, discord soon broke out as a result of both confessional and economic disunity, leading to Belgian independence in the 1830s. This, of course, was only possible because of French and English intervention on the side of the Belgians; the Dutch army had otherwise acquitted itself wonderfully, but it was no match for the combined weight of the European Great Powers, especially France.⁹⁰ But if disunity was bad, what came next was worse: parliamentary democracy. The 1848 constitution ushered into being political parties that divided the volk and worked only for factionalism. It was responsible to no one, and certainly not to the entire people.

⁸⁶ OVV, 71.

⁸⁷ OVV, 72.

⁸⁸ OVV, 73-75.

⁸⁹ OVV, 75.

⁹⁰ OVV, 75-77, including 76 addendum.

That would require a singular ruler, the likes of which parliamentary democracy was unable to produce.⁹¹ And to make matters even worse, parliamentary democracy ushered into being the rule of the Jew.

Capitalism is, according to the author, the “rule of money” over society: “Money rules industry, the banks ruled money and the Jews ruled the banks.” But capitalism was not the only invention of the dastardly Jew, for socialism was its counterpart. Created by Marx, also a Jew, socialism argued that the worker had no volk, that all workers, regardless of their differences were brothers in arms against owners. This, of course, made sense, the author argues, because Jews have no volk and no fatherland to owe homage to, and so resorted to the class struggle, despite the fact that “volk and fatherland are the highest asset of man.” Luckily, “National Socialism will improve this. The whole population must take care of all its members as a family. And every worker must be able to trust that his people will never leave him.”⁹²

Lest the reader think that the entirety of the nineteenth century was disaster and disaster alone, the author does note that some good came from it. The royal house was stocked with entirely German blood; it had not been degraded with the blood of other peoples.⁹³ Furthermore, inventions, such as electric lights, the railway, and the electric telegraph, made life easier for many people, although he is careful to warn the reader that these inventions have not made civilization. Rather, civilization, and with it culture, are the result of honoring the inheritance of one’s forefathers, the land, architecture, literature, music, and art. Moreover, even if things were bad in the Netherlands, in Belgium, after its independence, the Flemish began to feel their “Dutch blood” speaking to them in the face of Francophone dominance, and although the

⁹¹ OVV, 77-78.

⁹² OVV, 79-80.

⁹³ OVV, 78.

Flemish movement would not gain any real ground until the twentieth century, it came to life in the nineteenth.⁹⁴ The chapter ends, as do all chapters in the book, with a look into the future, in which the author notes that all of the bad tidings that came from the nineteenth century would be short lived, for “in 1940 he [the Dutchman] was startled from his slumber by a frightful shock.”⁹⁵

The final chapter of *Over Volk en Vaderland* covers the first half of the twentieth century, and given the short period that it covers, is the most in-depth chapter of the entire work. Beginning with the First World War, the author recounts a history that very well could have been written by a German revisionist during the inter-war years. England caused the Great War, a war it had wanted in order to stave off German commercial advances. On all fronts, the Germans were without equal, first defeating the Russians, while at the same time driving deep into France. Only because of socialists in Germany, who had threatened the war effort from behind the lines, was Germany forced to sue for peace. In the Netherlands too, the English were the villains. All that was bad, including the food shortage that occurred toward the end of the war, was the result of English violations of Dutch neutrality. Similar violations by the German military are ignored entirely.⁹⁶ The Versailles Treaty that ended the war with Germany was unjust, especially the “false declaration ... that the war occurred completely and only through German guilt.” The League of Nations was, according to the author and not entirely without logic, doomed to failure as the international mediation that the League called for could only be enforced through war and violence, the opposition to which was the express purpose of the League in the first place.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ OVV, 80-81.

⁹⁵ OVV, 83.

⁹⁶ A good overview of Dutch neutrality in the First World War can be found in Maartje Abbenhuis, *The Art of Staying Neutral: The Netherlands in the First World War, 1914-1918* (Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

⁹⁷ OVV, 84-85, quote on 85.

The rest of the chapter takes a more topical approach, with subsections covering everything from the Zuiderzee Works and Afrikaner nationalist Japie Fourie to Christianity's place in the Netherlands, National Socialism, and the NSB. Especially telling is a section on the various political parties of the inter-war years, in which the author briefly describes, and then lambasts, each of the non-NSB political movements. The party leaders, regardless of party, were little more than fat cats living off the hard work of the honest man. The socialists wanted to divide the nation through their focus on class struggle, all the while ignoring the defense of the Netherlands through minimal, or non-existent, outlays for the military. The Free-thinking Democrats also neglected the military, while the liberals were too individualistic, thereby neglecting the nation. The religious parties, for their part, were too interested in only their own bases in the confessions, and therefore were not supporting the nation as a whole.⁹⁸

In contrast to the other parties and their leaders, NSB *Leider* Mussert was a man of true principle. He had volunteered for service during the First World War, although obviously saw no combat given the Netherlands' neutral status. He passed his exams "with praise" at the Technical University of Delft and quickly rose, while "still a young man" to high station in the civil service. As a result, "a wonderful career was open to him. Professor, minister, he could be everything."⁹⁹ But, seeing the "ailments from which our volk was so badly ill," he wanted to heal his people, "to make his people healthy and strong, united and happy. He wanted to bring prosperity and joy to all volk comrades, especially to the hundred thousand unemployed."¹⁰⁰ To that end, he founded, along with van Geelkerken, the NSB in 1931, which soon saw meteoric growth. The established authorities threw everything they could at the NSB and its leaders, but

⁹⁸ OVV, 88.

⁹⁹ OVV, 92.

¹⁰⁰ OVV, 93.

were unable, according to the author, to reverse its fortunes. Their members stayed true to the cause, and after the Nazis invaded, its membership rolls reached to over 100,000.¹⁰¹

In addition to commenting on politics in the Netherlands, the author also devotes several subsections to the two major political philosophies of the inter-war period: Soviet communism and fascism, especially German National Socialism. As could be expected, the Bolsheviks were the root of all evil in Russia, and even threatened the rest of the world. In Russia, the author claims the Bolsheviks killed 40 million people in their quest for power, including farmers, bourgeois, clerics, and officers: “there must be only soldiers and workers.” In those areas conquered by the Soviets, such as Poland, Estonia, and Finland, they were perpetrating similar atrocities. And those that they did not kill, they simply robbed of their possessions. Even those they claimed to want to help were no better off. Workers were made into “state slaves,” while the people starved. The state itself was controlled mostly by Jews. And because the Red Army was tasked with conquering the world for communism, Germany and its allies “took up arms and went to war against Russia.”¹⁰²

Faced with this threat, most Europeans reacted passively. That is, except Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Anton Mussert. These men recognized the threat and knew the necessary steps to take to counter it. They understood the need for unity among the people, for strong leadership, press restrictions, and service to the state unto death. These men formed nationalist parties that honored their people. They formed socialist parties that recognized that the people needed to be united, not divided. And they formed workers’ parties, because the well-being of the volk was most important of all.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid. The author conveniently skips over entirely the effectiveness of the establishment’s resistance to the N.S.B., which, as discussed in chapter three, was actually quite substantial.

¹⁰² OVV, 89.

¹⁰³ OVV, 90.

The Second World War, which allegedly began as a defensive action by Hitler to protect Germans in Poland, was really a war between National Socialism and Jews, according to the author. After defeating Poland in just eighteen days, the Germans turned to Western Europe in order to protect its own flank. This included the Netherlands, which had, under English influence, worked to undermine Hitler's regime, and therefore could not be trusted and had to be occupied. After reaching the coast, Hitler offered peace, but the English refused, instead inciting others to war against Germany. In 1941, Hitler ordered his armies to invade Russia, but were turned back by an extraordinarily early and harsh winter, otherwise the Russian campaign very well might have succeeded that first year. But, at the time of the author's writing, Germany was facing a war against the three leading Jewish powers, Russia, England, and the United States.¹⁰⁴

The Netherlands itself, in the author's view, was better off under German rule. The pre-war government had been weak, betrayed the country through their flight, and was, ultimately because of this flight, entirely illegal. They had been, and continued to be, pawns of the English. And what was even worse, they antagonized the Japanese against the Netherlands, allowing the nation to lose their last and most important overseas colony, the Dutch East Indies. The Germans, on the other hand, had treated the Dutch with respect. Hitler had let the POWs go while handling the civilian population kindly, save for a few rabble-rousers who had been inspired by the illegal government in London. It was only natural that the Germans had to crack down on these rabble-rousers.¹⁰⁵

Interestingly, the final chapter also contains several sections that were blocked out in red ink entirely, focusing on the *Weerafdeling*'s¹⁰⁶ resistance to violence by anti-fascist agitators

¹⁰⁴ OVV, 94-96.

¹⁰⁵ OVV, 96.

¹⁰⁶ Defense Department, the NSB's equivalent to the SA.

before and during the occupation, the Germanic SS, the *Nationale Jeugdstorm*¹⁰⁷ and the Dutch Labor Front.¹⁰⁸ There is no obvious reason, such as marginal notes, why these sections were blocked out en masse, nor do these sections contain any content that goes against the general theme of the larger work about the heroic Germanic past, present, and future. The section on the Dutch Labor Service was most likely scrapped because of the service's inherently unpopular nature, while the sections on the WA and the NJS may have been removed simply because they were NSB formations and the *völkisch*-minded members of the jury did not want to emphasize such elements. It is harder to speculate on why the section on the Germanic SS in the Netherlands was taken out, as it was an overtly *völkisch* organization that opposed the Mussert wing of the NSB. It seems likely that such material was simply considered inappropriate for school aged students, but ultimately, the reason is entirely unclear.

The chapter and book ends, as do all of the previous chapters, with a look at the future. The “new Europe” that the Nazis would create would be one that was united, in place of the division of the previous centuries that allowed for English domination. This new Europe would be led by Germanics. By virtue of their place as the second most populous Germanic nation, “the Dutch volk will occupy a glorious second position” behind Germany and its ninety million souls.¹⁰⁹ The Netherlands before the war had been little more than a house of cards that collapsed in on itself. But the war had brought to light the extent to which the state had been weakened and its people divided. It was now “the task of every true patriot to make every effort for the re-establishment of his people.” There was much to do:

Unity and togetherness.
A strong and decisive administration.
A courageous self-confidence of the entire nation.
Security in your own people.

¹⁰⁷ National Youth Storm, the NSB's equivalent to the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls.

¹⁰⁸ OVV, 93-94, 98-99, 101.

¹⁰⁹ OVV, 99.

Our Fatherland has lost a war. It is now wounded and impoverished. Our youth has the clean task, to set it up again. The Young Netherlands will have to show that our people have been hit hard but have not died. Live for your volk! Die for it, if it must be!¹¹⁰

The message that the author hoped to pass along to his student readers is clear. The Dutch are a part of a Germanic community, from which all good things in the history of the world have come. Intermixing with non-Germanics had led to the decline of previously great civilizations, as has disunity among Germanics. But in the new Germanic community, led by Nazi Germany, the Dutch nation could expect a bright and successful future. The defeats of the past had been the result of liberalism, sectionalism, capitalism, and Jews. The future would include none of those things. In their place, a strong leadership would pull the nation, indeed all Germanics, together into a new and greater world. Given the triumphalist narrative the author had created, it is not surprising that the jury accepted it as the best submission. Had the occupation lasted longer, the work would very likely have been edited, published and introduced into schools, but the timing simply was not feasible. The enemy was fast approaching and would, by the end of the very same year, liberate the southern portions of the Netherlands. The following year, the regime would collapse, and with it, any hope on the part of the occupiers to introduce the work into the schools.

De Germaansche Nederlanden

A year after the competition that resulted in *Over Volk en Vaderland* was held, in mid-1944, Schwarz returned to the question of historical instruction by asking van Dam to consider a new book for use in the schools, this time in secondary schools. This new work, entitled *De Germaansche Nederlanden: Duizend jaren Germaansche Geschiedenis*,¹¹¹ was originally published in Germany by the W. Cruemwell Verlag in Dortmund. Written by Werner vom Hofe,

¹¹⁰ OVV, 102.

¹¹¹ *The Germanic Netherlands: One Thousand Years of Germanic History.*

Dr. Peter Seifert, and Werner Steinbacher, and translated by J. H. M. Van der Eerden, it comprises a total of eighteen chapters and one hundred twenty-eight pages that stretch from the pre-Roman period clear through to the reign of Charlemagne and the first Viking invasions. Also, unlike de Vries's *Onze Voorouders*, which covers roughly the same period and takes the format of an ethnography of the Germanics, *De Germaansche Nederlanden* takes a narrative format, marching ever forward from the recounting of one past event to the next.

Schwarz had wanted to institute its use in Dutch schools directly but did not get the reaction he had apparently hoped for from the Education Department. Van Dam had two copies of the work sent to specialists. The answer to one such inquiry by A. C. J. Commissaris, a pastor in Oosterhout, came back quite negative. He noted that the work was “fragmentary” and not suitable for use as a regular school book. The uninterrupted heroization of the Germanics would cause students to poke fun at them. Quoting the French proverb, Commissaris noted, “he who proves too much, proves nothing.” For his part, van Dam simply copied much of Commissaris's comments in his reply to Schwarz. Van Dam was not of the mind to require the book for historical instruction but softened the blow by noting that he would have the book made available in school libraries.¹¹²

Despite it not becoming required reading in the classrooms, the work is a good example of what the Germans' plans for those classrooms included, as the lessons contained within could not be any clearer. Right from the very first page:

The territory of the Netherlands belongs to the Lower German flat lands, that stretch out of the east without any transition to the IJsselmeer—the former Zuiderzee—and further to the canal coast. Nowhere does nature form—not even through ridges—a German-Dutch border. ... No, the geographic condition does not give, and never gave, anyone the right to make separations, where the same people has lived for centuries.¹¹³

¹¹² NA 2.14.37/705.

¹¹³ Werner vom Hofe, Peter Seifert, and Werner Steinbacher, *De Germaansche Nederlanden: Duizend jaren Germaansche geschiedenis*, trans. J. H. M. van der Eerden (Amsterdam: Volksche Uitgeverij Westland, 1944), 5.

The authors take their argument even further by noting that the very same race (the Nordic race) inhabited the area that is otherwise politically divided and has done so since pre-history. This can be seen in the graves, the living structures, the weapons, and even the names of the locales. The Romans, whose motto was to “divide and rule” did not differentiate between the Germanics of Northern Europe either. And of course, these peoples themselves recognized that they were the same as well.¹¹⁴

In their chapter on the Germanics during the period of the Roman Republic, the focus remains squarely on the heroic Germanic pitted against the treacherous Roman. Population pressures were constantly forcing Germanic tribes to settle in new areas, which sometimes included portions of the Roman Empire itself. In some cases, access to the empire was granted by Roman leaders, but “usually access was refused, or they were held up with false promises or even treacherously ambushed. Germanic tribes put themselves, in good faith, under the care of the rulers of the Roman Empire, but they were bitterly disappointed.”¹¹⁵ Caesar, and his exploits in Gaul, take up a large portion of the chapter. The authors note that Caesar viewed the Belgians as the bravest of the inhabitants of Gaul and they are quick to note that these people sprang from the Germanics themselves. Recognizing the braveness of the Germanics, Caesar knew he could put them to use and so recruited many into his army, and Rome had these Germanic auxiliaries to thank for a number of favorable results. But the authors also emphasize repeatedly that the Germanic tribes were honorable people, who were unaccustomed to the treacherous ways of the Romans.¹¹⁶ They recount one event in which a large Germanic army crossed paths with Caesar’s army, and after the former sent ambassadors to the latter, Caesar detained the ambassadors and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 5–9.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 10–14.

“in violation of international law” drove the Germans into the river.¹¹⁷ As if to stress the evil nature of this “crime against Nordic blood” which “drenched and wasted the Dutch-Lower Rhine earth with blood in a gruesome way,” the authors note, in the very next paragraph that Caesar himself was murdered through treachery only eleven years later.¹¹⁸

As if in contrast to the treachery of Caesar, the authors then move directly into the single longest chapter of the book, which focuses on the great Germanic hero of the Roman period, Arminius. It is here that the near uninterrupted heroization van Dam’s reviewer noted becomes most conspicuous. The Romans, who initially portrayed themselves as friendly, quickly showed their “true nature,” that is their treachery and the harshness of their rule.¹¹⁹ In contrast, Arminius was an honorable man, whose only duty was to his Germanic fatherland. That he had served in the Roman legions and attained the rank of equestrian—that is that Arminius himself had betrayed the Romans—is mentioned but glossed over immediately. Rather, his knowledge of Roman tactics was nothing more than one of the many reasons a band of only six thousand Germanics managed to wipe out twenty-five thousand hardened Roman veterans.¹²⁰ But of course, the noble Arminius was later betrayed by weak German princes, hoping to gain by the loss of their own people, and who feared that Arminius wanted to establish his own hegemony over the various tribes.¹²¹ But the authors are clear to note the correct view in a declaration that could have easily applied to the political situation in the Netherlands during the occupation: “The

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 14. For Caesar’s version of events, see Caesar, *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* 4.7-15.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹²⁰ How the authors come up with this number for the Germanic army is unclear. The ancient sources do not give numbers for the Germanic army, although most mention three Roman legions and auxiliaries. Cassius Dio, whom the authors quote in portions of the chapter, does mention that the Roman army was spread out, allowing for local superiority of numbers on the part of the Germanic tribes, but does not speak to the overall size of the Germanic army. See also Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 56.18-24. Other ancient historians, such as Tacitus (*Annals* 1.55-72) and Velleius Paterculus (*Roman History* 2.117-119) also do not mention specific numbers for the Germanic army.

¹²¹ Hofe, Seifert, and Steinbacher, *De Germaansche Nederlanden*, 16–24.

great struggle for freedom, the maintenance of the pure Germanic blood on its own soil, was only possible with a connection of all the Germanic tribes under the leadership of a few captains with powerful wills.”¹²² To close the chapter, in which it is clear that the heroic Arminius, the would be uniter of the Germanic peoples, deserves the absolute highest praise possible, the authors first quote Tacitus’s own praise of Arminius, then argue that his story was the likely inspiration for one of the most foundational pieces of Germanic literature—the *Nibelungenlied*.¹²³

The following chapter, concerning the early Frisians, takes on much of the same character as that over Arminius, only lacking a single heroic figure leading the way. The Frisians were a peace-loving people who had long been in peaceful contact with the Romans, solemnified via treaty. That is, until the Romans showed their true colors and tried to repress the Frisians, who, after much patience, rose up in rebellion. The authors quote Tacitus again, this time regarding the Frisian victory against Lucius Apronius in 28 CE at the Baduhenna Wood.¹²⁴ Otherwise, the Frisians were a peaceful people, more concerned with farming and sea-faring than with warring against Rome. The authors also are clear to note that the Frisians, although a major constituent part of the Netherlands, can also be found in North-Western Germany, and so are yet another example of the connectedness of the two larger nations.¹²⁵

The authors then move on to latter-day examples of Arminius, including Gannascus and Claudius (Julius) Civilis. The pirate Gannascus was turned by the authors into an Arminius of the Sea, even though Tacitus, the authors’ source for this section, labels him only a deserter from the Roman legions and a pirate.¹²⁶ But like Arminius, according to the authors, Gannascus was a

¹²² Ibid., 23.

¹²³ Ibid., 24. See also Tacitus, *Annals* 2.88.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 27. See also Tacitus, *Annals* 13.54.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 24–30.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 31–35. See also Tacitus, *Annals* 11.17–18.

freedom fighter, fighting against insurmountable odds, insurmountable for a non-Germanic anyway, against the world empire that was Rome. Alternatively, Julius Civilis was a latter-day Arminius on the land. His revolt against Rome during the upheaval of 69 AD is marked by the authors as a reaction to Roman “treachery” against a people—this time the Batavians—that strove only to live in “peace and harmony” with the Romans.¹²⁷ Just like Arminius, both Gannascus and Civilis were former Roman soldiers, and just like Arminius, both united their people against Roman injustices.¹²⁸ Although Gannascus is not afforded the honor, the authors even go so far as to say that Civilis was likely another inspiration for Siegfried of *Nibelungenlied* fame.

One of the more striking elements that is completely out of place for an ancient history is the notion of the fatherland.¹²⁹ Repeatedly, the authors argue that the Germanics were fighting on behalf of their fatherland. Whether Arminius or the Frisians, Gannascus or Julius Civilis, the conflict was always in defense of “the fatherland.” This, of course, was meant to teach the students that the highest values a member of the Germanic race could uphold was a defense of the fatherland against foreign enemies. Nor should it be forgotten that the very fatherland as described by the authors encompasses not just the Netherlands, but rather the larger Germanic community of which the Dutch were members, stretching from the North Sea coast east past the Elbe and beyond. But of course, there was no such fatherland for the Germanic peoples at this time. At best, it could be argued that the Romans’ designation of the territory as Germania imbued these places with a sense of connection with the people who inhabited them, but the same cannot be said for the Germanic inhabitants themselves, who largely would not have

¹²⁷ Ibid., 37.

¹²⁸ In the case of Gannascus, this is really debatable, as the Roman sources do not describe him as a leader of his people, but rather as a pirate engaging in raids along the coast of Gaul.

¹²⁹ See, e.g.: Hofe, Seifert, and Steinbacher, *De Germaansche Nederlanden*, 19, 25, 29, 37.

adopted Roman nomenclature for the geographical area between the Rhine and the Elbe. The authors even admit that many of the groups moved around, crisscrossing the Rhine river or moving inward from the coasts in search of fertile new lands every generation. As such, the authors' repeated invocation of Germanic tribes fighting in defense of their fatherland can only be seen as an attempt to foster similar ideals in the minds of their young readers. That the enemy in the history text was the "world empire" of the Romans is even further equatable with the "international Bolshevism," the fight against which was at the heart of Nazi propaganda in all parts of their nascent empire.

Moving into Late Antiquity, the authors note that the time of the small tribes had come to an end. The battles of the previous centuries had shown Germanic leaders the need to coalesce into larger groupings, thus ushering in the "Greater Germanic period" which would eventually culminate in the establishment of the first Greater Germanic Reich by Charles the Great (Charlemagne).¹³⁰ The greatest of these confederations, at least initially, were the Franks, and among this group, the Salic Franks were the most powerful. Quoting from the preface of the *Lex Salica*, the authors note that the Salic Franks were beginning to show a "national and racial consciousness" although it was based upon a societal understanding of the world, rather than a "völkisch spirit," when the *Lex Salica* discusses the "high stature, with white appearance, supple and hardened ... that with their bravery and great power in battle, shook off the hard yoke of the Romans."¹³¹ It was this great confederation of Germanic peoples, the Franks, that "fulfilled the Greater Germanic task of organizing and managing Europe, until the German Reich would be established."¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid., 44–45, quote on 44.

¹³¹ Ibid., 48.

¹³² Ibid., 51.

After recounting the heroic return of a Frankish colony to the lower Rhine that had been established on the Black Sea by the Emperor Probus in the late third century, and which naturally overcame all sorts of obstacles put in its way by the dastardly Romans, the authors then move on to the early history of the Saxons.¹³³ Although the exact origin of the Saxons is unknown, they can be differentiated by the “purity of their blood and the maintenance of their old customs.”¹³⁴ Presumably originally from the Jutland peninsula, they proceeded to conquer neighboring groups down the northwest European coast until, in the fifth century, they moved to Britain. It is this section of the textbook that begins the discussion of the great Germanic migrations of Late Antiquity that led to the final dissolution of Roman rule in the West. But the authors are clear to note that this was more the result of the actions of Germanics than of the Romans themselves: “Now the Roman Empire had been germanicized. Germanic soldiers, in service to Rome ... named emperors and deposed them.”¹³⁵

In reality, however, the purpose of these sections is to build up to the high point of the textbook: the establishment of the Frankish Empire by Clovis and the later history of that polity down through Charlemagne, albeit with a short interlude to introduce the Germanic endeavors against the Huns. Atilla and his band of Huns began their conquest in the “East Germanic” lands along the Volga, Don, and Dnieper before moving on to the Vistula, Oder, and Danube.¹³⁶ The Huns were stopped only by Flavius Aetius, “Rome’s last great statesman and general,” who was “of Illyrian, or perhaps even Germanic blood.” Either way, Flavius Aetius defeated the Huns with an army of “Germanic-Roman legions and the auxiliary armies of his West-Germanic

¹³³ Ibid., 52–57.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 59.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 64.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 70.

neighboring peoples.”¹³⁷ The authors end their buildup to the Frankish Empire by noting for the third time that the actions of Germanic heroes during the fight against the Huns are immortalized as a central part of the *Nibelungenlied*, although at least this time, the history of the events is, more or less, internally consistent with the story itself.¹³⁸

The highpoint of the narrative, which takes up the final third of the entire work, details the rise and fall of the Frankish Empire and its replacement with the German Empire. This begins with the recounting of Clovis, Charles Martel, and Charlemagne. In comparison to the latter two Carolingians, the Merovingian Clovis gets short shrift. His ability in battle and his victories over the Roman rump state of Soissons, the Alemanni, and other smaller tribal groups are mentioned, but the majority of the chapter on Clovis is taken up by issues of religion. Clovis, the text relates, is the one who decided that Roman Christianity, instead of Arian Christianity, which “appealed more to the Germanics,” would be the official princely religion of his empire because of the large population of Romans and Gallic peoples who inhabited the southern reaches of the new Frankish realm.¹³⁹ And although the authors admit that Clovis’s decision to adopt Roman Christianity was the deciding factor in Christianizing Germanic Europe, the authors spend many pages extolling the virtues of Germanic resisters to this development.

The problem, as the authors relate, was that the Germanics outside of the Merovingian empire found it difficult to give up their old gods. They easily enough adopted Christian symbolism, but “wanted to remain faithful to the customs of their fatherland [and] could not leave their gods.” Conversely, the Merovingians “had degenerated prematurely, and their rule

¹³⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 74–75. The historical core of the saga surrounds the victory of Flavius Aetius, and Atilla appears as a character who married the hero Siegfried’s widow Kriemhild.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 79–80.

was stained by kin-slaying and disloyalty.”¹⁴⁰ Chief among these resisters to both Christianity and the Merovingians was Radboud of Frisia, who, despite experiencing ups and downs on the battlefield, “remained loyal to his race and his fatherland.”¹⁴¹ The tenor of the chapter makes clear, without disparaging Christianity directly, that the religion of the Romans instituted a break with the Germanic past, one that was not for the better.

After running quickly through the history of the Carolingian family, with a healthy side portion of bemoaning the enserfment of the peasantry, which “was completely in conflict with the ancient liberty and right of property of Germanic farmers” and was blamed, mostly, but not entirely on the Church, the authors move on to the victory of Charles Martel at Tours.¹⁴² Naturally, the Muslim conquerors were supported by Germanic shock troops, descendants of the Germanic Vandals and Goths who had inhabited the Iberian peninsula and North Africa in Late Antiquity, even if many of those previously pure-blooded people had debased themselves through intermingling with local populations.¹⁴³ But their degeneration had left them weaker than the Frankish host, who soundly defeated the invading Muslims and pushed them back over the mountains into Iberia.

“All German races, and also the non-German, Germanic races, who are still aware of their ancestry, above all the lower Franks on the Rhine and the Maas, can be proud, that the first Emperor of a Greater Germanic Empire is of their own blood.”¹⁴⁴ Thus begins the recounting of the rise of Charles Martel’s grandson, Charlemagne, whose empire, “for the first time ... united the six great tribes which would later form the German volk, the Franks, the Swabians, the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 82.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 86, 88.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 88–89.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 92.

Bavarians, the Thuringians, the Saxons, and the Frisians. In this period, we also see for the first time the common name ‘Duitscher’—from ‘duitisce,’ that means: *volksche*.¹⁴⁵ “Charles was great in all that he did,” whether as soldier, general, or statesman, and remained “as Germanic as the land in which he was born.” His rule extended across Europe, going so far as to serve as protector of the holy sites in the Near East, according to the authors.¹⁴⁶ When quoting a passage from Einhard discussing Charles’s physical characteristics, the authors note that this described his “Germanic character and Nordic blood.”¹⁴⁷ In fact, it is this emphasis on the Germanic nature of Charles that chiefly differentiates it from a work like Einhard’s, as it is otherwise simply a recounting of his great and noble deeds.

The authors then turn to those Saxons that were not already a part of Charlemagne’s empire, noting that, unlike the Franks whose rule had stretched to the south and thus incorporated non-Germanic elements, the Saxons “knew how to preserve their pure blood.” Quoting Adam of Bremen, the authors note that the Saxons “did not corrupt themselves through marriages with foreign and lesser peoples. They strove to be an independent and pure people, that remained true to their own blood.”¹⁴⁸ The purpose of this description, beyond extolling the values the authors see as important for their readers, is to explain why the Saxons resisted incorporation into Charles’s empire. It was, according to the authors, to remain free of the influence of non-Germanic blood and to keep their own Nordic blood pure. The great hero of this story is, of course, Widukind, leader of the Saxons against Charlemagne. Widukind preached to his people of the need to protect “customs of the Fatherland and freedom of belief”

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 94. *Duitscher*, in the older orthography, is the Dutch term for “German,” or *Deutscher*. Its original meaning was “of the people.”

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 95–97.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 98. Beyond his hair, which is described as white, there is nothing in the quoted passage that could be seen as particularly *Germanic*, unless one wants to count his tall stature, round head, and large, living eyes. See also Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne* 22.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 101–2. See also Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* 1.6.

against the Christian king Charles, and in this way, he was a latter-day Arminius. But Widukind's resistance to Frankish expansion was doomed for two reasons: their own disunity and the greatness of Charles's power.¹⁴⁹ Despite the defeat of the Saxons, this heroic people's influence could still be felt throughout the Germanic lands between the Rhine and the Elbe, as evidenced in any number of place names, and of course, through their blood. Widukind's descendant Mathilde, became queen to Henry the Fowler and mother to Otto the Great, the first "actual" king and emperor of the German Empire.¹⁵⁰

After a quick recounting of the dissolution of Charlemagne's empire by his sons and grandsons, the final result of which was the conglomeration of all of the actual Germanic peoples, including the people of the Low Countries except the Flemish, into a single empire ruled by Louis the German (thus making them *German*), the authors move on to their final chapter, which focuses on the Vikings.¹⁵¹ But this chapter is really just a brief summary of the various exploits of Scandinavian raiders and explorers, jumping from their adventures in the North Atlantic, including the establishment of the colony of Vinland, to the Baltic Sea and the Russian Steppe, down through the Mediterranean, and all parts in between. Special emphasis is placed, of course, on the Vikings' actions in the Lower Rhine Valley, where the authors argue that they helped influence the later culture of the Low Countries in everything from their seafaring nature to the building of windmills.¹⁵² But beyond that, the Viking excursions and settlements in the Germanic lands add the final element the authors see as foundational to the establishment of Germany proper. Just as the Frankish and Germanic tribes had contributed to

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 104.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 108.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 110–114, especially 112.

¹⁵² Ibid., 124–25.

the decline of Roman power, the Vikings contributed to the decline of Frankish power: “The new order, which also ruled the fate of the Netherlands, arose in the German Empire.”¹⁵³

Given the repeated references to the heroic Germanics throughout the work, the nearly constant extolling of their desires to fight to defend their “fatherland” or “customs of the fatherland,” and to keep their “blood pure,” it is easy to see why van Dam’s reviewer was unhappy with the work. The book has little to say about Christianity in general, and even less to say that paints Christianity in a positive light, instead extolling the virtues of Germanic pagans, which would surely cause problems in the confessional schools, something Schwarz likely was acutely aware of given his extreme anti-clericalism. But in its prescriptive elements, it is also easy to understand why the Germans would have wanted to institute the work in the schools as a textbook for secondary education. With its focus on keeping blood pure, on heroic resistance in defense of the Fatherland, in ascribing a common, Germanic heritage to all the inhabitants of the lands between the Rhine and the Oder, and even further east, it fits perfectly within the ideals of the German leadership in the Netherlands and their desire to foster the incorporation of the Dutch youth into the Nazis’ Greater Germanic Reich.

Although the work was ultimately rejected for incorporation into the curriculum, it was placed for use in school libraries, where it would be available for students should they or their teachers wish to consult it. While it is difficult to say to what extent students and teachers did avail themselves of this option, that question is of little importance when looking at the Germans’ *plans* for Dutch education. Rather, the Germans’ very attempts betray the ideals that leaders like Schwarz had for the areas under their charge—the fostering of a new Dutch identity aimed at the eventual incorporation of the Netherlands into a Greater Germanic Reich.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 126.

Volk en Bodem

Although *Onze Voorouders*, *Over Volk en Vaderland*, and *De Germaansche Nederlanden: Duizend Jaren Germaanse Geschiedenis* were the only historical texts that were discussed at the highest levels of the occupation regime, other attempts were made by various actors to introduce new history textbooks. For example, in mid-1941, the *völkisch* publisher *Volk en Bodem*¹⁵⁴ in Amsterdam suggested to van Dam that it had several history books that would be of use for school instruction. Included in the list were books designed for primary schools, secondary schools, and the teacher training colleges. Although van Dam indicated interest in the works, in his reply to the publisher, he noted that he did not, as yet, have control over the curriculum and therefore could not enforce their use in the schools. But he did offer the publisher help in formulating marketing ideas for the books, which, van Dam suggested, would make great inroads in teaching circles should they become better-known.¹⁵⁵

Volk en Bodem was a relatively new organization, having been founded in November 1940, but it did have a longer history than its later foundation might suggest.¹⁵⁶ Its founder was Evert J. Roskam, who had been active in NSB circles for some time. Beside Roskam could be found other *völkisch*-oriented thinkers who would later form the core of the SS party within the NSB during the German occupation, including Henk Feldmeijer, later head of the *Nederlandsche SS*/Germanic SS in the Netherlands; J. C. Nachenius, an artist, frequent contributor to various national socialist publications, and later member of the *Nederlandsche Kultuurraad*; Dr. Tobie Goedewaagen, who at this point was still not a member of the NSB; Geerto Snijder, the University of Amsterdam professor who would be so influential in his more

¹⁵⁴ People and Soil.

¹⁵⁵ NA 2.14.37/694.

¹⁵⁶ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, 80.

behind-the-scenes role during the occupation; and many others.¹⁵⁷ Chief among these, if not officially, then certainly in practice, was Frans Eduard Farwerck. Farwerck had been an old member of the NSB and was a close associate of Mussert, serving as propaganda leader of the party in its earlier years. By late 1935 and early 1936, however, he had become the leading *völkisch* thinker and agitator in the NSB, at least until that position was usurped by Meinoud Rost van Tonningen after the latter joined the party in 1936 after returning from Austria. In fact, later members of the SS circle during the occupation would look back to this period in late 1935, specifically the fourth party congress of the NSB held in Loosduinen on October 12, as the real founding of the SS in the Netherlands.¹⁵⁸

On July 7, 1937 Farwerck and several others associated with the *völkisch* movement within the NSB founded *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*,¹⁵⁹ a foundation which was, in many ways, a Dutch counterpart to the *SS-Ahnenerbe*, and although Farwerck's name did not appear in the administration of the organization, he was very much the behind-the-scenes director.¹⁶⁰ This organization was designed to investigate the Germanic history of the Dutch people, and to awaken the *völkisch* spirit of the Dutch.¹⁶¹ It was this foundation, and its in-house publisher, that would publish several historical textbooks during the late 1930s that Roskam would later attempt to have introduced into the schools during the occupation.¹⁶² However, despite his clearly suitable ideological outlook, Farwerck was also a Free Mason. Free Masons were not entirely uncommon in the early years of the NSB, but owing to the deep suspicion of Free Masonry on the part of German Nazis, Farwerck lost much of his influence both within the *völkisch*-oriented

¹⁵⁷ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 199–200; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 185.

¹⁵⁸ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 197–99.

¹⁵⁹ The Paternal Inheritance.

¹⁶⁰ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 500–501.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 202.

¹⁶² Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/80.

group and within the larger NSB shortly after the German invasion.¹⁶³ As a result, the foundation *Der Vaderen Erfdeel* was disbanded and replaced, mostly in name only, with the *Volkse Werkgemeenschap*¹⁶⁴ in late 1940, which was essentially *Der Vaderen Erfdeel* minus Farwerck.¹⁶⁵ For his part, Roskam, who had been the head of the in-house publisher of *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*—also called *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*—re-founded the publishing house as *Volk en Bodem* in late 1940.¹⁶⁶

Roskam, in his letter to van Dam, had offered two works specifically for use in the schools (the others were meant for teacher training colleges and a general educational audience), both of which had been published in 1938 under the supervision of *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*. As a result, both works, while certainly influenced by German Nazi, *völkisch* thought, were not directly influenced by the occupation regime itself, but nonetheless reflect the view of history cultivated by Dutch *volksche* theorists who were largely aligned with the ideology of the later German occupiers, and therefore deserve a closer look. The first was a fifty-six-page booklet designed for primary school instruction authored by Farwerck himself entitled *Het is anders dan men ons leerde*.¹⁶⁷

The goal of *Het is anders dan men ons leerde* was simple: to upend the portrayal of the Germanics that had, according to the author, been dominant over the last several hundred years. This portrayal, which argued that the Germanics were little more than nomadic barbarians wearing animal pelts whose culture was significantly beneath that of the Romans who encountered them, Farwerck argues, was the result of, on the one hand, a lack of knowledge or

¹⁶³ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 200n.

¹⁶⁴ *Völkisch Working Group*.

¹⁶⁵ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 203. See also Notitie van H.E. Schneider, p. 530.

¹⁶⁶ Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/80. Venema notes that the in-house publishing unit was called *Ons Vaderen Erfdeel* ("Our Paternal Inheritance"), but this is contradicted on the title pages of the various works, which list only *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*.

¹⁶⁷ *It is different than they taught us*.

interest in Germanic peoples on the part of Roman authors, and, on the other, the result of the influence of Christian and later Renaissance thought.¹⁶⁸ But unlike earlier authors, Farwerck argues that recent work in archeology combined with a more critical eye toward the writings of classical authors, could give the reader a much more accurate understanding of their Germanic forefathers.

The work covers much of the same material as *Onze Voorouders* but does so with less pomp and gusto regarding the character of the Germanics and with an eye toward specifically overturning the previously held conventional wisdom, which is outlined through a series of quotes from other historical textbooks at the end of every chapter. For example, in the first chapter on clothing, Farwerck argues that the Germanics wore spun cloth for clothing, as evidenced by spinning rolls found in graves, fastened together with pins made of bronze.¹⁶⁹ He then proceeds to quote from nine separate school textbooks all of which argue that the Germanics wore either much simpler clothing or animal hides instead of spun cloth.¹⁷⁰ Alternatively, Farwerck argues that road infrastructure can be found in Germanic lands centuries prior to their contact with Romans, despite other works claiming that the Germanics inherited the knowledge of road building from the Romans themselves.¹⁷¹ Similar arguments can be found throughout the work, whether dealing with weaponry, agriculture, jewelry, and architecture.

Unlike *Onze Voorouders*, *Over Volk en Vaderland*, and *De Germaansche Nederlanden*, Farwerck gives comparatively little coverage to racial elements. While he certainly acknowledges that the Germanics were a part of the Nordic Race, he does not emphasize this

¹⁶⁸ Frans Eduard Farwerck, *Het is anders dan men ons leerde* (Der Vaderen Erfdeel - Werkgemeenschap voor Volkskunde, 1938), 3–6.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 33–34.

argument nearly to the extent that the authors of those later works would, nor does he posit that this racial group was somehow superior to others as work commissioned under the German occupation would. Rather, the mentions of races in *Het is anders dan men ons leerde* take the form of descriptions of various peoples, such as an individual in a grave in which cloth spun clothing was also found who was a member of the Nordic race, or the occupants of the territory between the Germanics and the Romans, that is the Celts, who were of a different racial group called the “western race,” which was differentiated from the Nordic race. In fact, a third of the mentions of the term *race* come as reference to another work with that word in the title.¹⁷² So where later works intended as school textbooks focus overtly on the racial element, Farwerck’s treatment of the Germanics takes a much less racialist view, even if racialism still can be found within.

It is difficult to say why, exactly, this might be the case. The work itself appears to be much more objective than later exemplars would be, trying to stick as closely as possible to what could, at least in the author’s eyes, be supported by evidence, even though he was, at the time of its publication, one of the leading *völkisch* thinkers in the NSB.¹⁷³ In doing so, Farwerck restrained himself from including much of the more outlandish heroization of the Germanics that could be found in the works commissioned by the German occupiers, preferring instead to content himself mostly with the argument that the Germanics were, as a group, not necessarily greater than the Romans or, as in the case of de Vries, greater than even Slavic peoples of the modern period, but rather, that the Germanics simply were not as barbaric as was otherwise taught.

¹⁷² There are twelve mentions of the word *race* in total, four of which refer to Nachenius’s work described below. See *ibid.*, 6, 8, 16, 22, 25.

¹⁷³ In ‘t Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 200–201.

Van Dam gives only hollow excuses for his refusal to make the work mandatory, noting that he does not have the necessary authority to compel usage of the works in the schools. While that was technically true, his later efforts betray a willingness on his part to work toward the introduction of other such works, which suggests that his refusal to Roskam in 1941 was either due to timing or to the content of the works, rather than a lack of proper authority. The question of timing cannot be ruled out by any means, nor can its insufficiently racial outlook or the question of Farwerck's authorship of the book, who by this point in 1941 had lost all influence within the *völkisch* wing of the NSB and who had never had any real influence with the Germans. It is also possible that a combination of factors led to van Dam's decision, but which elements were most influential in his refusal will likely remain unknown.

The second work that Roskam recommended to van Dam was written by Jan Coenraad Nachenius, entitled *Beknopte geschiedenis van het noordras*.¹⁷⁴ Nachenius had a long pedigree in national socialist circles in the Netherlands. He gained his interest in *völkisch* ideology in his youth through reading the work of the British-born, German racialist writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain. A painter by trade whose artistic work focused on the landscapes of the Guelders province in the Eastern Netherlands, he was also a prominent racial theorist, plying his arguments in publications such as *De Wolfsangel*,¹⁷⁵ which was a publication of the NSB's *Raad voor Volksche Cultuur*¹⁷⁶ and which would later be subsumed into *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*. Nachenius was actually one of the official founders of *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*, even if Farwerck had been the principle force behind its creation. In spring 1940, Nachenius would be promoted

¹⁷⁴ Herman Laagland, *Beknopte Geschiedenis van Het Noordras* (Amsterdam: Der Vaderen Erfdeel - Werkgemeenschap voor Volkskunde, 1938). *Abridged History of the Nordic Race*. Nachenius wrote under the pseudonym Hermann Laagland. His reasoning for writing under a pseudonym is unclear.

¹⁷⁵ The Wolf's Barb.

¹⁷⁶ Council for *völkisch* culture.

to editor of the official journal of *Der Vaderen Erfdeel* - also called *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*. When the foundation *Der Vaderen Erfdeel* was reorganized in late 1940 into the *Volksche Werkgemeenschap*, under the leadership of Feldmeijer, the journal *Der Vaderen Erfdeel* was changed to the *Volksche Wacht*¹⁷⁷ and published by *Hamer*.¹⁷⁸ Like *Volk en Bodem*, *Hamer* was a successor publishing house to *Der Vaderen Erfdeel*, although *Hamer* had an even closer relationship to the SS as its official publishing organ tasked with propagating the Greater Germanic ideal within the Netherlands. Nachenius would later be appointed to the *Nederlandsche Kultuurraad* and join the *Nederlandsche SS*, becoming the educational leader of the latter organization.¹⁷⁹ He would end the war working in Berlin for the SS.¹⁸⁰

As his pedigree shows, he was not considered suspect by the German occupiers like Farwerck. In fact, Nachenius gained even more influence as the occupation persisted. The author of multiple books and articles in national socialist publications, his *Beknopte geschiedenis van het noordras*, which had originally been published under a pseudonym in 1938, was actually published a second time, with minor changes and under his own name by *Hamer* in 1944.¹⁸¹ The work itself, intended for secondary school instruction, was much longer than *Het is anders dan men ons leerde*, reaching one hundred thirty-seven pages, along with a sixteen-page appendix. It is divided into five main chapters, each with several sub-units, covering the development of the Nordic Race, Neolithic culture, the spread of Nordics throughout the world, and the rise of the Germanics.

¹⁷⁷ *Völkisch Guard*.

¹⁷⁸ Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 278; See also In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 514–16.

¹⁷⁹ *Vormingsleider*.

¹⁸⁰ In 't Veld, *De SS en Nederland*, 201–202, 211–212, 515n. In 't Veld states that Nachenius worked for the SS-*Hauptamt* in early 1945, but since that office folded in 1940, that is not possible. In 't Veld is likely mistaking it for either the SS-*Führungshauptamt* or the RSHA, both of which were located on the Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse in Berlin.

¹⁸¹ Jan Coenraad Nachenius, *Geschiedenis van het noordras* (Amsterdam: Hamer, 1944).

In what can only be described as a testament to why historians and artists should probably steer well clear of evolutionary biology, Nachenius begins his work with an introduction that compares the development of the Nordic race with the breeding of sheep and hunting dogs, even if he couches his comparison with the note that humans are more complicated than animals.¹⁸² Extremely important to this racial development is the climate in its broadest sense, according to Nachenius. In what is essentially an argument based on a racialized understanding of natural selection, Nachenius argues that certain races became adapted to the northern European climate during the last ice age, while others faltered and were extinguished. What was left was the Nordic race, a race whose characteristics are both external, that is its phenotype, as well as a part of its inner posture: “race is disposition, including [the] spiritual.” Naturally, the inner disposition of the Nordic race is that of ruler, specifically a “ruler with self-control.”¹⁸³ After discussing the physical characteristics of the Nordic race, including a climate-based argument that the Nordics must have originated in Northern and Northwestern Europe, not in Asia, the Middle East, or Africa, Nachenius moves on to various Neolithic cultures.¹⁸⁴

His description of Neolithic Europe is cursory in its coverage, subsuming the various cultures into three major groups: the Funnelbeaker culture, the Linear Pottery Culture, and the Middle Danubian culture. He argues that the first two were definitely of the Nordic race, while the third was mostly of a foreign race, using both anthropological and archaeological evidence to argue that, at best the ruling faction of the Middle Danubians were of the Nordic race. This Nordic influence eventually overran the foreign racial influence in the Middle Danubians, such that when later cultures emerged, such as the Ancient Greeks, they had significant Nordic

¹⁸² Laagland, *Beknopte Geschiedenis van Het Noorderas*, 8–9.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10–18, quotes on 16, 18.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 18–24.

qualities, naturally through the influence of Nordic blood.¹⁸⁵ After a second section on the landscape of Europe during the late stone age and a short description of the etymology of the Dutch term *Noordras* (“Nordic race”), Nachenius turns to the spread of the Nordic race throughout the world.

Because the Nordic race, according to Nachenius, stems from Northern and Northwestern Europe, it is necessary to explain how, in contrast to the contemporary (and still current scientific) understanding of the origins of Indo-European peoples, the Nordic race spread from Northern Europe to the other areas that are populated by Indo-European speaking peoples, instead of the dominant thesis of an Indo-European homeland in Southern Russia along the Caspian Sea.¹⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, Nachenius argues that the upper classes of the “Aryan” peoples of the Middle East and South Asia were Nordic, although coming to South Asia via Southern Russia, using evidence as varied as archeology and literature.¹⁸⁷ Somewhat curiously, in his section on the ancient peoples of the subcontinent, he compares the Aryan conquests with Tacitus’s description of later Germanic conquerors to argue that these people must have originated in Europe.¹⁸⁸ While in and of itself not surprising, it is curious because Farwerck uses the very same similarities to argue that Tacitus’s descriptions adhere only to a conventional Greco-Roman trope regarding anything foreign, and therefore cannot be trusted.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 25–32.

¹⁸⁶ The Kurgan Hypothesis, which is the dominant hypothesis today of the origins of proto-Indo-European peoples, posits a homeland in Southern Russia and the Southeast Ukraine, from which those people spread in various waves throughout Europe and into Central and Southern Asia. First developed in the 1950s, it was a further contribution to scholarly model that reaches back into the 19th century. The most influential scholar for the Kurgan Hypothesis has been Marija Gimbutas.

¹⁸⁷ Laagland, *Beknopte Geschiedenis van Het Noordras*, 43–45.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 46–47.

¹⁸⁹ Farwerck, *Het is anders dan men ons leerde*, 1938, 5. Farwerck’s work was published second, as he references Nachenius several times.

Regardless of the contradictory evaluation of Roman sources, the conclusion Nachenius comes to regarding the Indians is the same as other national socialist writers. Through intermixing with non-Aryan peoples, they lost their purity and can no longer be considered part of the Nordic race.¹⁹⁰ Similar arguments are made regarding the other larger group of Aryan invaders in Asia, the Iranians, although in this case, the influence of intermixing with local, and later subjugated, populations, including Greeks and Jews, meant that the original Aryan conquerors diluted their Nordic blood to a much greater extent than the ruling classes of India.¹⁹¹ At this point, Nachenius also takes several paragraphs to discuss how Jewish culture and religion were influenced by Persian culture, and that through this interaction, as well as Persian influence upon Greece and later Islamic encounters, Persian culture had greatly influenced European culture.¹⁹² He closes the chapter with a shorter recounting of Nordic influence in East Asia, which was much lower than in South Asia, but still perceptible, not least because “it is quite possible that the great Confucius is a descendant of the Scythians,” who Nachenius argues were similar in racial make-up to the Aryans who would go on to conquer south Asia.¹⁹³

In Europe the situation was mostly similar to Asia. Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean had originally been populated by a mixture of peoples, but by the time of the Greek heroic age, a conquering race, descended partially from the Middle Danubians, and also probably from the Linear Pottery Culture, and thus with a strong Nordic influence, conquered the area and set themselves up as the rulers. It was these people that Homer discussed, according to Nachenius, in his epic poems of the heroic age of Ancient Greece. Naturally, Ancient Greece then was a mixture of racial and cultural influences—and for Nachenius, culture is merely a

¹⁹⁰ Laagland, *Beknopte Geschiedenis van Het Noorderasien*, 46–47.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 55–66.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 65–66.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 68–69, quote on 69.

symptom of race, much in the same way that one's internal spirit was a symptom of one's race—but in the Greek case, it was the Nordic influence that predominated and determined its essence.¹⁹⁴ Thus all of the great cultural artifacts of Ancient Greece can be said to have been the result of Nordic influence.¹⁹⁵

The situation in the western Mediterranean was somewhat different, for this area was originally populated by the “western race,” which was the most closely affiliated race to the Nordic, having the same ancestors in the middle and late stone ages, but who had simply migrated south. Nonetheless, there were also some other racial influences, personified by the Etruscans, who after their migrations into Italy from the areas around the Danube, assimilated the culture of the original Indo-Germanic, “western race” inhabitants. Thus, the original Romans, while not necessarily Nordic themselves, was descended from the Nordic race. Eventually these original inhabitants became the patriciate, while later additions to the Roman polity became the plebeians. But again, intermixing with these lesser peoples, according to Nachenius, led to the decline of the Romans by the time of the imperial period. Equally important to this decline was the role of other Nordic peoples, especially the Macedonians and Alexander. Himself a Nordic, as all Macedonian nobles were, Alexander was a purveyor of the false idea of equality among peoples, and through his efforts at integrating the peoples of his empire, allowed for the influence of various outside, non-Nordic ideas which helped lead to a cultural degeneration of Rome, as it adopted Hellenistic cultural norms.¹⁹⁶

The other major part of the “western race” were the Celts. Originally a part of the Nordic Race, the original Celts came from what is today southern Germany. Eventually, through

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 79–80.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 82–92.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 93–102.

migration, they settled in various locations, but principally in present-day France, Spain, and Northern Italy, and there acted as a sort of buffer zone between the Romans and the Germanics. As a result of this influence, not necessarily intermixing with other races, the Celts developed into a different race, one that spoke Romance languages and was strongly influenced by the peoples to their south.¹⁹⁷ It is here that Nachenius's argument that the landscape and environment, as much as the blood, comes to its fullest form. It was not that blood mixing with foreign races changed the Celts from Nordic to "western," rather that the cultural influences of Rome and other Mediterranean peoples, whether language, art, or spirit, caused the transformation, although, especially in France, this would be combined with later race mixing with eastern and colonial peoples, such that by Nachenius's time the French had been "bastardized."¹⁹⁸

In his final section, Nachenius devotes the entire chapter to the Germanics, which he notes could have just as easily been included in the previous chapter on European groups. Rather, he chooses to put the Germanics in their own chapter for two reasons. First, because they are still living in the same area as the original Nordics and are therefore also the direct descendants of those peoples. Second, and perhaps more importantly for the author's didactic purposes, "there is no doubt that they are still the culture-creating power in the North and North-West, and—it is a serious word—the last reserves of the Nordic race."¹⁹⁹ The rest of the chapter takes up the history of the Germanics from the late Stone Age through the Early Middle Ages, focusing first on anthropology and archeology, and then moving into historical inquiry proper.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 103–9.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 108–9.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 110.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 110–33.

But the emphasis in all of this is on the maintenance of the race, of which the Germanics of old were acutely aware. Further, Nachenius exhorted his readers to respect this tradition:

It is necessary to write about it [i.e., the racial consciousness of the Germanics] extensively in order to gradually get back to something like that, to awaken this consciousness, in the hope that, at the eleventh hour, the downfall of the Nordic race can be reversed. For “the last reserves” of this race will also irrevocably go the way that all the waves of this race have gone, they will fade for the last time, wasteful of blood by negligence, by disobeying the “holy order,” through neglecting the conservation and improvement of the race by means of superior families.²⁰¹ When we preach this, the dazed, short-sighted ones call out: idolization of the race, but we know that we obey our conscience, that we do not “exalt” ourselves, in overestimating the powers that are in us, but that we are reflecting on the most sacred thing that awakens in our minds, and that we feel as in harmony with the creation, as an outgrowth of God [is] in us, as our farthest ancestors must have felt in the religious representations of their time, which in essence (not in form) are also ours, therefore we are not deterred, but work with dogged earnestness to this awakening, before it is too late. It may sometimes seem hopeless—we do not ask but do our duty. How this insight can be converted into practice, cannot be treated here, but the practice must be preceded by the awakening of responsibility and we can do that by learning from the history of the Nordic race.²⁰²

In their overall tenor, the two works suggested by Roskam are similar to those directly created or suggested by the occupation regime. All of the works serve to promote the Germanic element in the Netherlands specifically, and Northern Europe more broadly, with the specific goal of educating young minds about their place within their race and their race’s place within the larger world. That the works written by Dutch authors prior to the occupation were never introduced in schools does not take away from their content or the didactic purpose that is clear in the writings. While it is not entirely clear, beyond van Dam’s hollow excuses, why these works were not suitable for introduction into the schools, especially in the ideologically reliable Nachenius’s case, van Dam’s reaction to the works as worthy of a broader audience testifies to their acceptable content, even if the author of one of the works, Farwerck, was seen as suspicious by the regime itself. In fact, all of these works, both those written before the invasion and those written after, fit into a larger schema of Nazi historicization of the Netherlands that was favored

²⁰¹ The original Dutch term *sibbe*, as Nachenius uses it throughout his work, pertains to an intermediate form of familial unit, larger than an extended family, but smaller than a clan or tribe. In modern Dutch, the word *sibbe* also means *siblings*, while the former meaning is extremely uncommon, with the exception of the term *sibbekunde*, which is itself a mostly outdated term for *genealogy*. *Sibbe* is similar in meaning to the German word *Sippe*, which is variously translated as *family*, *clan*, *tribe*, or *ethnic group*.

²⁰² Laagland, *Beknopte Geschiedenis van Het Noorderland*, 115.

by the occupation regime, and which, especially after the occupation began, became increasingly popular among historical writers writ large.

A Nazi View of Dutch History

Much like the political landscape of National Socialism in the Netherlands prior to the German occupation, there was no singular, national socialist view of Dutch history. Beyond an overt glorification of the high-points of the Dutch past, such as the acts of the water-geuzen and sea-faring exploits of the early modern Dutch state, probably the most common theme was the importance of the language barrier as being the defining element of what made up the Netherlands—that is to say that most, but not all, Dutch Nazi historical thinkers viewed the boundaries of the Dutch nation as being coterminous with the boundaries of the Dutch language, rather than being the political boundaries of the modern Dutch state.²⁰³ This is in lock step with the more popular political ideology of Dutch national socialist parties that followed the *Diets* ideology, to say nothing of their nineteenth century German counterparts, as discussed in chapters two and three. But moving beyond that general framework, which itself was not universal among such thinkers, there is little to unify the historical views of the majority of Nazi-inclined historians in the pre-occupation Netherlands.

As discussed in chapter two, there was a growing movement for the study of the Low Countries in Germany in the early twentieth century, although for various reason, this was, more often than not, subsumed under the field of German Studies.²⁰⁴ Centered at the Universities of

²⁰³ Schöffner, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 99–100. *Water geuzen* were *sea-beggars*. These were Dutch ships and military units that played an important role in support of the Orangist faction during the Eight-Years' War. The geuzen's victory at Brielle in 1572, which allowed the rebellious nobles to establish a land base after initial Spanish victories, was one of the first major turning points in the early part of the war.

²⁰⁴ For a review of the history of *Niederlandistik* in German universities, see Baerlecken and Tiedau, "Das Deutsch-Niederländische Forschungsinstitut an der Universität Köln 1931–1945 und der Aufbau des Faches Niederlandistik in der frühen Bundesrepublik."

Bonn and Cologne, especially the latter, a diverse group of thinkers came to see the peoples of the Low Countries as ethnically related to the German nation. Although this work, subsumed under the title *Westforschung* was not overtly tied to *völkisch*, racist thinking, there was a strong overlap between the two, with many scholars engaged in the *Westforschung* espousing *völkisch* beliefs. With the onset of the Nazi dictatorship, this overlap became much stronger.²⁰⁵

In 1935, Dr. Walter Frick, an official at the Reich Education Ministry in Berlin set forth a fifteen-point program for historical scholarship and instruction designed to bring historical education into line with the “decreed science” that was representative of national socialist scholarship.²⁰⁶ Historical instruction and scholarship in a national socialist mold should, according to Frick, include:

- 1) Role of prehistory in which is emphasized the high civilization attained by the ancestors of the Germanic race.
- 2) Role of the primitive race in which are prefigured all the great peoples and personalities of Germanic origin.
- 3) Role of the racist and national idea as opposed to the internationalist ideal so perilous to the German people, too much inclined to dreams and utopias.
- 4) Role of the great Germanic community scattered throughout the world and inseparably linked to the destiny of the Reich.
- 5) Role of political history which surveys the *ensemble* of large historic periods and takes account of their laws.
- 6) Role of the idea of heroism, in its Germanic form, which is inseparable from the idea of chief and leader.
- 7) Role of the heroic ideal, peculiar to the German race, always compelled to assert itself against an encirclement of enemies.
- 8) Role of the great migrations of peoples since the glacial epoch, which have determined the history of the Germanic race and assured the preponderance of Indo-Germanic languages.
- 9) Role of the great Germanic migrations into Asia and Africa which explain the pre-excellence of the Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations.
- 10) Role of the mixtures of races, with disastrous consequences—to be extensively developed and explained.
- 11) Role of the ancient Greeks, closest brothers of the Germanic race, with explanation of how they succumbed when the population declined and they were outnumbered by inferior and democratic races.
- 12) Role of the great Germanic migrations into Italy, France, Spain, and England, which explain the preponderance of these countries over Russia and the Balkans, which have not been fertilized by new blood.
- 13) Role of the conquest of territory east of the Elbe.
- 14) Role of modern history which shows how Germany was too easily receptive to alien influences, and then lost consciousness of her own qualities, through lack of knowledge of the laws of blood.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 862–67; Schöffner, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 101–5.

²⁰⁶ Robert Alexander Brady, *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1937), 53–54.

15) Role, in particular, of the last twenty years in the course of which Germany, having struggled against the coalition of her enemies, was betrayed by forces hostile to the nation and led to the verge of ruin by liberal and Marxian ideologues, carried down to the day when, in a heroic resurgence, she gave herself to National Socialism.²⁰⁷

The points outlined by Frick are clearly visible in the works that were intended for school instruction in the Netherlands during the occupation. In fact, if one substitutes “the Netherlands” for “Germany” in the last two points, they fit nearly perfectly. There are some slight variations, such as Nachenius’s use of the term “Nordic race” in favor of “Germanic race,” but that is a minor difference, with Nachenius seeing the Nordic Race as being the original race, and the Germanics being their direct descendants who had never been corrupted by “race-mixing.” But by and large, it is easy to see how some works produced by national socialist authors prior to the German invasion as well as those produced directly on behalf of the German occupation were influenced by the points Frick proposed in the 1930s, even if direct evidence that this exact program was prescribed for the individual authors is lacking.²⁰⁸

As in Germany, the ascendancy of Nazism via occupation also allowed for a greater consensus among Nazi-oriented historians in the Netherlands. Very quickly after May 1940, the focus in Dutch Nazi historical writing shifted from an emphasis on language as being the defining characteristic of the Dutch nation to blood and race being the defining characteristics, although there was some pushback and variation within that larger shift.²⁰⁹ Beyond a shift in focus toward the racial, a more unified, but still not completely homogeneous, interpretation of the historical development of the Netherlands came into being. This movement was led by both

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Charles A. Beard, “Education under the Nazis,” *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1936): 447. See also Brady, *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*, 53–54; Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 47–48; Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/62–63.

²⁰⁸ Venema, without citing any evidence, suggests that van Dam and his colleagues in the *Afdeling Lager Onderwijs* did design the competition that resulted in the manuscript *Over volk en vaderland* with these points in mind. Given the similarities between Frick’s program and *Over volk en vaderland*, that is certainly possible. See Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/63.

²⁰⁹ Schöffers, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 242–43.

Dutch and German Nazi scholars, intellectuals, and popular thinkers, including, but by no means limited to, Robert van Genechten, Tobie Goedewaagen, Alfred A. Haighton, P.E. Keuchenius, Hendrik Krekel, J.C. Nachenius, Franz Petri, Werner Reese, Robert van Roosbroeck, Christoph Steding, Rudolf Steinmetz, Johan Theunisz, and the father and son combination of Jan and Hans de Vries.²¹⁰

Through a close examination of these and dozens of other scholars and publicists who produced thousands of books, pamphlets, and brochures regarding the history of the Netherlands from a national socialist perspective, Ivo Schöffer has managed to sketch out a very general outline of Dutch history as seen through the lens of national socialist ideology.²¹¹ Without a doubt, the history of the Netherlands, according to this national socialist view, was a history of lost opportunities.²¹² By and large, the schema outlined by Schöffer fits with the histories presented in those works designed for primary and secondary education, even though Schöffer's analysis focuses on the larger field of national socialist historical writing instead of those work intended for school instruction specifically.

According to the national socialist conception of Dutch history, it had all started out along the right path. In Antiquity, the Netherlands was populated by the same Germanic tribes as the rest of non-Roman Western and Northern Europe. But unlike the previously held wisdom of humanistic, and especially Roman-Catholic tradition, these were not savages at all. In reality, these people were "tall, upright, beautifully dressed with that strong, hard face and those steel-blue eyes, entirely the National Socialist heroic ideal."²¹³ Their technology was by no means inferior, and in some cases, perhaps superior to that of the Romans, and of course, their warlike

²¹⁰ For a fuller list of relevant authors and literature, see *Ibid.*, 280–319.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 152–238.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 117. A short summary of Schöffer's outline can be found on pages 117–118.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 153.

nature was feared by their contemporaries, with heroes such as Julius Civilis and Arminius. In any case, and perhaps most importantly for the racially-obsessed, *völkisch* faction of Dutch Nazis, their racial and genetic characteristics had carried through, unmolested, to the present day.²¹⁴

The history of the Franks was especially troublesome for national socialist scholars, for although the Franks definitely started as a Germanic tribe, their later Romanization resulted in the modern state of France, which itself was definitely *not* Germanic, even if Germanic elements could be found within its borders. The general schema that resulted was to argue that the Frankish conquest had been mostly the result of its original Germanic element. Under the Merovingians, these original conquerors had become Romanized as they pushed south and west toward Paris, the Seine, and the Loire (i.e., Neustria). Alternatively, it was the Carolingians whose strongly Germanic, un-Romanized nature, centered as it was on the Maas, Moselle, and Rhine regions (i.e., Austrasia), that managed to establish dominance later in the Early Middle Ages and halt the spread of Roman culture and language north and eastward. Thus, using this scheme, the national socialist scholars could argue that not only was Charlemagne really Germanic, but they could also explain the language border that arose between the Low German languages of the Lower Rhine Valley and northern Low Countries and the Romance languages further south.²¹⁵

Charlemagne himself had been, prior to the Second World War, somewhat problematic in the national socialist mind. The Saxon Wars; Charlemagne's turn toward Rome and the Church, which led to further Romanization of the Germanic world; his embracing of Christianity and his Christianizing mission; and his effort toward universal, rather than Germanic, empire were all

²¹⁴ Ibid., 153–54.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 154–59.

parts of his legacy with which true-believing Nazis took issue. But during the war, a sort of rehabilitation of his image took place.²¹⁶ His wars against Saxons were perhaps unfortunate, but he could not be blamed entirely. They were, after all, not different than later intra-German wars, such as those between Frederick Barbarossa and Henry the Lion or between Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa. Moreover, he could not be faulted for a lack of a specifically Germanic identity, as no such identity had existed at that time, and even so, his focus on waging war to the east meant a turn toward the Germanic, instead of focusing to the South. His turn toward Rome was mitigated with the argument that he had not actually wanted to be crowned by the Pope and he perhaps really wanted to subjugate the Papacy under his own rule. That it worked out as it did, with the Pope crowning him was unfortunate, but hardly enough to throw away his legacy. And of course, the Nazis' own efforts in Europe during the 1940s, which included domination of many non-Germanic peoples in Eastern Europe put Charlemagne's universal ambitions in a new light. And so, during the Second World War, many Nazi thinkers reevaluated their opinion of *Karel de Grote* and came away with a much more positive view. He was, definitely, Germanic, a true leader of whom national socialists could be proud.²¹⁷

A similar veneer can be found for the rest of medieval history. The various groups and events were all seen through the lens of those elements most dear to National Socialism: a strong, warlike nature; mythic elements; vitality; and above-all race. In that vein, the Vikings were hardly blood-thirsty pillagers, but rather the bringers of Germanic vengeance who spread their blood from north to south and from west to east.²¹⁸ The entire High and Late Middle Ages were particular high-points in both Dutch and German history. This was the time of the

²¹⁶ Ibid., 159.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 159–63.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 163.

colonization of the east by Germanic peoples, which saw Dutch and Germans moving further east, establishing themselves over the native populations there.²¹⁹ It was also the time of the Hanseatic League, the beginnings of which, at least, were viewed by many national socialists as a sort of pan-Germanic community. While it was definitely an economic grouping, that element was downplayed in favor of emphasizing the “more ethical view of the excellent Germanic person” and his integration with his community, by focusing on the cities themselves, rather than the trading between them.²²⁰

Even events that might otherwise be seen as disastrous were repainted in a positive light as much as possible. So, the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire was actually a good thing, as it allowed for the permanent separation of Germanic and Romance cultures and languages. Far from a dissolution, the breakup of the Carolingian Empire was a reassertion of Germanic interests against proto-French domination, in what appeared to be remarkably similar argument to that used by Nazi historians for the explanation of Carolingian ascendancy, only with the Carolingians now representing French influence rather than being the bastion of Germanic blood and culture.²²¹ Similarly, the domination of the Low Countries by the French Dukes of Burgundy was seen as a step in the wrong direction, with their connections to the French throne seen as pulling the Low Countries away from its Germanic roots.²²²

But these minor setbacks were nothing in comparison to the tidal wave of problems that began with the onset of the modern period in the sixteenth century. The breakaway of the Netherlands from the Holy Roman Empire, which started with the Dutch Revolt in 1568 was just the beginning of the downward spiral. But even here, the focus of the historiography was

²¹⁹ Ibid., 173–77.

²²⁰ Ibid., 180–183, quote on 181.

²²¹ Ibid., 164.

²²² Ibid., 183–84.

slightly altered. Where previous historians like Treitschke had argued that the independence of the Low Countries had been a shortcoming of the Holy Roman Empire, national socialist historians, especially Hendrik Krekel, focused instead on the innocence of the Reich and played up the dissolution of the Netherlands as a single state through the breakaway of the Seven United Provinces from the larger Seventeen Provinces.²²³ This tactic of bemoaning the setbacks of the early modern and modern periods, but highlighting certain aspects as exceptions to this general rule was a reversal of sorts of the very same tactic which saw the medieval period as largely a sort of Germanic golden age with only certain low points.

In this way, the *geuzen*, hardened by a strict adherence to Calvinism and led by the great leader William the Silent, were seen as a singular highlight of the otherwise disastrous Dutch Revolt. The culprits, on the other hand, were the burghers and regents of the cities, focused as they were on economic gain instead of the well-being of the *volk*.²²⁴ In the same way, despite the growing commercialism and liberalism of the nineteenth century, national socialists could be proud of Dutch imperial exploits in South Africa and the Far East as well as growing German-Dutch and German-Flemish contacts.²²⁵ Even at points that one might expect national socialist thinkers to see positive developments, such as the period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, instead the focus is on the cause of the creation of that state through defeat by France, the dominance of the English in Northwest Europe, and the state's eventual dissolution into the Netherlands and Belgium in 1830.²²⁶

But, in the grand scheme of things, none of this really mattered in the Nazi view of history, for in 1940, the German savior had come to help their Germanic brothers find their

²²³ Ibid., 186–88, 190–96.

²²⁴ Ibid., 190.

²²⁵ Ibid., 221–33.

²²⁶ Ibid., 216–20.

rightful place among the peoples of Europe. It would awaken within the Dutch nation the *völkisch*, Germanic thinking whose absence had been at the root of so many of the problems of the previous centuries. The problems of the past would be corrected through the dynamism of the coming future.

Voorbije tijden: vaderlandsche geschiedenis voor de lagere school

The Nazi view of history was substantially different from that which had been taught in Dutch schools prior to the German invasion. Although, to a certain extent, there was some penetration of Germanic ideas regarding historical instruction among the far-right of Dutch society, this view of history had in no way penetrated the educational establishment. While some teachers certainly were NSBers, even members of the *völkisch* wing of the party, their teaching material was strictly traditional. This was, after all, one of the primary reasons that occupiers decided to both censor school books and attempt to introduce new, more Nazi-oriented works.

One such work that was deemed unworthy of use in education during the German occupation was the primary school history book *Voorbije tijden: vaderlandsche geschiedenis voor de lagere school* by J. Dijkstra.²²⁷ Dijkstra, who was a school head in The Hague, was a prolific author of history textbooks during the 1920s and 1930s. His various works were designed for all levels of education in the Netherlands, from primary education to the teacher training colleges. His textbook *Voorbije tijden* had multiple editions designed for both primary and lower secondary schools, beginning no later than 1926, with later editions being published in 1928, 1929, 1932, and 1933. Given the prolific nature of his work, it was likely relatively widely

²²⁷ J. Dijkstra, *Voorbije Tijden C: vaderlandsche Geschiedenis voor de Lagere School, 3e Leerkring (tot 1648)* ('s-Gravenhage: N V Joh. Ijkema's Uitgevers maatschappij, 1932). *Past Times: National History for the Primary School*.

used in schools, although given the decentralized nature of Dutch education in the pre-occupation period, it is impossible to determine exactly how widespread its use actually was. On the other hand, it does not appear on any of the lists of banned books, which may indicate that its use was not terribly widespread.²²⁸ However, given that it most certainly was used at schools in The Hague, the failure of the school book control commission to notice it was more likely an oversight on the commission's part and a testament to how enormous the task of censoring the entirety of Dutch school literature truly was.

The book did come to van Dam's attention, via Goedewaagen, when, in November 1943, F. J. Meijer informed the Goedewaagen about the less-than-satisfactory content of the book. Describing the chapters over the Germanics of antiquity as "rubbish" and "nonsense," Meijer noted that such material "in the present time" would cause the "spirit of our children to be poisoned."²²⁹ In fact, when one compares the material in Dijkstra's work with those that more closely conform to the national socialist view of Dutch history, it is clear that Meijer had definitely found a work that was, at least from a Nazi perspective, worthy of disdain.

Using Roman authors, especially Tacitus and Caesar, as his sources, Dijkstra notes that the Germanics were "true nomads" who subsisted off of hunting and fishing, and when they had free time engaged in gambling and drinking. They did little in the way of farming, but when they did, it was exclusively the work of women and slaves. They clothed themselves with animal pelts, although he does note that they wore linen cloth as well. They lived in what could

²²⁸ The various lists can be found in: NA 2.14.37/692. See also Venema, *Schrijvers, uitgevers en hun collaboratie*, I/459.

²²⁹ NIOD 114b/38.

best be described as “little more than clay huts.”²³⁰ Their religion, which was based on nature, was actually a “terrible superstition” which saw every elderly woman as a witch to be abused.²³¹

If the description of the Germanics was not bad enough, Dijkstra’s argument regarding the Romans was much worse, from a national socialist point of view. The “most highly civilized” Romans were “much, much more developed” than the Germanics, with their roads, cities, and palaces, and as such practiced a “civilizing influence” upon them. This included increases in commerce, through Roman roads and trading materials such as coinage, better agricultural practices, and the knowledge of digging wells and finding non-riverine water sources, allowing the Germanics to settle land further away from rivers and streams, which had not been possible prior to Roman contact.²³² Naturally, this higher form of civilization led to Roman military dominance, against which the Germans eventually *unsuccessfully* rebelled. Dijkstra makes no mention of Arminius at all, while noting that the rest of the rebellions against Roman dominance were all eventually defeated. It was only the later Germanic migrations of the 5th century that ended (western) Roman imperium.²³³

Post-Roman life, according to Dijkstra, was not entirely dissimilar to Germanic life during Roman times. Many of their customs remained, including a division of people into free and unfree, the latter including both serfs and slaves. They continued to hold proto-assemblies in the open air in which free men could discuss the future of the community, offer sacrifices to their gods, and try criminals for their offenses. These “trials,” ordeals really, included such actions as an accused holding their hand in fire with innocence being proved by a lack of harm.

²³⁰ J. Dijkstra, *Voorbije Tijden C (tot 1648)*, 14–15.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 18–19, quote on 19.

²³² *Ibid.*, 20–21, 24, quotes on 20.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 21–24.

Alternatively, the accused might be thrown into water where floating was a sign of guilt.²³⁴ And then came Christianity. After spending several pages discussing the Christianization of the Netherlands, in which individuals such as Radboud of Frisia, who it will be recalled, according to Werner vom Hofe, Peter Seifert, and Werner Steinbacher in their *De Germaansche Nederlanden*, had “remained loyal to his race and his fatherland.” For Dijkstra, however, Radboud was nothing more than a “Christian-hater” who stood in opposition to the Irish missionary Willibrord’s efforts to bring the faith to the Netherlands.²³⁵ Of course, in both accounts, Christianity eventually prevailed against Germanic paganism, but according to Dijkstra, this was very much a positive development, for one Christianity was adopted “one could see the blissful effects: bondage was softened, wives were raised from slave-status, the desire for revenge was curbed, [and] alcoholism was contested.”²³⁶ There could hardly be a more of a contrast between the Germanic period as presented by Dijkstra and the very same presented by later, national socialist authors.

Another period of Dutch history on which national socialist historians focused was the Dutch revolt. As the author of *Over volk en vaderland* noted at the end of the chapter on the Dutch Revolt, the very same treaties that had given the Netherlands its de jure independence also marked the end of the devastating Thirty Years’ War and the beginning of the end of the Holy Roman Empire.²³⁷ Dijkstra’s recounting, however, does not even mention Germany in the five chapters he spends on the Dutch revolt, save to briefly mention William the Silent’s brief self-imposed exile there and his raising of mercenary troops. The Thirty Years’ War and the decline of the Holy Roman Empire go unmentioned entirely. Where later Nazi historians would bemoan

²³⁴ Ibid., 27–29.

²³⁵ Hofe, Seifert, and Steinbacher, *De Germaansche Nederlanden*, 82; Dijkstra, *Voorbije Tijden C (tot 1648)*, 30–31.

²³⁶ Dijkstra, *Voorbije Tijden C (tot 1648)*, 32.

²³⁷ OVV, 53.

the breakaway of the Netherlands from the Holy Roman Empire and the lack of unity among the entirety of the Low Countries, Dijkstra does no such thing, moving triumphantly from the Peace of Münster to the Golden Age and the establishment of the Netherlands as a colonial and world power.²³⁸ In fact, the entire last forty per cent of the book that includes the chapters covering the ascension of Charles V and Phillip II through to the end of the work, offer a predominantly triumphant narrative of Dutch resolve in the face of overwhelming odds, the eventual successes that resolve achieved, and the subsequent reward, in the form of Dutch independence, the subsequent Dutch Golden Age, and the formation of a colonial empire. This is explicitly and unapologetically a Dutch story. There is no bemoaning of the lack of unity among “Germanics” here or even among the people of the Low Countries; this is purely a patriotic Dutch history celebrating the very events that make the Dutch unique among those larger groups. It is no wonder that the German occupiers and their sympathizers would find the book problematic.

Conclusion

Of all the German occupiers’ many attempts to instill a more Germanic identity among Dutch youth through educational initiatives, the most concerted effort was put toward the creation of new school books, especially history books, aimed at this end.²³⁹ This effort was not entirely limited to the Netherlands either. In February 1944, a group of German, Austrian, and Dutch scholars met in Salzburg to discuss an all-encompassing Germanic history book.²⁴⁰ Unlike the other books that Nazis had tried to introduce into Dutch schools, this work was meant to be applicable everywhere, from Norway to Austria to the Netherlands and everywhere else in

²³⁸ Schöffner, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld*, 186–88, 190–96; Dijkstra, *Voorbije Tijden C (tot 1648)*, 137–55.

²³⁹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 267.

²⁴⁰ These individuals included: Joseph Otto Plassmann, Othmar Anderle, Hans Ernst Schneider, Jan de Vries (nl), Heinz Gollwitzer, Walther Wüst, Geerto Snijder (nl), Walter von Stokar, Hans Schwalm, Reinier van Houten (nl), Wolfram Sievers, Nikolaus Fox, and Maximilian Ittenbach. All were affiliated in one way or another with the SS-*Ahnenerbe*. See NIOD 020/436.

between, although all of those in the planning meeting were either German, Austrian, or Dutch. Nothing came from the planning session beyond a commitment to continue working on this idea, but the continued efforts of the Nazis to recast history along Germanic lines in such a way as to bring together the Germanic peoples of Europe is indicative of the importance leading ideologues placed on Germanic identity and historical education as a way to inculcate that in, not just the Netherlands, but the wider European populace under Nazi control.²⁴¹

The Nazis attempted to use historical education to re-create and reshape the way that Dutch youth thought about their society, its past, and its place within the larger European world in order to instill a *völkisch* spirit, often called a *vaderlandsche* or *volksche geest*.²⁴² Pre-occupation historical works like *Voorbije Tijden* focused on an overtly national identity, with the history of the Netherlands and the Dutch people viewed through the singular lens of the Dutch nation and its interactions with the wider world. Everything else was secondary, filler material aimed at giving context to the uniquely Dutch story taking place. The heroes of these works were Dutch patriots, like William the Silent and Prince Maurice, father of the Zuiderzee Works Cornelis Lely and liberal constitutional reformer Johan Thorbecke. Christianity, and especially Calvinism, were defining elements of what made the people of the Netherlands Dutch, and the adoption of Christianity was viewed as a positive development in the history of the Low Countries, helping to rid the country of dangerous superstitions. Moreover, commercial, scientific, and artistic development; liberal parliamentarianism; the expansion of the franchise; and the establishment of a proto-welfare state were seen as victories for the Dutch people. It was, by and large, a Whig-style history of progress, a movement of society from the dark into the light.

²⁴¹ NIOD 020/436.

²⁴² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/348.

In contrast to this triumphant, national history, Nazi ideologues and historical thinkers promoted a pan-Germanic mindset. The high point of his Germanic civilization had been in antiquity and the Middle Ages when Germanic peoples had understood the importance of their race. They were united, more or less, through the apparatus of the Holy Roman Empire, but this changed with the transition to modernity when Dutch history became a history of setbacks and lost opportunities. First was the independence of the Dutch from their Germanic brothers in the Holy Roman Empire, and then disunity among the peoples of the Low Countries themselves. Chances to make the most of that disunity, through the establishment of a strong, unitary state with a singular leader were defeated by urban merchant elites. From there things only went downhill, as foreign powers took control of the country, liberalism was cemented as the governing ideology, and the people were divided along confessional and political lines. The Netherlands ended up as a weak state, unable to protect itself. But worst of all, it was disassociated from the Germanic world, taking instead its cues from France and England. The Dutch had, according to Nazi thinkers, lost their place in the world, unaware of the most important and defining aspects of historical and cultural development: their Germanic identity. Luckily, the Germans, with their racially conscious National Socialism would help the Dutch find their true calling and return the Netherlands to the greatness it deserved as members of a ruling Germanic ruling class.

The change in emphasis exhibited by Nazi historical theorists displays their understanding of what it truly meant to be Dutch. The true meaning of Dutchness was as a constituent member of the larger Germanic community. The place of the Netherlands lay at Germany's side, and together they would, along with other Germanic nations, lead the future Europe into a new era defined by their own perceived racial superiority. When the Netherlands

had strayed from this path, as it had in the modern era, it was met with setbacks and defeat. Even in those areas where the Dutch had shown characteristics of what the Nazis viewed as greatness, such as the establishment of a Dutch colonial empire across the seas, the emphasis was always on what *could have been* if the Netherlands had had the powerful German nation standing alongside it.²⁴³

The changes to the historical curriculum were meant to foster this cultural identity among Dutch youth, and these efforts were part of a larger educational project with the same end goals, which itself was part of a larger cultural project aimed at transforming Dutch identity writ large. As the highest levels of the Nazi leadership understood, education was a tool that could be used to shape the youth in much the same way that propaganda could be used to shape the larger populace.²⁴⁴ But much as resistance to Nazi designs began to pervade Dutch society, in the classroom Nazi educational “reformers” experienced significant resistance to the changes they hoped to implement.²⁴⁵ The following chapter turns to the local level, with a focus on the two extraordinary school inspectors tasked by the regime with maintaining peace and order in the schools. Through a close examination of their work, as well as the many complaints regarding anti-regime activity on the part of students, teachers, and administrators that made their way up the hierarchy to the Education Department in The Hague, it will be shown that the majority of Dutch students, teachers, and administrators had little use for their new German overlords and the Nazis’ Germanic project in the Netherlands.

²⁴³ See, e.g. OVV, 34.

²⁴⁴ See e.g. Schwarz in: NIOD 020/2047; Hitler, *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-1944*, 523.

²⁴⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/346-354; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 278–81; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 286–90.

Chapter 7 - Chaos and Disorder in the Schools¹

Again and again there are noticeable signs of a destructive and negative attitude, which presents itself in the spreading of rumors and jokes, the slandering of the Germans and [our] fellow countrymen, the passing on and writing down of childlike, indeed repulsive, nonsense. ...In particular, every terror against teachers and pupils with national socialist convictions must also be strictly suppressed. - Jan van Dam, January 29, 1941²

Thus far the focus of this study has been placed upon the efforts of the German administration and their Dutch collaborators in the education realm during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in the Second World War. That is, the focus has remained upon the upper echelons of the administrative and educational apparatus in the Netherlands, the actions of men like Heinrich Schwarz and Jan van Dam. This chapter will deviate slightly from that focus to look more closely at what was happening in the schools themselves. It will approach this topic from two perspectives. First, it will look at the efforts of the men appointed by the government to enforce “peace and order” within the schools. These men, Piet van Rossem and Dr. D. G. Noordijk, stood outside of the already extant School Inspectorate and were tasked with, mostly, combating anti-German and anti-NSB actions on the part of teachers, administrators, and students, although Noordijk’s commission expanded significantly as the occupation entered its third calendar year.³

It should be noted from the outset, however, that there was a bit of a divergence between the ways in which “peace and order” were described by the government and what was actually going on in the schools themselves. For the most part and for the overwhelming majority of students, teachers, and administrators, school life went on more or less the same as it had before the occupation began.⁴ With the exception of higher education, which saw significant

¹ Owing to Dutch privacy laws, which this author had to agree to respect in order to consult certain archival collections, the names of non-public individuals—that is school administrators, teachers, students, and local NSB officials—have been omitted.

² NIOD 216e/12.

³ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 211–12.

⁴ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/346–47.

disruptions during the occupation as a result of both university closures and the forced-labor service, the larger educational establishment continued to operate as usual. Schools remained in session and most students kept attending classes, except for those students forced out of the classroom because of their Jewish heritage. While there were occasional student revolts, with the exception of some unrest that followed the dismissal of Jewish civil servants, there were no large scale, nationwide protests or strikes in primary or secondary education, as occurred at the universities. Those strikes and protests that did occur were limited to a single school and lasted no more than a day. For the most part, peace and order as a modern reader would understand it actually reigned throughout the occupation period, despite the changes the occupation regime hoped to implement.

Despite that, however, the government was overwhelmingly concerned with maintaining “peace and order” in the schools and was decidedly suspicious of the regular school inspectorate tasked with enforcing it.⁵ But it is on this point that the occupation regime’s definition of “peace and order” is betrayed, as what the government meant by “peace and order” was really the removal and/or suppression of anti-NSB or anti-German elements from the schools.⁶ If a teacher was thought to have been imparting anti-regime politics to the students, that threatened “peace and order.” Similarly, if students, teachers, or administrators demonstrated against the regime or engaged in acts of harassment against NSB colleagues or students, that was seen as disrupting “peace and order.” To the extent that these types of actions occurred, the occupation authorities viewed the educational establishment as needing a reestablishment of “peace and order.” It was

⁵ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 126–27.

⁶ This is especially obvious in the orders appointing van Rossem and the instructions drawn up by van Dam for the position of Authorized Representative and for the rules drawn up by Noordijk and van Dam regarding the implementation of Decree 5/1942. For van Rossem’s appointment orders and van Dam’s rules on his work, see NA 2.14.37/414. For the documents on Noordijk, see NIOD 114a/142, 216e/12.

these types of acts, after all, that were at the center of the overwhelming majority of investigations conducted by van Rossem and Noordijk.⁷

The second focus of this chapter is on those actions actually taken by administrators, teachers, and students that contributed to the regime's belief that chaos and disorder ruled in the schools. These actions ran the gamut from passive protests through the wearing of political insignias such as *Nederlandsche Unie* badges to active harassment of NSB connected individuals, up to and including physical violence.⁸ Most of the passive and active resistance performed by teachers, administrators, and students did not necessarily affect the functioning of the classroom itself. Passive resistance was, by its very nature, mostly non-disruptive, even if the occupation authorities took a dim view of it, while more active resistance, actions like the bullying and harassment of NSB students and teachers, tended to affect the victims specifically more than the entire classroom more generally. Both types of resistance to the occupation regime were widespread if the records of the two extraordinary inspectors and the complaints that made it to the Education Department are any indication. All of these actions, when taken together, suggest a widespread disdain on the part of students and teachers for the occupation regime and its supporters in the education realm, but do not necessarily evidence a widespread state of chaos within the schools, even if the government often described it so.

These types of anti-regime demonstrations, whether by students or teachers, were among the few ways that students and teachers could demonstrate their anti-regime feelings without exposing themselves to the risk of retaliation. Occasionally students and teachers were actually

⁷ NA 2.14.37/408-555; NIOD 114a/1-6, 114b/1-150.

⁸ The *Nederlandsche Unie* was a political bloc made up of all of the established parties in Dutch politics which aimed at accommodation of the new ruling authorities. It quickly grew in popularity among the Dutch people and was eventually banned in December 1941 along with all other political parties, save the NSB. For a full recounting of the *Unie*, see Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration*, 66–86.

suspended, fired, and even arrested for the actions they took inside the schools, but such instances were comparatively rarer. Rather, the most common punishment such individuals received as a stern warning from the educational inspectors or van Dam. For this reason, resistance through the creation of “chaos and disorder” in the schools offered students and teachers a relatively safe way to protest the occupation regime, and given the option, many Dutch students and teachers took it.

Finally, it is difficult to argue with any certainty that the actions of teachers and students toward their NSB or German-oriented colleagues was tantamount to a specific rejection of the Nazi occupiers’ Germanic project in the Netherlands, as opposed to a rejection of foreign occupation more generally. In most cases, those accused of anti-regime activity denied the allegations against them rather than offering a motive for their purported actions. Nonetheless, passive and active resistance against the regime and their local representatives, whether those representatives were government officials or simply members of NSB organizations, demonstrated a rejection of the occupation regime in its entirety on the part of those who committed such acts. Therefore, it is not necessary in my view to be able to prove exactly what motivated anti-regime agitators in the schools. Given the antipathy that many Dutch students and teachers displayed toward the German occupation regime, it is extremely unlikely that they were disdainful of the messengers while at the same time indifferent to or even supportive of the message itself. This is all the more true because the German occupiers tried to put a positive spin on their occupation during the initial “hearts and minds” phase, and yet, active and passive resistance in the schools was prominent right from the very start of the 1940-1941 school year. Most Dutchmen and women simply viewed the occupation with scorn, and that scorn extended to any policies the Germans tried to implement. Had the Nazis’ Germanic project been

implemented by a democratically elected, native Dutch movement, it is certainly possible, although in my view still highly unlikely, that it would have been more readily accepted by the populace.⁹ But it was not instituted in such a way; rather, it was instituted by a conquering regime that was detested by the majority of the populace, and as such, was a nonstarter entirely.

The Authorized Representative of the *Reichskommissar* for Supervision of Peace and Order in the Schools

The efforts of the government, whether by the German supervisory administration or their Dutch collaborators, to change the curriculum in schools could only be carried out if there were enforcers on the ground who made sure that local administrators, school heads, and teachers actually implemented the mandated “reforms.” As briefly mentioned in chapters three and five, one of the first actions that the Germans took in this regard was to appoint the NSB teacher Piet van Rossem as the “Authorized Representative of the *Reichskommissar* for Supervision of Peace and Order in the Schools.”¹⁰ Van Rossem, a Belgian by birth, fought in the Belgian Army during the First World War where he became involved with Flemish nationalist circles known as *Activists* who were willing to collaborate with the German army. After the war, he fled to the Netherlands where he continued his studies and eventually became a teacher in Zwolle.¹¹ Already a member of the NSB when the Germans invaded, van Rossem quickly made himself widely known as sympathetic to the occupiers. When a local German official complained to the director of the lyceum where van Rossem taught about anti-German sentiments being spread by the student body, the director held an assembly wherein he, the

⁹ The failure of the liberal side in the school struggle should not be forgotten here as several of the initiatives of the occupation regime, such as gaining state control over education, had been the goal of the failed liberal bloc in the previous century.

¹⁰ Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies (NIOD) 114a/5; Nationaal Archief (NA) 2.14.37/414.

¹¹ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 48–49.

director, praised the German people. In protest, several teachers walked out, and in response, two of them were arrested by the German security police. It was widely believed that van Rossem had denounced the arrested teachers to the German authorities.¹² Shortly thereafter, on November 15, 1940, van Rossem received his commission from Seyss-Inquart to inspect the schools.

Van Rossem was directly empowered by Seyss-Inquart to investigate incidents in all schools, both public and private, save institutions of higher education, regarding the behavior of teachers in the classroom as it related to “peace and order.” To further this effort, he was empowered to sit in on lessons; gather information, including making copies of documents; and conduct interrogations of faculty, staff, students, and other relevant parties. He was then to submit the results of his investigation to Wimmer and suggest appropriate measures.¹³ To complete his work, van Rossem would need a certain amount of support, but unfortunately for him, Jan van Dam had been appointed to the position of Secretary-General of the Education Department shortly after van Rossem’s own appointment, and van Dam had little use for the Authorized Representative of the *Reichskommissar*. Van Dam consistently worked to undermine the Authorized Representative in every way. For example, van Rossem requested a salary increase to the level of Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools, but van Dam countered with an increase to the level of Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, which was only equivalent with that salary of a regular Inspector of Secondary Schools. Further, van Rossem requested that he be allowed two deputies, J. J. Valkenburg and P. R. Dijkema, and while van Dam initially declined

¹² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV/678.

¹³ NA 2.14.37/414.

this request, he eventually relented and allowed for the temporary installation of Valkenburg and Dijkema as van Rossem's lieutenants for the period of three months.¹⁴

To make matters worse for van Rossem, van Dam issued a series of instructions in early January 1941 regarding how van Rossem was to carry out his duties as Authorized Representative.¹⁵ First and foremost, van Dam noted, in contradiction to the actual order of the *Reichskommissar*, that van Rossem's "work consists of conducting research into the behavior of teachers, who could be dangerous for the maintenance of peace and order in the schools ... and issuing advice to the Secretary-General."¹⁶ Further, any conclusions should likewise be brought directly to van Dam's attention. This restriction issued by van Dam was due to a certain amount of vagueness in the original order given by Seyss-Inquart. That order stated that van Rossem was empowered to "investigate which teachers, according to their general behavior, do not offer or offer only an incomplete guarantee that peace and order reigns in school life, *or those teachers who in their current assignment do not appear to be suitable for the development of the school system in the interest of the Dutch people.*"¹⁷ Van Rossem understood this authorization to mean that his authority extended to more general personnel matters, but van Dam made clear that this was not the case—van Rossem was to be restricted only to actions that affected "peace and order."

When performing his work, van Rossem was to work in concert with the heads of the sub-departments (i.e., primary education, secondary education, etc.) within the larger Education Department and the existing school inspectors, and only in "very urgent cases" was he to venture out on his own without first informing the School Inspectorate, and even then, he was to inform

¹⁴ NA 2.14.37/414.

¹⁵ NA 2.14.37/414.

¹⁶ Van Dam, of course, claimed his instruction was in accordance with the authorization given by Seyss-Inquart.

¹⁷ Emphasis added.

the School Inspectorate and the corresponding sub-departmental chief immediately afterward. Further, van Rossem was to steer clear of anything dealing with the appointment of teachers, as van Dam reserved that prerogative for himself, as he was soon to make public.¹⁸ Should van Rossem encounter any resistance in his activities, he was to inform van Dam, who would take care of the issue, for van Rossem was in no circumstances to attempt to counter any such resistance on his own. Finally, he was to allow all teachers who came under suspicion to explain their actions in person. There would be no decisions made based upon rumor and conjecture alone.¹⁹ In total, it was clear that van Dam was trying to curtail van Rossem's personal authority and subsume it under his own.

Naturally, van Rossem objected to many of the restrictions that van Dam attempted to place on his personal authority, especially the curtailment of his authority over general personnel matters. In his reply to van Rossem's objections, van Dam relented regarding the temporary installation of Dijkema and Valkenburg but noted that the curtailment of van Rossem's jurisdiction over general personnel matters had been approved by Schwarz. Moreover, he informed van Rossem, that, after consultation with the German authorities, it had been determined that not only were the appointments of Dijkema and Valkenburg temporary, so was van Rossem's appointment itself.²⁰ The power struggle between the two men that had begun almost immediately after van Dam's appointment in November 1940, was ended, thanks to the support of Schwarz, in a decisive victory for van Dam by the end of January. This sort of back and forth, in which both men attempted to assert their own authority would continue for the remainder of van Rossem's time in office.

¹⁸ The Appointment Decree would be released to the public a few months later, on April 9. See NIOD 216e/14; Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 73/1941.

¹⁹ NA 2.14.37/414.

²⁰ NA 2.14.37/414.

Despite the restrictions that van Dam put in his way, van Rossem, along with his two colleagues, J. J. Valkenburg and P. R. Dijkema, proceeded to create more unrest in the education field than peace and order. By and large, the actions of van Rossem's office were sporadic, given the still large mandate they had to ensure peace and order. In most cases the Authorized Representative or his deputies would receive tips from regime-oriented teachers or parents, or sometimes directly from Robert van Genechten, who had been appointed Solicitor-General in The Hague after he had failed to attain the top spot in the Education Department. They would then investigate the circumstances of the incidents and recommend actions to be taken directly by Wimmer or van Dam.²¹ The tips van Rossem's office received and the cases they investigated ran the gamut from ordinary issues of discipline that could be expected at any school in any age to specifically anti-German and anti-NSB activities that could border on the cruel and unusual.

Despite the broad power granted to van Rossem and his deputies by Seyss-Inquart, however, their investigations took on a broad pattern for their entire tenure in office. First, the incidents reported, such as the anti-German and anti-NSB actions of the students, whether directed at other students, teachers, or passers-by on the street, were encountered by van Rossem, Dijkema, and Valkenburg much more often than the more regular incidents of student misconduct. This is, however, unsurprising given the nature of van Rossem's mandate. Those more typical incidents of poor student behavior generally did not fall under the purview of his office and so only reached his desk rarely, staying instead under the purview of the local administration or, if necessary, the regular School Inspectorate. Second, upon receiving a report from van Rossem's office, van Dam tended to turn the issue over to the local school inspectors to get a second opinion, most of whom were careerists in the Education Department and only a

²¹ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 204–9.

couple of whom, at least at this early stage in the occupation, were NSB or German sympathizers.²² Finally, because van Dam trusted the reports provided by the local school inspectors more than those presented by van Rossem's office and because he set himself up as van Rossem's opponent, the punishments that the latter or his deputies suggested were often significantly curtailed, if an agreement on the facts was even possible in the first place, which was not always the case.

Typical of the types of investigations handled by van Rossem's office was one incident in Doetinchem, a small town to the east of Arnhem, near the German border. In March 1941, Dijkema received a tip from a local NSB official regarding a whole range of illegal activity at the public lyceum there. Among the activities being carried on by the students there was the illegal sale of stamps with the Queen's portrait on them, purportedly with the approval of the school director. After an investigation was conducted, it turned out that the student body at this school, with the tacit support of the administration, was practically in open revolt against the new regime, at least as much as could be expected from school students. Accusations abounded, including the widespread distribution and display of stamps in support of both the Queen and the *Nederlandsche Unie*, death threats against the children of local NSB functionaries, harassment of a local NSB functionary and a German official on the street in front of the school, and a student-led strike after the larger dismissal of Jewish civil servants. To rectify the situation, Dijkema suggested that the school director be dismissed from his position and transferred to another school as a teacher, that another involved teacher be suspended for a month without pay, and that one offending student be suspended for a month while a second student should be expelled for a year. Van Dam availed himself of the local school inspector, who conducted his own

²² Ibid., 206.

investigation, which established that many of the points Dijkema had made were, at least in the inspector's eyes, and thus also van Dam's, less than completely forthcoming.²³

The local school inspector noted that the incidents regarding the sale of *Unie* stamps had occurred not during the school day, were quite limited in nature, and the students were not even aware that it was against the rules. Further, the director had, originally, no knowledge of the nascent black market that had developed, and when he did discover it, he put an end to it immediately. The incident with the German official had been handled by the Germans themselves, with the offending student having been hauled down to the local police station and given a stern talking to, while an incident between another student and an NSB functionary had been handled by that NSB man himself, who got in touch with the student's parents. As for the school director, he was judged to be both competent and hard-working, taking every effort to clamp down on disorder, as evidenced by the lack of such since the new year had begun. The teacher, on the other hand, was the victim of a series of misunderstandings. The only issue that van Dam found concerning was the strike, but even then it was downplayed significantly, with the local school inspector noting that the strike had been spontaneous, lasted barely forty-five minutes, and ended when the teachers called the students back into class and discussed the inappropriateness of their actions.²⁴ It was, for all intents and purposes, a total rebuke of Dijkema's investigation and complete undercutting of the authority of the office of the Authorized Representative.

As a result of van Dam's constant use of local inspectors to undercut the authority of the Authorized Representative, van Rossem and his lieutenants were largely ineffective in their work. Occasionally, because of the resistance that they faced from van Dam, van Rossem or his

²³ NA 2.14.37/473.

²⁴ NA 2.14.37/473.

subordinates would attempt to go over the head of the Secretary-General straight to Schwarz, but this did not usually have the desired effect. On March 4, 1941, van Rossem wrote to Schwarz complaining about van Dam's practice of having the regular school inspectors conduct secondary investigations of complaints regarding peace and order in the schools, thus undercutting van Rossem's authority.²⁵ Schwarz does not appear to have taken any action in response, as the practice continued unabated. On April 22, Dijkema complained to Schwarz about van Dam undercutting his authority at the public secondary school in Winschoten, where the director was making his anti-NSB attitude known among the student body. In this instance, instead of punishing or removing the director, van Dam sent a letter telling the director to knock it off. Again, Schwarz did not take any action to counter van Dam, as van Rossem was still complaining about the situation a month later, this time about a synagogue visit planned for students by that very same school director.²⁶

In fact, van Rossem made a similar appeal to Schwarz regarding the situation in Doetinchem and van Dam's less than helpful reaction on May 29, more than two months after Dijkema's initial investigation began. But by this point, although van Rossem did not yet know it, he had been fired from his position as Authorized Representative. After a discussion with van Dam on the subject of van Rossem in mid-May, Schwarz convinced Wimmer and Seyss-Inquart to remove the Authorized Representative's mandate. Wimmer had originally scheduled the removal to take place on May 25, but the actual order from Seyss-Inquart was only signed on May 26 and forwarded to van Rossem on May 29, apparently after he had sent his complaint about van Dam to Schwarz. The official reason for van Rossem's dismissal was that his office

²⁵ BAL R83-Niederlande/25. It should also be noted that Dijkema complained of similar interference on the part of the *Opvoedersgilde*.

²⁶ NIOD 114a/6.

had achieved its function to restore peace and order in the schools. But that was purely a cover. In reality, anti-NSB and anti-German activity in the schools continued to be a problem for the authorities. The real reason for van Rossem's dismissal is that he had stood outside of van Dam's authority, and van Dam had been acting to contain under his own control all elements of education in the Netherlands. All van Dam really needed to do was to convince Schwarz of this necessity, which van Dam was able to accomplish in mid-May.²⁷ The falsehood behind van Rossem's dismissal was made clear when, a few weeks later, van Dam appointed a new functionary to fulfill the exact same role, but this time directly under his own authority.²⁸

During his time as Authorized Representative, which spanned about six months from mid-November 1940 to late-May 1941, van Rossem and his deputies fielded hundreds of complaints from cities and towns across the country. The overwhelming majority of these complaints dealt with actions that were perceived to be anti-German and/or anti-NSB and the perpetrators of these acts came from all areas of the educational system, whether students, teachers, or administrators. By and large, however, van Rossem and his lieutenants were ineffective in combating chaos and disorder within the schools. At the ground level, the odds were simply stacked against them, as the overwhelming majority of both faculty and students were in some way opposed to the German occupation regime and their Dutch collaborators. Their efforts were made more difficult by the lack of support they received from van Dam, who, it should be noted, was looking out more for his own political authority within the educational system than he was acting on behalf of anti-German or anti-NSB students. Not only did van Rossem represent a threat to van Dam's own authority via his position outside the chain of command of the Education Department, van Rossem, as a member of the NSB, represented that

²⁷ BAL R83-Niederlande/25; NA 214.37/414.

²⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/347; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 209.

sector of Dutch society that van Dam otherwise detested. Van Rossem's position, therefore, represented not just a threat to van Dam personally, but also the ascendancy of the NSB within education more generally. By getting rid of van Rossem, van Dam was able to not only make his own position more secure, but also to remove the threat of the NSB in the education realm at the same time.²⁹

The Inspector of Education in General Service

Only a few weeks after van Rossem was sacked by Seyss-Inquart, van Dam appointed a new functionary as extraordinary school inspector: Dr. D. G. Noordijk. The official rules for the new "Inspector of Education in General Service" were approved August 29, and then published in the *Nederlandsche Staatscourant*, the official government bulletin on September 2.³⁰ In large part, the new rules for Noordijk's position as they regarded school inspections were essentially similar to those that van Dam supplied for van Rossem's position the previous January, except for one major difference. The new Inspector of Education in General Service also carried the authority to make suggestions and consultations regarding all hiring and firing of teachers and education officials, and in the case of primary education, the additional authority to mandate that any proposed personnel changes be brought directly to the attention of the Secretary-General. Thus, Noordijk held a weak veto power over appointments and dismissals in primary education, limited only by the direct authority of van Dam himself. In exercising his right to give input on appointments, Noordijk was to pay special attention to "the suitability of the candidate to be employed in education in a manner and in a spirit, as would be expected in connection with the state of occupation of the Netherlands."³¹

²⁹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 262–65.

³⁰ Ibid., 265; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 209.

³¹ P.S.A. Goedbloed, "Regeling voor den Inspecteur van het onderwijs in algemeenen dienst."

The weak veto that Noordijk held was more powerful than it might at first appear, however, because Noordijk was an old acquaintance of van Dam's and had been one of the individuals van Dam consulted before the latter took up the position of Secretary-General of the Education Department.³² He was, according to van Dam, "my closest adviser from the very beginning and a colleague on all points where education had to be adapted to the current political situation." At the same time, Noordijk was the one who was to carry out "the dirty work."³³ Noordijk was trained as a Germanist and, at the time of his appointment, was a lecturer of German in The Hague. He was also a member of the NSB, although more closely aligned with the SS faction thereof, and the *Opvoedersgilde*. He was generally a bit more radical than van Dam in his ideological outlook, but because he was a member of the SS faction, as opposed to the Mussert faction, he suited van Dam's purposes as Educational Inspector.³⁴ Administratively, he was positioned directly under the Secretary-General, although he largely worked with the existing School Inspectorate. This meant, from van Dam's perspective, that there was a bit of a check on how much trouble the new Inspector of Education in General Service could stir up, lest he turn out to be as disruptive as van Rossem and his subordinates had been.

In reality, Noordijk's tenure as Educational Inspector was a continuation of the work van Rossem had begun.³⁵ The cases that reached Noordijk's desk were essentially similar to those that van Rossem had investigated, indeed he even took over cases that had originally been sent to van Rossem.³⁶ For all intents and purposes, Noordijk's office functioned as a sort of "universal

³² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/339; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 209.

³³ Quoted in Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 211.

³⁴ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/352-353; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 265.

³⁵ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 265. Noordijk's office also handled various other tasks for van Dam and the Education Department that don't deal directly with school inspections, including student transfers from one school to another, the structure of exam committees, the disbursement of scholarships for studying German language, the German language instruction book, and other political issues of a sensitive nature. See Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 211-12.

³⁶ NA 2.14.37/516.

complaint bureau.”³⁷ For example, at the Amsterdam Lyceum in summer 1942, one of the teachers was accused by an informant of having passed the collection plate in order to help a dismissed Jewish colleague. Although this was a banned offense, the teacher, according to the complaint that reached Dr. Albrecht, who worked in Schwarz’s Main Department Education and Churches, replied, “I don’t care. I do what I want.” As a result, Noordijk was sent to investigate. Upon reaching the lyceum, both the individual teacher and the school director were interviewed, steadfastly denying having passed the hat for their departed colleague. Although Albrecht had wanted to dismiss both the teacher and the school director, Noordijk recommended that too little evidence existed for their dismissal and both remained in place for the foreseeable future.³⁸ The same school also had problems with NSB-oriented students being bullied by their classmates as well as one teacher who was pro-German being disrespected by her students. It got so bad for the NSB students that several students actually ended up switching schools to other institutions, while the teacher side-stepped the administration and took her complaints directly to Noordijk. The disruptions continued, however, until late 1941 when the school director finally started punishing the perpetrators with detention and ultimately suspensions.³⁹

In another instance at the Ambachtsschool in Amsterdam, one disruptive student was assaulted by his teacher—the teacher hit the student with a ruler—and then removed to the hallway. When the student kept being disruptive from the hallway, the teacher sent him to the director’s office. The student’s father, who was an NSB member, complained to Noordijk, suggesting that the cause of the problem was political and that the teacher was taking out frustrations with the regime on his son. Although both the teacher and the school administration

³⁷ Quoted in Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 211.

³⁸ NIOD 114b/144.

³⁹ NIOD 114b/61.

insisted that the student himself was the cause of the problem, with his constant disruptions, Noordijk appears to have sided with the NSBer, recommending that the teacher be suspended for a week, which was carried out in early 1942. The teacher's assault on the student does not appear to have factored heavily into the punishment, rather the belief that his motives were political was the cause.⁴⁰

Sometimes, however, Noordijk's investigations revealed what he considered to be good work on the part of school officials. When one student at a private school in Cuyk was being harassed by other boys in his class, naturally because of politics, the school director sent circulars home with all students warning parents that future transgressions, that is bullying, would incur stiff penalties. When the harassment of the one child continued, the perpetrators were suspended. All of this had already occurred by the time Noordijk got around to investigating, and so he cut his investigation short, noting that the school director was doing good work to maintain peace and order.⁴¹

These examples are typical of the types of inquiries that Noordijk's office handled for most of the time he was on the job as Inspector of Education in General Service. He would receive a tip or complaint, sometimes directly from the complainant him or herself, but also through other channels such as the police, van Genechten's office, or through local NSB circles. He would then contact the school to inquire, which usually led to a personal investigation when possible or his reliance on the existing school inspectorate when he was not personally able to intervene. He would then pass along his recommendations up the chain for further action by van Dam or one of their German supervisors. In both style and function, he was the successor of van

⁴⁰ NIOD 114b/143.

⁴¹ NIOD 114b/88.

Rossem. But this all changed in 1942, as his own personal power to affect changes in personnel matters was expanded greatly.

In January 1942, van Dam delegated to Noordijk the direct authority to fire teachers and other school inspectors. This had not been one of the original powers granted to Noordijk by van Dam when the former was appointed and empowered in summer 1941. Rather, this new authority was the result of an order by Seyss-Inquart from January 9, 1942, promulgated along with the Second Appointment Decree, which gave the Secretary-General the authority to fire teachers, when previously such personnel changes had required either the intervention of one of the German administrators, such as Schwarz, Albrecht, or Wimmer, or the compliance of the local authorities, whether schools boards, school directors, or mayors.⁴² Van Dam's new power was further expanded in June of that year to include the ability to suspend teachers, administrators, and school inspectors.⁴³ Van Dam quickly delegated his new authority to Noordijk, and in concert with the latter van Dam outlined the use of that authority in set of guidelines that was published on September 2.⁴⁴

The "Guidelines to Follow for the Implementation of Order Number 5/1942" outlined the duty of the educator to both uphold and pass along to the student a sense of solidarity with Germany, its government, and its people. Key to this duty is an understanding of the *volksgemeenschap*. Where the previous era of individualism, which was based on the ideas of the French Revolution, saw the volk as individuals merely living *near* each other, the present saw individuals living *with* each other, or as van Dam writes, it is the difference between an

⁴² Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 5/1942.

⁴³ Ibid., 68/1942. This appears to have been a mere formality, as Noordijk, who exercised the power to fire teachers on van Dam's behalf, was already suspending teachers in early 1942 on his own authority, citing Order 5/1942 of the *Reichskommissar*, which only mentioned firing teachers.

⁴⁴ "Benoemingen, Ontslag, Enz.," *Nederlandsche Staatscourant*, January 23, 1942, Nr. 16/1942 edition.; NIOD 114a/142, 216e/12.

orchard and a forest, where the former is simply “mechanical” and the latter is “organic.”

Arguing that the Dutch owe loyalty to the German government and its people, not just because it was expected by the occupation authority, but also because of “common descent and neighborliness,” this loyalty and approval by the Dutch of the new ideas of *volksgemeenschap* “must now be attested to in education, especially in history education.” And because the idea of a *volksgemeenschap* is “not only just an acclamation, but also a reality,” benefits for *volksopvoeding* can also be attained in the Netherlands through collaboration with Germany.⁴⁵ This required a defense of the youth from Bolshevism, which threatened their western ideals and Christian character, and support of the struggle, led by Germany, for the future of European civilization.⁴⁶

The guidelines were set up in two parts, one for school inspectors and one for teachers. With the exception of a single guideline directed specifically at school inspectors, which stated that they should never deny those teachers who support the new ideals of the *volksgemeenschap* appointments and promotions in favor of those teachers who do not support the new Europe, the entire list is the same. Included among the combined set of guidelines were instructions that implored teachers and school inspectors to “face the music of the meaning of this time and that the exercise of their activities should bear witness [to that] in the formation of the youth.” Further, that they “*at least* should show understanding for National Socialism and appreciation for the work of its carriers in the Netherlands”⁴⁷ as well as showing “appreciation for the struggle to orient the people toward the idea of community [*gemeenschapsidee*], for the position and work of the Greater German Reich which leads the way in the new Europe, and for the place of

⁴⁵ Social/educational development of the volk.

⁴⁶ NIOD 114a/142, 216e/12.

⁴⁷ Emphasis in original.

the Dutch people therein, *including its Germanic character*.”⁴⁸ Finally, the guidelines warn teachers and inspectors that they should work toward a better understanding between the Dutch and German peoples and should avoid any type of resistance and, indeed, work against any resistance activity.⁴⁹

Noordijk exercised his new powers broadly. For example, in April 1942, he dismissed a teacher from his position in The Hague for making anti-German remarks. The teacher was accused of telling a student, whose father had recently been released from a concentration camp, that the father would, in due course, attain a position of honor for the ordeal he had been forced to go through. The teacher was subsequently arrested by the German police. When questioned about his statements, the teacher suggested that he was merely reflecting the popular attitude of the public in The Hague but owing to this being his second infraction—the same teacher had made anti-German statements the previous December—he was fired from his position.⁵⁰

Similar situations were encountered across the country. In Rotterdam at the Zeevaartschool, a teacher was fired for making anti-German statements, according to several students and the school director.⁵¹ While at the secondary school in Winterswijk, it was the gymnastics teacher who was causing problems by fostering an anti-NSB environment in his class. Noordijk suspended the teacher pending an investigation, while the teacher was subsequently arrested and interred at the concentration camp at Amersfoort. Shortly after his arrest, he was fired permanently.⁵² In Tilburg, at the St. Odulphus school, the school director was taken to account, not for having engaged in anti-German activity, but merely for not having

⁴⁸ Emphasis added.

⁴⁹ NIOD 114a/142, 216e/12.

⁵⁰ NIOD 114b/143.

⁵¹ NIOD 114b/145.

⁵² NIOD 114b/145

reprimanded students who hooted and hollered during a public film viewing. During a school festival, a film was shown to some five hundred attendees, many students among them. When a character named Adolf died in the film, the students erupted in laughter, but the school director did not respond to this provocation. He was suspended pending an investigation, after which both the local school inspector and Noordijk both concluded that suspension was sufficient, given that the director was an otherwise upstanding citizen. Their German superiors, however, felt that suspension did not go far enough, and ordered his removal, both from his position as school director and from his position as lecturer at the local university. It was only through the direct intervention of Wimmer, who personally reviewed the case, that the dismissal was reversed, with the Commissioner-General noting that his actions were “exceptional” to the standard procedure.⁵³

Sometimes, the anti-German activity was not limited to a single teacher or administrator but was more widespread. Such instances presented a problem for Noordijk as he could not very well close the entire school for anti-German activity.⁵⁴ This was the case at a primary school in Neerbosch, near Nijmegen. According to a local leader of the *Opvoedersgilde*, the entire school establishment, from the director and teachers, down to the students, exhibited strongly anti-German sentiments. Among the various accusations included the school director passing out *Nederlandsche Unie* pamphlets, passing along Radio Orange reports to students, singing anti-German and anti-NSB songs, and hanging anti-NSB placards in the school hallways, as well as a general anti-German and anti-NSB teaching curriculum. The school director steadfastly denied these accusations, but when he learned of an impending investigation by the local school

⁵³ NIOD 114b/143.

⁵⁴ Technically, he *could* have the school shut down, if he had wanted to call upon Van Dam or the Germans to intervene but closing the entire school would have created other problems, not the least of which would have been the logistics of finding substitute schools for the children.

inspector instigated by Noordijk, the illegal placards were apparently taken down, again according to the *Opvoedersgilde* leader. When the local inspector completed his report, it was determined that all of the accusations were basically correct. The school director was eventually fired in June 1943, while the rest of the administration and faculty was given a stern talking to.⁵⁵

Although Noordijk was primarily concerned with anti-German sentiments, sometimes it was a teacher's pro-German sentiments that brought on Noordijk's investigation. At the St. Antonius School in Voorhout, a teacher incensed the local clergy by proclaiming that "Christ was not a Jew. He was the first and best National Socialist." Complaints about the incident made Noordijk's desk, who actually agreed that the teacher's statements were uncouth. After promises by the teacher to refrain from such pronouncements in the future, Noordijk recommended only a warning in April 1942. The school board, however, felt this was insufficient, and so fired the teacher anyway. The situation was brought to the attention of Dr. Zunft, a German official in Wimmer's office, who ordered Noordijk to have the teacher reinstated, while others were to take the teacher's place on the unemployment rolls for anti-German statements that had been uncovered during the course of the original investigation.⁵⁶ Clearly, one needed to tread carefully when involving the authorities.

In another case of being reckless when the authorities were near, a teacher in Groningen was at first cleared of wrongdoing through Noordijk's investigation. The teacher, who taught at one of the local secondary schools, was accused of having said in front of his class, upon the death of an NSB-oriented student, "It is good that the swine is dead, it was getting too hot for him." Naturally, the teacher denied it completely, but when the local school inspector conducted an investigation at Noordijk's request, it turned out that only a single student, also an NSB

⁵⁵ NIOD 114b/147.

⁵⁶ NIOD 114b/144.

sympathizer, was making the accusation, while the rest of the students in the class said it had never happened. The teacher was cleared of wrongdoing, but then, unwisely, noted to another teacher that they need to be careful around the NSB sympathizer, because she was a tattler. That statement, which was obviously made to the wrong colleague, got him suspended and fined.⁵⁷

It was not just the actions of teachers inside of the classroom that garnered Noordijk's attention. A teacher's actions outside of school could also become a cause for dismissal. One teacher in Amsterdam at the Reseda School was picked up on the street for wearing a Jewish star in solidarity with the persecuted Jewish population in spring 1942. She was subsequently sentenced to six months' incarceration. Upon receiving word of the incident from Albrecht, Noordijk immediately suspended the teacher for the duration of her imprisonment, but later fired her outright and took away her pension, owing to the severity of her "crimes," despite protest from the local civil administration of Amsterdam and the teacher's status as a breadwinner for her younger sister and elderly parents.⁵⁸ Similarly, a teacher was arrested in De Bilt for having passed along information about a potential hiding location to a local Jewish woman. When the teacher's "sabotage" was discovered, she was arrested on June 22, 1943, with her suspension and ultimately her dismissal following later in the summer.⁵⁹

In a similar situation in Alphen on the Rhine in September 1943, a teacher was caught listening to English radio broadcasts. This came out because he mentioned to his students, without naming the source or discussing it in a political way, that Allied armies had landed in Italy the previous day. As it would turn out, one of his students had also heard the same report,

⁵⁷ NIOD 114b/147.

⁵⁸ NIOD 114b/144.

⁵⁹ NIOD 114b/147.

knew the source of information was English radio, and spread this information clandestinely around the school. When word reached Noordijk, he began an investigation, and the teacher admitted to having listened to English broadcasts on an illegal radio. But Noordijk and the teacher were old acquaintances, having been university students together at the University of Amsterdam. Noordijk knew from his previous experience that this particular teacher, who taught German language and mathematics, was generally pro-German in his sensibilities. The teacher claimed only that he was listening to English broadcasts to better his English language abilities, which Noordijk believed. Van Dam, who also knew the man, also tried to intervene on the teacher's behalf. Regardless, Noordijk determine that, at the least, he must suspend the teacher, which he did. Because the teacher was listening to an illegal radio, however, the *Sicherheitsdienst* began a parallel investigation, arrested the teacher, and sentenced him to one years' imprisonment at the concentration camp Vught. Despite appeals from Noordijk, Van Dam, and the local Protestant preacher, the latter of whom especially bemoaned the case because the teacher was one of the few non-NSBers in the local area who was well known for his pro-German sensibilities, the sentence was upheld in December 1943. As a result, a little more than halfway through his imprisonment at Vught, he was dismissed on Wimmer's orders.⁶⁰

In Apeldoorn, in November 1943, five teachers were suspended not because of what they did, but because of what they did not do outside the classroom. In this case, the mayor of Apeldoorn called for a teachers' conference where lectures from local and regional figures would be held, including the head of the NSB's *Opvoedersgilde* and an official from the Department of Arts and Public Enlightenment. When another scheduled speaker, the municipal "Councilor for

⁶⁰ NIOD 114b/147.

Education” in Apeldoorn, noted the five teachers’ absence to Noordijk, they were suspended for one month and their pay was docked.⁶¹

Not uncommonly, a teacher, seeing the writing on the wall, attempted to head off discipline. In one case in Bellingwolde, a teacher at the local school refused to interact with the school director, who was an NSBer. She learned of the director’s complaints against her, which reached Noordijk via the *Opvoedersgilde*, and pro-actively announced that she would retire at the end of the school year. Given that it was already July, and only six weeks of classes remained before the summer break, she apparently hoped this would buy her a reprieve. She was wrong. Noordijk simply suspended her for the remainder of the term, with her outright dismissal set to come into effect at the beginning of the new school year on October 1.⁶²

Toward the end of the occupation, this type of strategy took a different turn. Instead of announcing one’s retirement, teachers just absconded entirely, as was the case of one school head who objected to the Red Cross handing out oranges to school students. Noordijk was unable to determine why, exactly, such a thing would be objectionable, but the local NSB chapter leader was insistent that the school director be punished for his obstinance in the matter.⁶³ The only thing Noordijk could do was dismiss the director, as he was unavailable to participate in any investigation because he went underground shortly after the incident. His extended absence—several months by the time of his dismissal—was cited by Noordijk as the cause.⁶⁴

In other cases, teachers absconded for reasons that were not entirely clear, and that was the cause of an investigation. In Doetinchem, one teacher went underground on June 6, 1944,

⁶¹ NIOD 114b/149.

⁶² NIOD 114b/144.

⁶³ Presumably there was more to the case than a mere refusal to pass out donated oranges, but the file lacks such details.

⁶⁴ NIOD 114b/149.

feigning illness, which was one of the more common excuses teachers gave before going underground, likely because it would allow them to continue to receive their pay and benefits for the immediate future. When the teacher never returned to school, an investigation was launched by Noordijk, and it was determined that the teacher had never been ill in the first place, according to his own wife, who may, or may not, have been in on the secret. According to the wife, the teacher had simply disappeared on June 6 and had not been seen or heard from since. Because he was a reserve officer in the Dutch army, Noordijk determined that the likely cause of the teacher's disappearance was his desire to join the invading Allied armies in Northern France. Noordijk turned the case over to the SD in late June, and formally dismissed him on July 25.⁶⁵

Over the course of his tenure, Noordijk would intervene in thousands of cases and suspend or dismiss dozens of teachers and administrators for their anti-German actions. But this was, in the grand scheme of things, less substantial than his other primary intervention into the school establishment—the dismissal of school inspectors. Beginning with his newly designated authority, Noordijk began to implement a “cleansing” of the School Inspectorate, replacing anti-German inspectors with NSBers. The impetus for these changes came directly from Seyss-Inquart himself in November 1941, who ordered a survey of the School Inspectorate to be conducted by the *Reichsbeauftragten* of the Reichskommissar in the various provinces. The survey results were less than stellar, with more than half of the inspectors judged as poor, and a third as merely “provisionally acceptable.”⁶⁶ Although the surveys included inspectors of all levels, both the Germans and their Dutch collaborators were overwhelmingly more concerned

⁶⁵ NIOD 114b/149.

⁶⁶ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 116–22.

with primary education.⁶⁷ It was there that the minds of the future would be won, but also there that resistance was least likely.

Noordijk got to work quickly. He began with the Primary School Inspector in Deventer, who had previously ordered that van Rossem's staff be barred entry to schools under his supervision unless he personally accompanied the agents of the Authorized Representative. Noordijk suspended him indefinitely in January 1942 because of his anti-NSB activities, very shortly after he gained that authority.⁶⁸ His suspension was turned into a dismissal the following summer. Noordijk's attempts to "cleanse" the School Inspectorate picked up steam in summer 1942. It was at that time that W. Terpstra, who also happened to be Mussert's brother-in-law, was promoted by van Dam to head the Sub-Department Primary Education. Terpstra, who had previously been a school inspector himself, was, unlike Noordijk, an ardent Mussert supporter. To be certain, Terpstra was not the first NSBer with a prominent position in the department - that honor belongs to G. Vlekke, who in November 1940 was appointed to Chief Inspector of the First Inspectorate, which encompassed the provinces of Limburg, Gelderland, and North Brabant in the southeastern part of the country—but it was Terpstra's appointment that marked a rather rapid increase in the number of NSB functionaries, especially within the School Inspectorate.⁶⁹ Before the war started, there were only three NSB members working for the Department of Education, Sciences, and Arts out of a total of one hundred, seventy-eight. But by 1943, that number had increased to thirty-four, out of a total of two hundred, sixty-seven officials in the Department of Education, Science, and Cultural Administration. The NSB's strength within the department was growing much faster than the department itself.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 266.

⁶⁸ NIOD 114b/143.

⁶⁹ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 264–65; Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 22–23.

⁷⁰ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 219–22.

Within the School Inspectorate, Terpstra and Noordijk formed a partnership of sorts aimed at ridding the Inspectorate of suspect individuals. After the first dismissal of the school inspector in Deventer, it was the turn of the inspector in Utrecht, who was dismissed on June 8, 1942, for refusing to sit on a committee for a home crafts exhibition. On June 6, 1942, an annual meeting for primary school inspectors was held in Utrecht, during which Terpstra interviewed the inspector from Breukelen, whose unsatisfactory answers provided an excuse to dismiss him. Seven other school inspectors were summoned to The Hague for interviews and were subsequently dismissed as a result of unsatisfactory answers they provided Terpstra regarding all nature of questions. These included the inspectors in Nijmegen, Tilburg, Breda, Amersfoort, Zwolle, Zaandam, and Dordrecht, all of whom were dismissed over the next two months.⁷¹ An eleventh inspector was fired by Noordijk later that year.⁷² Given that there were only forty-nine primary school inspectorates across the country, grouped under three Chief Inspectorates, the eleven who were fired by Terpstra and Noordijk in the summer and fall 1942 would amount to a significant change in the personnel of the primary school inspection regime.⁷³

All of these fired inspectors were replaced by NSBers, but they too were problematic. Van Dam, who like Schwarz was never a fan of the National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands, found most of these new school inspectors to be sub-par, and so prevented, as best he could, the appointment of further NSB members to the School Inspectorate. For the remainder of the occupation, only five additional NSBers were appointed as school inspectors.⁷⁴ When Mussert attempted to have a further five NSB candidates appointed to positions as school

⁷¹ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 126–27.

⁷² Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 22–23.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 266; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 219–22.

inspectors in 1944, van Dam rejected all five. Mussert appealed to Schwarz, but to no avail.⁷⁵ Although the NSB managed to get a total of sixteen members appointed as school inspectors over the course of the occupation, mostly as a result of the actions of Noordijk and Terpstra in the latter half of 1942, NSB members never formed a majority of primary school inspectors. They did, however, make up almost a third of the total inspectors, which accounts for a much more significant impact by Noordijk (and Terpstra) upon the inspection corps than upon school faculty. So, while van Rossem had little impact on the educational realm, beyond creating chaos in the ranks, Noordijk was comparatively much more effective.

Over his time as Inspector of Education in General Service, Noordijk handled thousands of inquiries, with an average of roughly eighty replies going out per day and even more inquiries coming in in the first half of 1942 alone. He personally dismissed or suspended a total of fifty one teachers, although his own willingness to accept the recommendations and proffered punishments of local administrators and school inspectors, most of whom had no interest in helping Noordijk in his work, was in complete contrast to van Rossem and likely helped keep this number relatively low.⁷⁶ Even when one considers his additional tasks of handling students transfers, the composition of exam committees, and work on the German language text book for primary schools, this is still an incredible amount of work that Noordijk and his office managed to complete.

Resistance at the Local Level

Ostensibly, both van Rossem and Noordijk were to be occupied with keeping peace and order in the schools. In reality, their job was more akin to enforcing the will of the occupation regime upon students, teachers, and administrators at the local level. Although Noordijk was

⁷⁵ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 244.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

more effective than van Rossem in making personnel changes both within the schools and in the inspectorate, neither was very successful in rooting out passive or active resistance on the part of teachers, administrators, and students. There was simply too much work to be done and too few willing collaborators, whether in their individual offices or within the School Inspectorate more generally, to effectively police a teaching population that reached into the tens of thousands. At best, their efforts could be described as a game of whack-a-mole, in which the inspectors would reply to complaints, “solve” an issue, and return to find four more complaints in queue. To the extent that one can describe anti-German and anti-NSB resistance by administrators, teachers, and students as “chaos and disorder,” it reigned supreme for the duration of the occupation at all levels of schooling in the Netherlands.

Resistance by students, administrators, and teachers took various forms. It included the wearing of political insignias such as orange ribbons and badges; the singing of anti-German, anti-NSB, or patriotic songs by students, often with the either tacit or explicit support of their teachers; anti-German and anti-NSB pronouncements and lessons by teachers, including the use of banned books; the hanging of anti-regime placards; and harassment of pro-German and pro-NSB students and teachers by their colleagues. The records of both of the extraordinary school inspectors and the complaints that reached the central office of the Education Department in The Hague (and later Apeldoorn) are riddled with such actions.⁷⁷

For the most part, it is difficult to determine the deeper political motives of many of these actors. The overwhelming majority of teachers, students, and administrators who were investigated either denied outright the accusations leveled against them or recast them as complete misunderstandings. Little good could come to a teacher in admitting anti-German or

⁷⁷ NA 2.14.37/408-555.

anti-NSB activity. If they were lucky, and most were, they would be given a warning, but if they were unlucky, they would be suspended, expelled, fined, fired, arrested, and/or imprisoned in a concentration camp. The complainants, on the other hand, usually assumed that the motivations of those against whom they informed to the authorities were entirely political. But it is impossible to determine whether the political manifestations of particular incidents were causes or symptoms of a deeper misunderstanding.⁷⁸ Regardless, the mere fact that politics was used by some individuals to lash out at their colleagues and charges, even if their motives were not political in origin, suggests that using the political dimension as an avenue of attack was seen as especially effective. In other words, if a student or teacher used a colleague's association with the NSB as a weapon with which to attack that colleague, regardless of whether the assailant him or herself even cared about the victim's politics, it suggests a wider understanding within the schools that NSB or German-related activity or affiliations were worthy of scorn, and so itself serves as evidence of this larger phenomenon of anti-NSB and anti-German sentiment.

The Singing of Patriotic and Anti-German Songs

Perhaps most benign of all forms of passive resistance was the singing of patriotic songs. The most obvious such song is *Het Wilhelmus*, the Dutch national anthem. Van Dam recognized this early in his tenure as Secretary-General, writing to Dr. Albrecht in Wimmer's office asking for advice. He suggested that the song be viewed in two lights. In its cultural and historical context, van Dam did not believe that it could be banned completely, and so suggested that, so long as it was sung as part of a lesson in a music class or read as a poem in a literature class, its use in the schools should remain. Alternatively, if it is sung as political demonstration, and that included any performance of the song outside of the classroom, it should be banned as all anti-

⁷⁸ For example, as Valkenburg found at the Girls' Lyceum in Rotterdam, general antipathy between two students could be initially understood as political even when it really was not. See NIOD 114a/4.

German political demonstrations were. The German leadership agreed with his suggestion.⁷⁹

This understanding, however, would cause problems because it was often impossible to determine whether its singing inside of the school was meant to be an anti-German demonstration.

Many teachers and administrators took full advantage of this ambiguity.⁸⁰ For example, at the Primary School B on the Weesperstraat in The Hague, students often sang *Het Wilhelmus* as they returned from school field-trips. Owing to the letter of the regulations, this should have been seen as a violation outright, as it was not in the classroom. The teachers present did little to stop the students, and both students and teachers claimed that the singing was on the initiative of the students themselves. As so often was the case, the local school inspector's investigation simply sided with the teachers, noting that "according to all witnesses, one cannot call it provocative."⁸¹ That is all witnesses save the NSB-oriented students with whom the complaint originated.

Similarly, at the public primary school in Oud-Zuilen, the children had taken to singing *Het Wilhelmus* three times each day. Van Genechten, whose office sent the tip to van Dam noted that, as far as he knew, the children were not being forced to sing the song, "but whenever it happens three times in a day, it takes on the character of [an anti-German] demonstration." When the local inspector went to investigate, it turned out that the song was sung one per week, and then during music lessons. Both the inspector and van Dam declined to take any measures against the school, although it should be noted that this particular inspector, based in Breukelen,

⁷⁹ NA 2.14.37/421.

⁸⁰ See e.g.: NA 214.37/452; NIOD 114a/3, 4; 216e/12.

⁸¹ NA 2.14.37/448.

was one of the several who would be dismissed by Noordijk in the coming months as unsatisfactorily pro-German.⁸²

In one instance, the problematic nature of the singing was clear. At the Marnix Gymnasium in Rotterdam in early 1941, one teacher allowed students to pick their own songs for musical instruction and the class overwhelmingly voted for *Het Wilhelmus*. When the students changed the text to indicate William being of *Dutch* blood, instead of *German* blood, that was indeed not allowed.⁸³ When their spontaneous changes to the text went unpunished, the students pushed it further, choosing poems and songs that highlighted freedom of thought and which called on patriots to either defend their freedoms or die trying. Again, it was a change in the text that pushed the students' action into the realm of subversion. In one poem, in which the original text noted that "there is freedom of thought in Holland," the students changed to "there *was* freedom of thought in Holland." Although there were several teachers who were suspect, according to Valkenburg, who investigated the case, there was little that the inspectors could do about it. The main teacher involved steadfastly denied the accusations, or placed the blame upon the students, who had, after all, voted themselves on which songs and poems to recite. The single student who admitted to substituting in the subversive lyrics even covered for his teacher, telling the local school inspector that the teacher reprimanded him immediately. Because the local school inspector disagreed with Valkenburg's conclusions, the matter was mostly dropped.

⁸² NA 2.14.37/490.

⁸³ The lyrics of *Het Wilhelmus* are problematic when it comes to the translation of the first two lines. The original lyrics were: *Wilhelmus van Nassouwe/Ben ick van Duytschen bloet*. In modern Dutch, the first two lines are: *Wilhelmus van Nassouwe/ben ik, van Duitsen bloed*. The key word is *Duytsch/Duits*. At the time of the original composition, *Duytsch* would have meant *of the people*, specifically those people who spoke a Lower West Germanic dialect (as opposed to French or Spanish). It was only later that the term *Duytsch* was restricted in its meaning to *German*. Nonetheless, the modern Dutch lyrics, when translated word for word into English, read: William of Nassau/am I, of German blood. The official English language translation, however, reads: William of Nassau, scion/Of a Dutch and ancient line. The official German translation reads: *Wilhelmus von Nassawe/bin ich von teutschem Blut*.

Valkenburg was able only to urge that the teacher be denied any advancement—the teacher was in line to become the next school director—but van Rossem’s office was unable to take any further steps.⁸⁴

In another, similar instance, at the Queen Wilhelmina School in Haarlem, students and teachers sang the song in combination with a prayer for Queen Wilhelmina and the oppressed of the country, while a drawing of a German eagle and swastika was torn apart by a teacher in a “demonstrative way,” according to the *Weerafdeling* member who filed the tip with van Rossem’s office. Valkenburg, who replied to the tip, noted that the singing of the *Wilhelmus* was, in and of itself, not forbidden, while the rest of the tip was simply too vague to act upon.⁸⁵ In another instance, when the son of an NSB student refused to sing along to the *Wilhelmus* with the rest of his class and was sent to the school director’s office as punishment, Valkenburg replied to the inquiry, which had gone up the chain from the child’s father through the local NSB apparatus, that singing of the *Wilhelmus* was not banned unless it was meant as an anti-German demonstration, which did not appear to be the case in the father’s complaint.⁸⁶ But exhibiting the confused nature of the situation, one tip that made it directly to van Dam regarding two primary schools in The Hague stated that during a combined field trip to a museum, students began singing anti-German songs. When the tipster went to the school director to complain, the school director noted that the *Wilhelmus*, the song in question, had not yet been banned so not only would the director not punish the students, he would have them sing it the following day. Van Dam only promised to look into the matter.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ NIOD 114a/3.

⁸⁵ NIOD 114a/4.

⁸⁶ NIOD 114a/3.

⁸⁷ NIOD 114a/3.

Other times, the songs in question were much more clearly anti-German, and these were generally banned outright. But this did not stop students from singing them, with or without their teachers' permission. For example, at the Protestant primary school in Heemstede, in addition to *Het Wilhelmus*, students were fond of the following song:

Holderdebolder
Hitler hangt op zolder
Een touw op zijn nek
Een prop in zijn bek
Daar hangt die halve gek.

Swinging back and forth
Hitler hangs in the attic
A rope on his neck
A gag in his mouth
There hangs the weirdo.

Zie ginds komt de stoomboot
Uit Engeland weer aan
Zij brengt ons Wilhelmintje
Ik zie haar al staan
Hoe waaien de wimpels
Van 't rood, wit, en blauw
Laat Hitler maar strikken
Wij bleven getrouw.⁸⁸

See yonder comes the steamboat
From England again
It brings us sweet Wilhelmina
I already see her standing there
How the pennants blow
Of red, white, and blue
Let Hitler [remain] tied up
We remain faithful.

When the local inspector came to investigate the matter, the teacher in charge of supervising the children on the playground denied being able to determine what was being sung, and as soon as she did figure it out, she banned the students from singing it, or so she claimed; the inspector suspected that she was fully aware of the students' actions from the beginning. The inspector held an assembly for the teachers of the school and told them to take better charge of their pupils, but that was the end of the whole ordeal. As for the singing of *Het Wilhelmus*, all of the teachers denied it, including the music teacher, for whom assigning the song would not have been against the rules.⁸⁹

For the most part, anti-German songs appear to have been relatively common in schools across the country as many of the same songs show up in different locations, sometimes with their verses altered slightly. For example, the second verse of the above-mentioned song that

⁸⁸ NIOD 216e/12; NA 2.14.37/452.

⁸⁹ NA 2.14.37/452.

was sung in Heemstede, which lies just south of Haarlem in the far west of the country, also appears with slight alterations in complaints regarding the Protestant primary school in Dreumel, clear across the country near Nijmegen:

Zie ginds komt de stoomboot uit Engeland weer aan
Ik zie Wilhelmina aan 't stuurboord al staan
Hoe waaien de wimpels van rood, wit, en blauw
Laat Hitler maar komen, Ik blijf Wilhelmina getrouw⁹⁰

See yonder comes the steamboat from England again
I see Wilhelmina standing on the Starboard [side]
How the pennants of red, white, and blue blow
Let Hitler come, I remain faithful to Wilhelmina

Similarly, an anti-NSB song from the primary schools in The Hague shows up again in slightly altered fashion at the Juliana School in Amsterdam. In The Hague, the verses, as recorded by a complainant, are rendered as:

Op de hoek van de straat staat een pharizeeër
'T is geen man, 't is geen vrouw, maar een NSBer
Met een krant in zijn hand staat - is daar te vinden
Hij verkoopt zijn Vaderland voor 6 losse eenden⁹¹

On the corner of the street stands a Pharisee
It is no man, it is no woman, but an NSBer
With a paper in his hand - is there to find
He sells out his Fatherland for 6 loose ducks

While in Amsterdam, the same song is rendered:

Op de hoek van de straat staat een pharizeeër
'T is geen man, 't is geen vrouw, maar een NSBer
Op de hoek van de straat, staat hij daar te venten
En verraad zijn Vaderland voor 'n paar roode eenden⁹²

On the corner of the street stands a Pharisee
It is no man, it is no woman, but an NSBer
On the corner of the street, he stands to peddle
And betray his Fatherland for a pair of red ducks.

Another song initially reported in The Hague found its way across the country to Emmen, in the province of Drenthe, on the German border, again in slightly altered form. According to van Genechten's sources, in The Hague, the song had two very similar versions:

1)

Holland is gevallen door verraad
Engeland kwam natuurlijk te laat
Vliegtuigen rondom
parachutisten op de grond
Holland viel door verraad

Holland has fallen through treason
England, naturally, came too late
Airplanes all around,
paratroopers on the ground
Holland fell by treason

2)

⁹⁰ NA 2.14.37/408, 410.

⁹¹ NA 214.37/448.

⁹² NA 2.14.37/459.

Holland is gevallen door verraad
 Engeland kwam precisie een dag te laat
 Het is gevallen voor een boef
 Die op alle landen loert
 Holland viel door verraad⁹³

Holland has fallen through treason
 England came exactly one day too late
 It has fallen to a scoundrel
 Who lurks in every land.
 Holland fell by treason

In Emmen, however, the song went, according to Dijkema:

Holland is gevallen door verraad
 Engeland kwam natuurlijk weer te laat
 Hitler is een groote ploert
 Die op kleine landjes loert
 Enz.⁹⁴

Holland has fallen through treason
 England again came naturally too late
 Hitler is a huge bastard
 Who ambushes small countries
 Etc.

The variations in these anti-German and anti-NSB songs, as well as their wide distribution, from north to south, and east to west, suggests that they were being passed by word of mouth, and although the records do not indicate the singing of these particular songs at other schools between the various locales, it stands highly likely that they were, in fact, sung at many more locations than just Dreumel, The Hague, Amsterdam, Emmen, and Heemstede. This is not to say, however, that *other* songs were not sung at schools across the country. In reports to Schwarz by van Genechten, several other songs or rhymes were relayed to the German administrators in The Hague, including:

1)

Heb je het gehoord
 Peter Ton is vermoord

Have you heard
 Peter Ton was murdered⁹⁵

2)

Wie is Jansen, Wie is toch deze Jansen
 Jansen is de leider van de Swingclub NSB⁹⁶

Who is Jansen, who is this Jansen
 Jansen is the leader of the swing club NSB

By and large, most of these songs were harmless little tunes sung by school children. The records do not indicate any instances in which teachers sang along with the children, save for *Het Wilhelmus*, although teachers' tacit approval was likely common enough, regardless of their

⁹³ NA 2.14.37/410.

⁹⁴ NA 2.14.37/472.

⁹⁵ Peter Ton was a Dutch Nazi activist who was killed during a National Youth Storm rally turned riot in The Hague on September 7, 1940.

⁹⁶ NA 2.14.37/410.

denials. The songs might be directed at a particular classmate, hoping to taunt those particular children, as was recorded occurring at the Primary Schools on the Weesperstraat in The Hague, but beyond a few hurt feelings, the school yard singing of children was unlikely to actually stir up trouble directly.⁹⁷ In much the same way, school children took up another form of largely, but certainly not entirely, passive political protest: the staging of anti-regime demonstrations.

Political Demonstrations

Anti-regime political demonstrations took many forms. They ranged from relatively minor “silent demonstrations,” in which students might wear particular clothes or political insignias to the distribution of anti-regime propaganda and, in some cases, all-out student strikes aimed at protesting the regime. The government took a range of steps to combat these efforts on the part of students, most of which were entirely reactive. Over the first few years of the occupation, the Education Department, and sometimes the German administrators in the *Reichskommissariat* themselves, sent out repeated decrees banning certain types of political insignias, everything from badges and pins to pictures of the Queen. When these actions did not prove effective enough, the government resorted to threatening local administrators to take further precautions to prevent anti-regime agitation on the part of students. This was, by and large, more effective, but the unequal application of punishments, whether of students or of teachers, kept these further regulations from being completely effective.

Political insignias were first banned generally in September 1940 by the Secretary-General of Internal Affairs for all state officials, save those that were specifically prescribed by the government. This was followed by a circular from the interim Secretary-General of Education Reinink in October 1940 noting that educational establishments were included in this

⁹⁷ NA 2.14.37/448.

ban.⁹⁸ But these did not have the effect of banning the wearing of such insignias by students, which had become problematic for the occupation regime in the meantime. For example, at the advanced primary school in Bilthoven, students had taken to wearing orange ribbons, whereas at the municipal secondary school in Zutphen, the students took to waving orange flags as symbols of their patriotism. In both instances, according to police reports, the teachers and administrators appeared to at least tacitly support the students.⁹⁹ At the same time, in a primary school in The Hague, students hung orange flags in a classroom as a sign of their own political feelings, although these were promptly removed by the teacher.¹⁰⁰

The situation regarding political insignias was so poor in Maastricht that the mayor and city council wrote to Reinink on November 11 asking him to amend the rules to this effect. Van Dam, who was appointed on November 25, complied with their request on December 11, outlawing the wearing of “insignias or other differentiating symbols” by students in or near school buildings, and ordering teachers, administrators, and local officials to help police the matter. This second circular, which was followed by a third on December 23, caused much confusion within the ranks. Questions came in regarding German Nazi symbols, such as the swastika, the *Wolfsangel*, and the *Sonnenrad*.¹⁰¹ While others questioned whether it was permissible to wear completely non-political insignias, such as those often worn at parochial schools as part of the uniform. The mayor of the town of Vries noted that several local townships in his area often distributed pins to advancing students meant to spread notions of traffic safety among the locals. Surely that could not be problematic, he believed.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ NIOD 216e/52.

⁹⁹ NA 2.14.37/408.

¹⁰⁰ NA 2.14.37/412. The teacher, who admitted the incident to the local school inspector, actually claimed it was one orange flag and that it was a single, solitary incident.

¹⁰¹ The *Wolfsangel* and *Sonnenrad* (the latter sometimes translated as the *Black Sun*) are both Germanic pagan symbols that were adopted by the Nazis, especially the SS.

¹⁰² NA 2.14.37/415.

Van Dam appears to have immediately recognized the problem and sent the question upstairs to Wimmer's office. Albrecht responded and informed van Dam that all insignias and differentiating symbols, save German symbols, were banned, although he did not directly address the three specific symbols Nazi symbols in van Dam's inquiry. Van Dam then sent out a fourth circular in April 1941 noting that all such symbols and insignia, even as parts of a uniform, were banned, save those specifically authorized by the state, followed by a fifth circular in late May that expanded the ban to any Dutch placards or posters of a political nature, save those issued by the Dutch government at the occupiers' behest (such as those supporting *Winterhulp Nederland*).¹⁰³ Neither Albrecht's reply nor van Dam's circular cleared up the matter regarding what, exactly, constituted a German symbol, as questions still came in asking for clarification. For example, in the second half of 1941, repeated questions came into the Education Department regarding students who wore an orange V symbol (presumably indicating *vrijheid*) on their clothing.¹⁰⁴ Oddly, van Dam, in consultation with Schwarz, decided that the orange V was actually a *German* symbol and thus should be allowed, although V symbols of a different color or form were not to be allowed.¹⁰⁵ The curious case of orange Vs was only one of many.

The goal of the German regulation, of course, was to prevent the display of patriotic or anti-German insignia by students and teachers in the schools, as this was a common tactic students and teachers used to show their loyalties. Such was the case at Woerden in May 1941, when a local NSB member, who lived across the street from the local primary school, hung an NSB placard in his window. In response the students of the school hung *Nederlandsche Unie*

¹⁰³ NA 2.14.37/415, 510.

¹⁰⁴ Freedom.

¹⁰⁵ NA 2.14.37/512. The records do not indicate why, exactly, Schwarz and van Dam decided that the symbol was German and not anti-German.

placards in the windows and doors of the school. Although the political element of the provocation was obvious, the school director did not act until directly confronted by the NSBer, at which point he ordered the *Unie* placards removed and strictly enforced the ban on political demonstrations. The NSBer then withdrew his complaint. Noting that the complaint was withdrawn in his reply to van Genechten's office, van Dam saw no reason to take any further action against either the students or the administrator.¹⁰⁶

Similarly, at the Princess School in Amsterdam, some twenty students, both boys and girls, arrived at school with *Nederlandsche Unie* leaflets and wearing red-white-blue caps. In what was clearly an anti-German demonstration, the director appears to have done little to combat the student agitation. Upon investigation, he admitted that some students had brought oranges (that is, the fruit) into school—which he himself had forbidden previously—but claimed not to remember anything else. Noordijk took this as a sort of *nolo contendere* plea and recommended he be put on probation for six months. This, it would turn out was a light sentence, as van Genechten, through whose office the complaint first emerged, suggested a more proper punishment might be sending him to a concentration camp for his trouble.¹⁰⁷

Although such anti-regime displays continued to occur throughout the occupation, their banned status was not really in question. Alternatively, the status of non-political and non-German, pro-regime insignia and uniforms was completely in flux. Non-political uniforms and insignia had to be handled on a case by case basis. Students at shipping and vocational schools who wore “uniforms as such,” were permitted to continue as they always had.¹⁰⁸ But when the head of a private, Catholic school in Arnhem inquired about symbols worn by a priest, who also

¹⁰⁶ NS 2.14.37/502.

¹⁰⁷ NA 2.14.37/520.

¹⁰⁸ NA 2.14.37/501. That is to say, uniforms in trade schools and shipping schools, where particular styles of clothing were generally seen as a necessary part of the job, were not banned.

occasionally taught religion classes, van Dam informed the school director that such symbols were definitely not allowed. He further informed the director that if the priest did not want to comply, then the school director should inform van Dam directly.¹⁰⁹

Even more problematic than non-political insignia were non-German, pro-regime insignia. Most obviously here, the NSB was not a German organization nor had the wearing of NSB insignia been explicitly allowed by the state and so questions came flooding in regarding NSB and its associated organizations, such as *Winterhulp Nederland*, the Nazi charity organization.¹¹⁰ The answers proffered by van Dam defied a specific logic. *Winterhulp Nederland* insignia were to be allowed.¹¹¹ The *Wolfsangel*, as van Dam understood it, was not specifically German, but rather used by the NSB, and so should be banned. At the same time, iron rings, which NSB youth commonly wore on their fingers, were not banned by van Dam, even though van Genechten, head of the NSB's *Opvoedersgilde* and Solicitor-General in The Hague, saw them as “differentiating symbols” that should be banned.¹¹² The issue of NSB related symbols and uniforms was only finally cleared up on February 2, 1942, when a circular released by van Dam made allowances for the NSB and its related organizations, such as the *Nationale Jeugdstorm* (NJS). Although van Dam released the circular, the order came from Wimmer.¹¹³ This was later followed up with an allowance for officials to wear NSB insignias and uniforms as well.¹¹⁴

Finally, the logic of the occupiers came full circle, when on February 20, 1942, van Dam decreed that Nazi organizations such as the Waffen SS and the NJS were allowed to hang

¹⁰⁹ NA 2.14.37/415.

¹¹⁰ NIOD 216e/23; NA 2.14.37/415, 445.

¹¹¹ NA 2.14.37/445.

¹¹² NA 2.14.37/415, 487.

¹¹³ NA 2.14.3/538; NIOD 216e/14.

¹¹⁴ NA 2.14.37/130; NIOD 216e/14.

propaganda posters in the schools and that requests to hang such posters “are to be granted.” When questions came asking whether this final circular was a direct order to allow such posters, van Dam clarified his position on May 4, noting that while the ultimate decision was left to the individual administrators at each school, it was certainly wise to acquiesce given that Waffen SS posters were meant to further “the fight against Bolshevism and the preservation of our own Christian civilization, which is important to and must be valued by everyone, young and old, who have not consciously chosen the side of communism.” He followed this up with a warning that should such requests by the Waffen SS be denied, it would reflect upon the individual administrator’s personal feelings regarding this larger struggle. A similar argument was made regarding NJS posters, although when it came to the distribution of pamphlets, van Dam suggested it would be better to simply provide the NJS with the home addresses of students so that direct propaganda initiatives would remain outside of the schools.¹¹⁵

The problem, however, with allowing Nazi paraphernalia in the schools, aside from the larger political dimensions, was that it gave anti-German students and administrators yet another reason, or more likely an excuse, to harass their pro-German or pro-NSB classmates. In summer 1941, Albrecht wrote to van Dam noting that he had gotten many complaints of students wearing Hitler Youth uniforms in schools being sent home. Van Dam again released a new circular on August 16, reminding local officials that German symbols and uniforms were completely allowed, this time specifically mentioning the Hitler Youth. In the same circular, van Dam warned of the “undesirable consequences” that would follow should such anti-German disturbances continue. It must not have been universally accepted, however, as yet more circulars were released later that year, this time aimed specifically at confessional schools.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ NIOD 216e/14; NA 2.14.37/539, 542.

¹¹⁶ NA 2.14.37/530.

In a similar case in 's-Hertogenbosch in April 1941, a primary school director began harassing a German student at that school for wearing symbols associated with the Hitler Youth. The director attempted to claim to both the local school inspector and Valkenburg, both of whom investigated the case, that his actions were more of a blanket ban against any and all insignias, which he attempted to institute because he had difficulty telling various allowed and banned insignias apart from one another. Neither the local inspector nor Valkenburg bought this explanation, and both were of the opinion that the director's excuses were just that, excuses meant to cover up his anti-German attitude. Although Valkenburg recommended a stiff penalty, van Dam let the director off with a stern warning.¹¹⁷

A blanket ban on political insignias was a rather common tactic used by school directors during the early days of the occupation, although if one can believe the complaints of NSB parents, it was often selectively enforced. At the Van Speyk primary school in The Hague, the director there banned all political insignia personally when the school year began in September 1940. One particular child, who had been accosted by his classmates as a "traitor" and "scummy NSBer" previously, apparently wore an NJS insignia in some form of personal protest, complaining that other students were wearing *Nederlandsche Unie* badges at the same time, knowledge of which the director denied entirely. The school director personally confiscated the NJS badge and warned the student to not try and argue with him. When the child's father wrote to the school director, the director, believing that the father had written at the instigation of the child, took this to be a direct affront to his own authority and his previous warning not to argue and suspended the student. A personal intervention by the father at the director's home resulted only in the return of the particular NJS badge, but not the reinstatement of the student because

¹¹⁷ NIOD 114a/4; NA 2.14.37/503.

the teacher became even more convinced that the student had instigated his father's intervention. When the police investigated the case, it also turned out that a history and geography teacher at the school had made some inopportune comments about the governance of Eupen-Malmedy (the teacher said it was easiest to assume it was a part of Belgium), and so the authorities focused almost exclusively on that aspect. When van Dam finally wrote to the school director, he did not even mention the insignia case, and so it was left to stand in favor of the school director.¹¹⁸

In a more troubling instance, at a Catholic boys' school in Haarlem, the insignia ban does not appear to have been initially enforced at all, whether for patriotic insignia or for NSB-related insignia. In February 1941, the student body was heavily anti-German, with the anti-German faction wearing coins, which contained portraits of Queen Wilhelmina, as symbols of their patriotic allegiance. One *Nationale Jeugdstorm* member was intercepted on the way to school by a group of boys from the anti-German faction who began accosting the lad. The group attempted to forcefully remove his NJS badge from his rucksack, and when the boy defended himself, the group of assailants attempted to throw him off a bridge into the canal below. Only the intervention of a second group of students, who warned against such an attack as being Pyrrhic in nature, brought the assailants back from the brink. All the while a teacher from the school was standing there, refusing to intervene, ostensibly because the incident occurred off school grounds. In another instance, the same NJS student was threatened by at least two other students with knives. In both cases the police were involved, but the only penalties handed out were for the leader of the group of student assailants, who was expelled, and to the teacher, who was given a stern warning.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ NA 2.14.37/441.

¹¹⁹ NIOD 114a/3.

The case of the Catholic boys' school in Haarlem is representative of a particular type of problem for the German occupier—what to do about the royal family. As is the case in many monarchies, the presence of the royal family was rather ubiquitous in the Netherlands. In the education sphere, this specifically took the form of portraits and school names, while in the larger public arena, street names, currency, and other public symbols of the royal family were widespread. The occupation authority took quick action, when in late 1940, internal discussions took place regarding the naming of new school buildings, including those already under construction, after living members of the royal family.¹²⁰ The ban came out on February 7, 1941.¹²¹ This was furthered when, in October 1941, the use of names of living members of the royal family was extended to all public associations and organizations. The ban on the use of such names for new buildings and institutions was one thing, but the expansion of the rule to encompass all already existing institutions created quite a dilemma, as van Dam himself immediately recognized.¹²²

Despite this, the Germans were determined to go through with the changes. Streets, parks, large hotels, bridges, and other public buildings were to be renamed. To make matters go smoothly, at least in theory, the responsible organizations were to submit a name change list to the Representative of the Reichskommissar for their province, after whose approval was given, the name changes could go through. Excepted from this rule were only private residences and smaller, less important hotels, although Wimmer's office noted that the continued choice of a name of a living member of the royal family for such buildings would be seen as provocative.¹²³ The results in the education sector were somewhat mixed. Many schools simply changed their

¹²⁰ BAL R83-Niederlanda/25.

¹²¹ NA 2.14.37/430.

¹²² NA 2.14.37/535.

¹²³ NA 2.14.37/535.

name outright, such as the Queen Wilhelmina Primary School in Voorburg, which changed its name to the Christian Primary School in Voorburg. Similarly, the Queen Wilhelmina School in Sneek changed its name to the rather pedestrian “School on the Frederick Hendrik street.”

Alternatively, the same school association rejected a change to the Queen Wilhelmina School’s sister school, known as the Princess Juliana School. The board informed van Dam that the Juliana in question was not the daughter of Queen Wilhelmina, but actually Juliana van Stolberg, the mother of William the Silent, and thus it did not fall under the ban against naming institutions after living members of the royal house. Similarly, the Queen Wilhelmina School in The Hague made an end run around the decree, changing its name to the Queen Emma School, Emma being a popular nickname for Wilhelmina.¹²⁴

The question of political insignias based on the royal family had further implications as well. The students in Haarlem had used coins to display their patriotic affinities, but this was by no means the only form of royal portraiture that could be found across the country. Initially, such portraits were not banned from public display, if for no other reason than that they could be found everywhere and their removal would be a gargantuan task. The sole exception to this rule were portraits of Prince Bernhard—consort to Princess Juliana—whose trademark white carnation became a symbol of Dutch resistance to Nazi domination when, on the prince’s birthday June 29, 1940, the Dutch public adopted the wearing of carnations as a sign of passive resistance in what became known as Carnation Day. As a result, the Germans banned any portraits of Bernhard in public, arrested Dutch commander-in-chief Henri Winkelman, and fired the mayor of The Hague, where the largest demonstrations had taken place outside of the

¹²⁴ NA 2.14.37/535.

Noordeinde Palace.¹²⁵ But for the time being, only Bernhard's portrait was banned in public spaces and buildings.¹²⁶

For the immediate future, the question of portraits of other members of the royal family came up repeatedly. When van Rossem advised the head of the primary school in Avereerst in April 1941 that it would be wise to remove the portrait of the Queen that was then hanging in the school, van Dam intervened, telling van Rossem that only portraits of Prince Bernhard were banned.¹²⁷ In another instance, in Alphen on the Rhine, the director of the secondary school there actually inquired about portraits of the Queen and royal family in April 1941. Valkenburg replied that, as far as he could determine, the ring one girl had been wearing that included a picture of the queen fell under the ban on the wearing of political insignias, but that the actual portraits hanging in the schools were allowed, provided that they did not include Prince Bernhard. Van Dam seconded this opinion, noting that the ring should be considered as a political demonstration and therefore, the girl who wore the ring should be punished for breaking the rules.¹²⁸

In what was seen as a much more serious issue, the previous month, March 1941, a twenty-year old teacher at the Christian National Primary School in Groningen was arrested for the production and distribution of over three thousand photos of members of the royal family. The school director informed the local school inspector that he was unaware of any such distribution in the school itself and dismissed the possibility as "out of the question." Furthermore, the school inspector came to the conclusion that the young man was not entirely

¹²⁵ This focus on Prince Bernhard was all the more ironic because Bernhard, who was German by birth, had been a member of the SA, the SS, and the Nazi Party proper prior to his marriage to Juliana in 1937. He was, however, widely acknowledged to have adopted Dutch culture and sensibilities upon his marriage to the princess.

¹²⁶ NIOD 114a/3.

¹²⁷ NA 2.14.37/477.

¹²⁸ NIOD 114a/3.

aware of the severity of his crime, owing to his young age and his only very recent employment at the school. The case was treated with some leniency—by Dutch law, he was still a minor—but he was nonetheless dismissed from his position after his release from custody.¹²⁹

The situation was finally resolved from an administrative standpoint through the complete ban on public portraits of living members of the royal family that was enacted by Karel Fredericks, Secretary-General of Internal Affairs, under orders from his German superiors, likely Wimmer, on May 2, 1941, although buildings in use by the government itself were exempted.¹³⁰ That was extended by Wimmer personally on June 28 to all public places, this time including schools and other institutions used by the government. Van Dam passed this order along to educational institutions on July 1, at which time he also removed the portrait of Queen Wilhelmina that had been hanging in his own office.¹³¹ The ban on using portraits of the Queen was so all encompassing that it included a ban on the use of Dutch coinage in math lessons, because those coins contained portraits of the Queen, although it was not extended to permitted history texts, probably because that would have been indefensible from a regulatory and fiscal standpoint.¹³²

By mid-1942, the government had finally figured out the larger outlines of the insignia ban generally and the place of the royal family specifically as it related to educational institutions. Political insignias of any and all non-Nazi organizations or groups were banned, as were any portraits of living members of the royal family. Alternatively, Nazi organizations were

¹²⁹ NA 2.14.37/455.

¹³⁰ NA 2.14.37/499, 505. The Department of Internal Affairs was also under Wimmer's supervision, but unfortunately, Frederiks's decree stated only that it came "from the German side."

¹³¹ NA 2.14.37/517. For the portrait in Van Dam's office, see Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 208–9.

¹³² NA 2.14.37/517. Removing all pictures of the Queen and royal family from permitted history books would have been a gargantuan undertaking, involving tens of millions of individual books, making the work of the book control commission look limited in comparison.

allowed to both use the schools as bases of propaganda and their members, whether students or teachers, were allowed to wear their uniforms and insignias as they saw fit. But this did not solve the question entirely. Questions regarding specific organizations continued to roll in regularly and had to be handled on a case by case basis. Nor did the problem of students and teachers wearing banned insignias end.¹³³ Reminder circulars went out repeatedly from the central government in The Hague to the towns and provinces warning local officials to carry out the decrees of the occupation authority under penalty of severe punishment.¹³⁴

The wearing of anti-regime political insignias was most often seen by the regime as a form of political demonstration, but that was not the only way in which students protested the occupation. In early May, 1941, the director of the public secondary school in Tiel reached out to van Dam in order to get ahead of what he feared was a planned series of student demonstrations against the regime. The school director noted that on April 30, 1941, many students had come to class wearing their “Sunday best,” which the director could only assume, given the unusual nature of such a concerted effort by the students, was meant to be an anti-German “silent demonstration.” He feared that the upcoming May 7 birthday of a recently dismissed Jewish teacher would turn into cause of a second demonstration and had heard rumors of a third impending “silent demonstration”—via the wearing of black scarves—planned for May 10, the anniversary of the German invasion of the Netherlands. He requested from van Dam the authority to close the school entirely to prevent such demonstrations, apparently fearing that, as the head of the school, he would be found partly responsible for any such actions on the part of the students. Although van Dam did not grant that specific request, he did take the extraordinary

¹³³ See, e.g.: NA 2.14.37/551. Students were pretty clever with finding new ways to show their support, such as the use of certain flowers as symbols for members of the royal family.

¹³⁴ NA 2.14.37/538; BAL (Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde) R83/25; NIOD 216e/14, 33.

step of empowering the local school inspector to shutter the school and ordered the school director to keep in close telephone contact with the local inspector.¹³⁵ Unfortunately, the records in the file do not indicate whether the feared second and third demonstrations actually went forward.

Although in Tiel, van Dam was supportive of the director's efforts to combat student demonstration, in other instances, van Dam came to the aid of students themselves. One such student at a secondary school in Zwolle collected English propaganda pamphlets that had likely been dropped out of a British airplane near his house and distributed them to his classmates. Initially, the school expelled him for this action, but the boy's father appealed, noting that the thirteen-year-old child could barely read the German language fliers, and so had no idea of what he was doing, and did so despite warnings by his father against bringing them to school. The local school inspector, upon hearing the father's appeal suggested to van Dam that the boy be allowed to return to school with a stern warning. Van Dam, convinced of the father's case as well, was able to persuade Schwarz to allow the child to return, should the school accept him. Regardless of this fortunate intervention by van Dam on the boy's behalf, he still was out of school for more than two months in spring 1941 while the case was adjudicated.¹³⁶

Although van Dam's close relationship with Schwarz allowed him a certain amount of influence in such cases, the Germans were not always as lenient, especially if older students were involved. At St. Trinitatis Lyceum in Haarlem, two older students were caught producing anti-German propaganda. As a result, the two students were arrested, expelled from the school, and forbidden to continue their education at any other institution in the Netherlands.¹³⁷ In other cases,

¹³⁵ NA 2.14.37/500.

¹³⁶ NA 2.14.37/451.

¹³⁷ NA 2.14.37/454.

the provenance of anti-regime propaganda was unknown, but it was nonetheless spread through the school. Such was the case at the Royal Secondary School in Maastricht, in which some two dozen students were found to have been in possession of communist propaganda pamphlets aimed at Dutch youth. Although all of the students claimed that they had found the propaganda pamphlets by the bicycle racks, the original finders of the pamphlets did distribute them to the rest of their classmates, at least until they ran out of the roughly thirty pamphlets that were found. Neither the police report nor the included correspondence between van Dam and Noordijk reveal what actions the occupation authorities took against the students, most of whom freely admitted to spreading the propaganda. However, given the age of those involved—most students were thirteen or fourteen years old—and the quickness with which the school director took action to combat the spread of the propaganda, it is unlikely they suffered severe consequences, although that cannot be determined with any certainty.¹³⁸

In perhaps the most draconian reaction to anti-regime demonstrations, the mayor of the public lyceum in Eindhoven suspended or expelled more than half the school, in response to one of the largest anti-NSB demonstrations at any non-university educational establishment during the entire occupation. The immediate cause of the disruption was a visit by NSB *Leider* Mussert on May 29, 1942. As part of the visit, local officials hung the orange-white-blue Prince's Flag on the school building, which was the preferred flag of the NSB.¹³⁹ When the flag remained up at the school even after Mussert had left, the students decided to strike. The following day, of the two-hundred, ninety-three total students at the school, two-hundred, sixty remained home. Although most returned to school the following Monday, the message the students had hoped to send was clear. Equally clear was the message the mayor sent in response. One-hundred, eight

¹³⁸ NA 2.14.37/523.

¹³⁹ This is opposed to the red-white-blue tricolors of the Dutch Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

students were given some form of detention, the overwhelming majority being required to stay late at school Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. The other one-hundred, twelve students were suspended for a period of between eight days and an entire year, with more than half receiving a suspension of one month, and a full twenty receiving a suspension of one-half year. The curators of the lyceum and the parents involved were, naturally, furious. The stiff penalties handed out by the mayor threatened not only the smooth functioning of the school but the future education of dozens of students, and so both groups took their complaints to van Dam. The Secretary-General agreed that some punishment was necessary, but also found the rather harsh nature of the mayor's actions troubling, especially for the twenty-four students who were punished with a one-half year or full-year suspension. Luckily, the timing of the event played to van Dam's favor, as the upcoming summer break offered the opportunity for van Dam to suggest to the mayor that he could, on the last day of class, offer a general amnesty to the most severely punished students, support for which he appears to have received from both Noordijk and Schwarz. Equally luckily for those students involved, the mayor availed himself of this opportunity and announced the amnesty for the twenty students who had received a half-year suspension, although he waited until later in the summer to extend that offer to the four students who had received a full-year suspension.¹⁴⁰

The Harassment of NSB Members and Children

Although anti-regime demonstrations occurred throughout the Netherlands, that was not the most common form of agitation that students engaged in, nor was it the type of anti-German activity that most perturbed the authorities. By far the most pervasive form of anti-German activity found in the records of complaints that reached Education Department was the

¹⁴⁰ NA 2.14.37/547.

harassment of NSB and German-friendly children by both teachers and students. This type of activity ran the gamut from the relatively innocuous anti-German or anti-NSB statement to physical violence directed at such youths. In the case of the former, it could rightly be questioned whether, in some cases, minor statements or asides were even actually directed at specific children intentionally, although in those cases that went up the administrative chain, the complainants usually believed as much. Regardless of whether anti-German or anti-NSB statements were directed at specific children, however, the presence of NSB and/or German children in the classroom must have been known to those who made such statements, and so would constitute harassment regardless of whether or not the perpetrator intended it as such. At the very least, anti-German or anti-NSB statements would have contributed to a hostile learning environment for children with personal or familial connections to Dutch or German Nazism. And that is the least corrosive form of harassment those children faced. On the other end of the spectrum, literal, physical violence, including death threats made with brandished weapons, were not unheard of.

Naturally, the German authorities and their Dutch collaborators took these cases very seriously. On the one hand, mere anti-German statements, much like larger political demonstrations, threatened to poison the well of the next generation, undoing all of the work the occupiers hoped to accomplish. On the other, physical violence against NSB or German-oriented youths in or outside the school was, in the eyes of the regime, just about the most severe form of resistance a school-aged student could engage in on their own initiative. The prevalence of such complaints in the records testifies to both the seriousness with which the government viewed these types of activity and the frequency with which they occurred.

Given that most of the accused steadfastly denied the charges against them, it is difficult to determine with any certainty whether or not the accusations leveled against them were accurate. Generally speaking, van Rossem, Dijkema, and Valkenburg tended to assume the worst of the accused, while Noordijk and the local school inspectors tended to be a bit more trusting of the teachers' (although not necessarily of students') explanations, but this is only a general trend. Moreover, school directors tended to side with their teachers (again, not necessarily with students) against the inquiries of the government. In the case of the Authorized Representative and his deputies, they had a vested self-interest in portraying the schools as centers of chaos and disorder, for if the schools were bastions of peace and discipline, there would be no need for their services, which would have put them in a precarious position given van Dam's clear desire to remove them. Alternatively, Noordijk's and the local inspectors' positions were relatively more secure, and so they would have little need to take otherwise mild infractions out of context as a means of creating job security.¹⁴¹

At the same time however, the local inspectors, especially before Noordijk managed to make substantive changes in their numbers, were, by and large, in lock step with the larger anti-NSB consensus in the country, even though they mostly carried out the orders of the central government faithfully.¹⁴² Assuming that these career officials overlooked harassment of NSB or German-friendly students in deference to their own political motivations is unsupported by the evidence and needlessly casts doubt on the work ethic of these largely career public servants.

¹⁴¹ It is worth pointing out that the local school inspectors Noordijk dismissed in 1942 were dismissed, not because of any failure on their part to do their job sufficiently, but because they had not given satisfactory answers in personal interviews with Noordijk regarding their commitment to the occupation regime and its ideals. De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 116–28; Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 22–23.

¹⁴² Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 242–44; De Pater carried out an in-depth study of the entire primary school inspectorate and came to similar conclusions. See De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 258–372. Of course, the Germans themselves judged about four-fifths of the inspectorate to be politically unsatisfactory. Ibid., 116–22.

Finally, it is extremely unlikely that all of the incidents that were reported up the chain, whether through local NSB circles, via the police, the local inspectors, or through the office of the Authorized Representative were entirely fictitious. Even in those cases in which it was later determined that the events had originally been substantially misrepresented to the authorities, some kernel of dissatisfaction on the part of the complainant(s) must have been present, otherwise they would not have complained in the first place, and most of the time, the complainants represented that dissatisfaction as political in nature.

Such was the case at a Protestant school in Amsterdam, when a father complained of violent interactions between his three children and other students that included the throwing of rocks which caused injuries, owing to his wife's membership in the NSB. As it would turn out, the family only had two children at that school, and both denied having had any adverse interactions with their classmates as a result of their mother's NSB membership, although one of the children did, after prodding, recall an incident that occurred when he was passing by a completely different school in which he was accosted because of his mother's NSB membership.¹⁴³ So although the original complaint was unfounded, there was a kernel of truth to it in that the one child had, in fact, been mistreated as a result of his connection to Dutch Nazis.

In other instances, the connection to politics was simply unclear or imagined entirely. Such was the case at the expanded primary school in Steenwijk, where a student who had a long history of truancy was finally expelled from the school after he passed the age of required attendance. His parents both complained through NSB circles that this was the result of the boy's role in the NJS, but when the inspector investigated, it turned out that the boy was

¹⁴³ NS 2.14.37/515.

welcome to return, so long as he actually attended regularly. This particular offer was left out of the original complaint by the boy's parents.¹⁴⁴

Nor was it uncommon that the authorities would view certain acts through the lens of politics when no such intention was present. In one such example, in a teachers' lounge at the First Public Trade School in Amsterdam, teachers hung a thank-you note from the widow of a recently deceased colleague. Because this colleague was Jewish and had been dismissed along with other Jewish civil servants, the German authorities, upon learning of the thank-you note, assumed the matter was entirely political. In fact, it had often been the custom in that particular school to hang announcements and other items of interest in the teachers' lounge so that all of the faculty might see them, as was the case here. The fact that the recently deceased teacher was Jewish was, according to Noordijk and all of the witnesses he interviewed, completely coincidental.¹⁴⁵

At the protestant primary school in Driebergen, local NSB officials complained to van Genechten that the "strong anti-national socialist" mood of the school, especially by the director and one of the teachers, had led to several NSB and German families to remove their children from the school and send them elsewhere. As part of his investigation, the local school inspector inquired about every single student who had left the school since May 10, 1940. In the previous year, forty-four students had left the school, and of those, forty-three had either moved or fulfilled their schooling requirements. Only a single student, who switched to the German School in Utrecht, had complained of anti-NSB or anti-German harassment as the cause of the move. The only actual "infraction" that the inspector could find was that the accused teachers had, in fact, allowed students to sing *Het Wilhelmus* in a music lesson, and only then, it was

¹⁴⁴ NA 2.14.37/458.

¹⁴⁵ NA 2.14.37/545.

problematic because the teacher had previously been investigated by the NSB's security service.¹⁴⁶

Despite evidence that some complaints about disorder in school were mostly, or entirely, misrepresentations of the true events, anti-German or anti-NSB statements were common throughout the occupation. By and large, it was teachers who were most accused of making these types of more general anti-regime statements. At the Pontinstituut in Rotterdam, on October 15, 1940, a teacher told three girls, none of whom were affiliated with the NSB, that "The NSBers always disrupt radio broadcasts" and "NSBers are genuine traitors."¹⁴⁷ The inspector, in his report, noted that no one in the class actually heard the teacher say the second item about NSBers being traitors, even the girl whose father initially reported the incident to the authorities. The teacher did admit to the radio comment, however, received a stern talking to, and promised to keep politics out of the classroom.¹⁴⁸

At the municipal secondary school in Zutphen, one teacher constantly made anti-German and anti-NSB statements to his class, noting things such as, "there are the NSBers, who all think that they are world reformers," and, whenever a plane would fly over, "There go our defenders."¹⁴⁹ Upon inspection, the teacher denied having ever made such statements, and indicated that, at worst, he had made more innocuous statements that students had taken out of context and assumed referred to the NSB. He even wrote directly to van Dam defending his maintenance of order within the classroom. The inspector warned him about how things could

¹⁴⁶ NA 2.14.37/470. In other words, he was becoming known in NSB circles as possibly someone who was anti-regime, even though the singing of *Het Wilhelmus* in this circumstance was not illegal.

¹⁴⁷ NA 2.14.37/408, 413.

¹⁴⁸ NA 2.14.37/413.

¹⁴⁹ NA 2.14.37/408, 410, 413. Presumably he meant German planes.

be taken out of context, but owing to a lack of any further evidence, was forced to let the issue slide.¹⁵⁰

Even though these types of anti-regime statements were not necessarily directed at a specific student, their meaning was still clear to anyone paying attention. For example, at the extended primary school in the small village of Klazienaveen, near the German border, a history teacher going over the Napoleonic Era asked his students about St. Helena, “Who should actually be sent there?” In unison, the class answered, “Hitler.”¹⁵¹ One school director at the Christian advanced primary school in Noordwijk elicited a “hoorah” from students by noting that they seemed boisterous in class, perhaps because of the recently reported death of Rudolf Hess, which earned the school director a warning from Noordijk to keep politics out of the classroom. Although the director denied it specifically, the testimony of several students in the class, including one who participated in the “hoorah” and subsequent laughter, worked against him.¹⁵²

At a public primary school in The Hague one religion instructor, according to four witnesses, referred to the German bombing of Rotterdam as the work of the devil, thereby comparing the Germans themselves to the devil. According to the witnesses, he bragged about actually saying this, in Dutch, to two German soldiers while visiting his parents in Rotterdam shortly after the Dutch capitulation, but the German soldiers did not understand the meaning of the man’s words. At another point, the same teacher, in front of his students, compared the bombing of Rotterdam to Genesis Flood Narrative, noting that what the Dutch had to go through in Rotterdam was child’s play compared to the trials of the ancients. As the father of one of the students was a member of the NSB, these utterances made their way to the police, who informed

¹⁵⁰ NA 2.14.37/413.

¹⁵¹ NA 2.14.37/410.

¹⁵² NA 2.14.37/519.

van Dam. As was not uncommon, instead of taking more drastic actions, van Dam told the school director to make sure the teacher stopped teaching in such a way.¹⁵³

In other cases, teachers and administrators were more direct in their criticism of individuals because of their connection to the regime. At a primary school in Leiden, a specific NSB child was constantly bullied by other students because of his father's connection to the NSB. When the father went to the school to complain to the director, the director told the father that he wanted nothing to do with the NSB (i.e., the father) and he refused to instruct the children to stop their torment of the individual student.¹⁵⁴

At the private primary school in Dreumel, the pastor, who occasionally came to teach at the school, harassed one 12-year old NSB student in particular with statements such as, "You all think that you are the bosses, but that won't last much longer" and "Look in front of you, you need not look at me any longer."¹⁵⁵ It would turn out, after the local school inspector conducted an investigation, that the child in question was unable to remember exactly what the teacher had supposedly said. Even her parents suggested the child had difficulty remembering such things, although they stood by their original complaint. For his part, the teacher steadfastly denied any wrongdoing, suggesting the complainant had misrepresented his actual statements.¹⁵⁶

Other times, the teacher did not deny wrongdoing. When the director of a secondary school in The Hague passed away from a heart attack one evening, the following morning one of the teachers accused students at the school of having been the impetus for the heart attack through their spreading of NJS propaganda, which, according to the teacher, the poor director simply could not tolerate. The director was so taken aback, the teacher claimed, that he suffered

¹⁵³ NA 2.14.37/482.

¹⁵⁴ NIOD 114a/3.

¹⁵⁵ NA 2.14.37/408.

¹⁵⁶ NA 2.14.37/411.

the heart attack as a result. At the same time, another teacher at the school reacted to the death of the director by noting that all NSBers should be removed from the school including those only suspected of NSB membership. As it would happen, only the first teacher was actually removed from his position, primarily because he actually admitted to having made the offending comments, albeit the teacher's version of the events, he stated only that "the events of yesterday probably did not do him [the deceased director] any good. He got very annoyed by it all."¹⁵⁷

Students were not the only recipients of teachers' ire, however. Sometimes it was representatives of the regime directly. In these cases, there was little the offending teachers could do in their own defense, as the accusers were trusted bureaucrats, not school children or their parents. In one instance at a public primary school in The Hague in May 1943, a teacher was visited by the local school inspector for a regular inspection. The inspector was accompanied by a local city councilor who was also an NSB member. When the councilor offered the teacher his hand for a hand shake, the teacher refused. This was bad enough, but to make matters worse, the teacher refused in front of his class of third graders. Noordijk suspended the teacher for one month without pay. Such an affront was not taken lightly, as Dr. Schmidt, in Wimmer's office became aware of the case and requested an even stiffer penalty, although Noordijk held his ground on that point.¹⁵⁸

The previous month, in April 1943, in Heerlen, a similar incident bordered on the childish when a local school inspector came to visit the class of a teacher at the Christian primary school there after receiving several complaints. This particular inspector was one of the NSBers who Noordijk had appointed in 1942 after the latter made significant changes to the School Inspectorate. When the inspector offered his hand to the teacher as a greeting, the teacher

¹⁵⁷ NIOD 114a/4.

¹⁵⁸ NIOD 114b/147.

refused it, in front of both the school director and the entire class. The inspector tried to remain civil and brought the teacher into the hallway. He informed the teacher that there was no need for such childishness, as he was there as a part of the government and that their individual political beliefs need not interfere with their official business. The teacher replied that if he were truly acting childish, he would invite the inspector out into the school yard to handle things in a more physical manner. Moreover, the teacher insisted that, as a reserve officer in the military, he had sworn allegiance to the Queen and the government in London. The inspector demanded the teacher's immediate dismissal, which the director refused to do. The very next day, Noordijk signed the order to dismiss the teacher from his position. The school board tried to intervene, suggesting that Noordijk did not have such authority, even though Noordijk very clearly did. Noordijk kicked the complaint upstairs to Schwarz's office, who took Noordijk's side in the dispute. It all became moot, however, as the teacher and his family absconded and went underground within a week.¹⁵⁹

Local government officials were not the only ones to earn the wrath of teaching faculty. In some cases, Dijkema and Valkenburg, the two deputies of the Authorized Representative were themselves the recipients of anti-NSB or anti-German opposition, for example, when they encountered trouble just entering the schools in the first place, as happened at a primary school in Deventer in spring 1941. There, Dijkema saw a child playing with a political pin—in this case one supporting the *Nederlandsche Unie*—and confronted the student. When Dijkema then attempted to take the child inside to meet with the school master, a teacher barred his way. As it would turn out, the teacher was acting on orders from the local school inspector. Although Dijkema protested to van Dam, the school inspector explained in reply that it was all a

¹⁵⁹ NIOD 114b/146.

misunderstanding and that he had told the school administrators to not allow entrance to anyone who did not have proper authority, a prohibition which obviously did not apply to van Rossem or his deputies. The entire incident turned into a contest between van Dam and van Rossem regarding their respective spheres of authority. Van Dam refused to punish school inspector and claimed that the director's refusal was based only on a misunderstanding that developed because Dijkema, in the director's eyes, appeared to be too young to have held such authority and therefore must have been an impostor with falsified credentials.¹⁶⁰ The protection this particular inspector received turned out to be short-lived. He was the very first such inspector dismissed by Noordijk when the latter was appointed to the role of Inspector of Education in General Service.¹⁶¹

In a similar instance in April 1941, the director of a secondary school in Alphen on the Rhine attempted to put barriers in the way of Valkenburg, who wanted to sit in on a class of a teacher suspected of instructing students in an anti-German manner. This had been the second time recently that Valkenburg had been denied entry into a classroom, the first time at a Christian primary school in Haarlem. In both instances, the Valkenburg and van Rossem complained to van Dam, who only noted to the school directors that it was not their place to bar van Rossem or his deputies from sitting in on classes.¹⁶²

In both of these cases, those who barred entry to the deputies of the Authorized Representative claimed a misunderstanding was the result. No such claim could be made for a teacher at the Catholic lyceum in 's-Hertogenbosch, who refused on principle to shake Valkenburg's hand upon meeting him in May 1941. The teacher did not mean it to be insulting,

¹⁶⁰ NIOD 114a/3; NA 2.14.37/475. Dijkema was said to have a "youthful appearance."

¹⁶¹ NIOD 114b/143.

¹⁶² NIOD 114a/3; NA 2.14.37/481.

he promised, but rather it was a matter of principle. “As a Dutchman I cannot be a national socialist, not even shake a national socialist’s hand,” he reportedly explained to Valkenburg. This case apparently hit a nerve with van Dam, as he ordered the teacher suspended immediately and then summoned him to The Hague for an in-person dressing down.¹⁶³

Although teachers and administrators often expressed their opposition to the occupation regime through a general anti-NSB or anti-German attitude and sometimes directed their ire directly at adult representatives of the occupiers, harassment of NSB students by teachers was comparatively rarer. No such thing could be said for students themselves, however. The files of the Education Department are littered with complaints of harassment of NSB-oriented children by their fellow classmates, sometimes with the at least tacit approval of their teachers. In May 1941, a complaint came into van Rossem’s office about the Catholic boys’ school in Noordwijk. Students there were continually accosting NSB children as “traitors.” Valkenburg requested that the school director conduct an investigation, and although the teacher in the class, per the investigation conducted by the director, was in a position to have possibly heard the insults, he claimed ignorance. The director still punished the offending students, but not the teacher.¹⁶⁴

In early 1941, at the *Hogere Burger School* (secondary school) in Terneuzen, one girl, who was a member of the *Nationale Jeugdstorm* was constantly harassed by fellow students. Her life was being “made impossible” and she was accused of being a “traitor” by other students. Although the girl’s parents took the issue directly to the director, the school head was either unwilling or unable to put an end to the harassment. The complainants suggested in their letter to van Rossem’s office that there were only a few NSB-oriented students at the school, all of whom were subjected to abuse by the “*Unie-clique*”—the group affiliated with the

¹⁶³ NA 2.14.37/497.

¹⁶⁴ NIOD 114a/4.

Nederlandsche Unie—to which a majority of students belonged; several of the teachers apparently condoned this behavior. Unfortunately for the girl in question, van Rossem was unable to conduct an inquiry to investigate the matter.¹⁶⁵

In most cases, the central government left discipline of students up to school officials, although they freely handed out warnings to teachers and school directors that they had better take more care to prevent disorder in the schools. At the Girls' Primary School in Utrecht, one ten-year old student complained to her teacher that she was being harassed by her fellow students with constant taunts of being an "NSBer." Her teacher replied to the girl with the less than supportive notion that "if you always have arguments with other girls, you could go to another school." The teacher freely admitted this to the local inspector when interviewed, although denied the more serious charge that was brought up in the initial complaint that she had called the student a "traitor" and further taunted the girl by telling her, "if you are bothered by that, just get out of school." The teacher and the school's director faced only a warning that they should better keep order in the school.¹⁶⁶

At the primary school in the village of Oud-Sabbinge, the children of two NSBers were occasionally harassed by fellow students with statements such as "Orange on top" and "long live the Queen."¹⁶⁷ The boys, all of whom were between eight and ten, recognized that these taunts were directed at them because when they refused to take part in the chants, they were further accosted by their classmates. But in this case, it appears to have been a temporary matter, as by the time the local inspector got around to investigating, the matter had cleared itself up, with the parents of one set of brothers saying there was no longer any other problem and the father of the

¹⁶⁵ NIOD 114a/3.

¹⁶⁶ NA 2.14.37/440.

¹⁶⁷ Both phrases are part of a traditional Dutch folk song, *Oranje boven*, whose lyrics read: *Orange on top, orange on top, Long live the King (or Queen)*.

other victim indicating he had only complained because he thought it was his duty as the local NSB leader to pass complaints up the ladder. The school inspector agreed that any disruptions had since ceased, and so no further actions were necessary by the inspector.¹⁶⁸

It was also not unheard of that students harassed their NSB colleagues with the support of their teachers. In one instance in at a confessional school on the Koepelstraat in Rotterdam, an NSB affiliated student was constantly harassed by his classmates, including through name calling— “NSBer” and “traitor”—as well as hitting him with sticks. When he tried to complain to the teacher, she labeled him a “tattle-tale” and a “wimp,” and she refused to punish the offenders. His further complaints to the school director, as well as those of his mother to both the teacher and the school director were rejected, for the teacher denied her actions and the school director stood behind his faculty member. The director further attempted to deflect blame from the accused students by noting that the NSB child had also used a stick against his assailants, although that was claimed by the boy’s mother to be pure self-defense. Only when Noordijk interrogated the teacher directly did the truth of the matter come out through her own direct admission of having ignored the proper protocols and tacitly approved the harassment. Again, Noordijk only suggested that the teacher be sternly warned against future indiscretions.¹⁶⁹

Harassment of NSB students was not limited to the classroom either. In the small village of Roosendaal, the anti-NSB attitude extended to the church, when two NSJ students were barred entry to Saturday morning services at the St. Josephskerk, not once but twice. When their father kept the children home from school the following Monday in protest — the students attended a

¹⁶⁸ NA 2.14.37/489.

¹⁶⁹ NA 2.14.37/531.

private school attached to the church — the children in the class celebrated their absence, according to fellow students who were in attendance.¹⁷⁰

In some cases, the form of harassment that NSB students endured was more problematic. Name-calling was one thing, but when harassment threatened to, or actually did, turn violent, it was an altogether different beast. In one such instance in The Hague, a student at a private primary school there was constantly accosted as a “mof” by his classmates, which caused the student, who was half-German, to respond that his assailants were “kaaskops.”¹⁷¹ In reply, several of the other students prepared a “death warrant” for the half-German child. The child obtained a copy of this “death warrant” and brought it home to his mother, who promptly complained through NSB circles. It took the usual path of going through van Genechten’s office to van Dam and then to the local school inspector, the latter of whom determined that the creating and signing of the “death warrant” had occurred off school grounds and thus could not be punished by the teachers. Given the ages of the children, all of whom were between twelve and thirteen, it is unlikely that the “death warrant” was meant in earnest. The authorities certainly did not perceive it that way otherwise van Genechten would likely have involved the police in the matter rather than sending it over to van Dam’s office.¹⁷²

Death threats, however, were only the tip of the iceberg when it came to anti-NSB violence by students. In Bussum, a thirteen-year-old girl was harassed by fellow students, with one tarnishing her blouse, which was strikingly similar to that of the NJS uniform, with garbage.¹⁷³ Sometimes harassment took on an even more criminal nature. At the municipal

¹⁷⁰ NIOD 114a/4. Granted, in this case, the aggrieved students would not have been present to witness the events in the classroom, but surely would have learned of it from other students who had been present.

¹⁷¹ *Mof* is a popular Dutch, anti-German slur of unknown origin, while *kaaskop* is an anti-Dutch slur which translates to “cheese-head.”

¹⁷² NA 2.14.37/412.

¹⁷³ NA 2.14.37/446. Unfortunately, the school inspector’s report is missing from the file, but van Dam did inform his counterpart at the Justice Department that van Genechten, in whose office the complaint originated, was not

secondary school in Hilversum, the daughter of an NSB member was repeatedly harassed by her fellow classmates, both verbally and through theft of her belongings, including her wallet, which was taken from her rucksack. Although the school director could not punish the culprits of the thievery, because they were unknown, he did punish the leader of the students harassing her verbally with a five-day suspension. To make matters worse, several children at the school took to following the girl home on their bicycles, riding in such a way as to cause the girl to repeatedly fall off her bike to avoid getting into a bicycle accident. Much to the chagrin of the director, however, the girl was unable to name her assailants, and so they too went unpunished.¹⁷⁴

Direct assault was also not uncommon. At the Catholic Bonaventura School in Rotterdam, one set of brothers was repeatedly harassed by their classmates because of their membership in the NJS. Each of the brothers, who ranged in age from eleven to thirteen, had been victims of assault by other students, either by being punched or hit with belts, albeit always outside of school. If that were not bad enough for the poor children, one of their teachers appeared to be fond of punishing them by expelling them from class for no other reason than their membership in the NJS. Even the government did not take very stern measures, as the teacher in question was judged by Noordijk to have suffered enough during his two-month wait between the time when the reports first came out and his journey to The Hague to be interviewed by Noordijk. The teacher was, according to Noordijk, quite concerned about his fate and had kept the stress bottled-up inside, not even informing his own wife of the potential trouble he might be in. The student assailants, save for one child who actually hit one of the brothers inside the classroom went unpunished entirely. The only administrative punishment meted out by the

“entirely accurately informed” by his source of the true nature of the incident, and that, either way, the issue could be considered closed.

¹⁷⁴ NA 2.14.37/506.

Education Department was a stern warning that the school administration would be held responsible for any future transgressions.¹⁷⁵

Violence was not limited to male students either. At the Mariengarde Girls' School in Aarle-Rixtel, one girl was constantly harassed by her classmates. Inside of the school, she was taunted by her classmates as a "dirty NSBer," had paper balls with curses thrown at her, and was otherwise shunned. But it was on the way home from school that the harassment became violent, as she was sometimes followed home from school, whereby her classmates would push her around and sometimes even throw rocks at her. One time, a boy of unknown origin got involved in the harassment and even threatened her with a knife. Unfortunately, Noordijk's report is missing from the file, but a later note of his indicates that the harassment eventually petered out after his intervention, suggesting that at least some of the accusations by the girl and her mother were true.¹⁷⁶

The ride home from school also presented some youth the opportunity to harass their NSB-oriented classmates. In one such instance at the Reformed Lyceum in Amsterdam, a girl had come to school wearing an NJS uniform in April 1941, before it was officially permitted. The school director, hoping to avoid problems, allowed her to wear her jacket over the uniform instead of sending her home to change, which, in retrospect, probably would have been the better option. When school let out, the girl was followed by a large crowd of students that eventually forced her into the house of a sympathetic neighborhood doctor, who immediately called the school director to come and intervene, which the latter did. After breaking up the gathering, the girl was able to make her way peacefully home. Van Dam, in consultation with Valkenburg,

¹⁷⁵ NA 214.37/527.

¹⁷⁶ NA 2.14.37/533.

ordered that the students who led the anti-NJS crowd be punished with suspensions, while the girl was to be reminded that uniforms of the NJS were not allowed to be worn in school.¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

For the most part, the reports that made their way to the Education Department in The Hague come from the first three years of the occupation. Starting in about mid-1943 they drop substantially in frequency, becoming more and more infrequent as the occupation goes on. There are many possible reasons for this. The most obvious possible cause for the drop in the number of complaints is that the incidence of anti-regime agitation inside the schools began to subside, that is, because the new regulations and punishments meted out by Noordijk, van Dam, and their German superiors started becoming effective. This seems especially unlikely given the overall tenor of the occupation, with resistance activity picking up precisely around this period owing to the changing tide of the war and the general increase in German repression. Anti-regime students, teachers, and administrators would have been emboldened by the uptick in resistance activity and increase in German oppression; it is unlikely that they would have chosen this time to stop causing problems for the regime and their local representatives on the ground, especially since such activity had not yet been, up to that point, especially risky for most individuals.

Another, related possibility is that fewer complaints reached the central Education Department offices in Apeldoorn—the Education Department moved from The Hague to Apeldoorn in March 1943—because inspectors on the ground were both initiating and handling the investigations entirely themselves. This is certainly possible and cannot be discounted entirely. But this theory does not account for the ways in which most complaints made it to the

¹⁷⁷ NA 2.14.37/504.

local inspectors in the first place, that is, via NSB circles, through van Genechten's office, along to van Dam, and down to Noordijk and the local inspectors. It seems unlikely that van Dam's office would have been excluded in this way. Moreover, the majority of the School Inspectorate was never in the hands of NSB officials, and those career officials would have no reason to exclude van Dam's office from their investigations, especially since van Dam tended to support their conclusions.¹⁷⁸

A more reasonable explanation comes in the demotion of Robert van Genechten from his position as Solicitor-General in The Hague in February 1943. While this is certainly possible, it assumes that van Genechten was the main force behind these complaints reaching van Dam's office. Although it cannot be discounted entirely, it seems unlikely that victims of harassment would give up their attempts to gain relief simply because one key advocate was no longer employed in a specific key position. After all, many individuals made complaints through several channels, including via the NSB, the local police, and the educational establishment more generally, all of which continued to supply cases for investigation after van Genechten was demoted.¹⁷⁹

In my view, the most likely reason that complaints stop showing up in mid-1943 is because the government was simply dealing with other matters of greater import. Noordijk's office and purview expanded significantly over the course of the occupation, and so he was dealing with many other issues beyond inspecting the schools.¹⁸⁰ The German administrators were, by mid-1943, more worried about extracting the greatest amount of resources possible from the Dutch populace in the name of winning the war. And of course, it is around this time

¹⁷⁸ Setten, *Opvoeding in volkse geest*, 22–23.

¹⁷⁹ See, e.g., NA 2.14.37/551-555.

¹⁸⁰ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 211–12.

that van Dam stopped performing anything but house maintenance at the Education Department's central offices.¹⁸¹ Schwarz's last report to the office of the Party Chancellery in Berlin is, although undated, also written around this time.¹⁸² It seems most likely that the significant drop off in reports of anti-regime agitation in the schools is connected to this larger drop off in general activity at the Education Department after its move to Apeldoorn.

Regardless of the cause in the decline in reported anti-regime agitation, however, the first three years of German rule offer more than enough evidence that students and teachers were unsupportive of the German occupation. Even if anti-regime activity actually declined, rather than the reporting of such activity declining, that would certainly not mean that students and teachers had been somehow convinced of the larger German mission or were for some reason less antagonistic to the occupation itself. From early 1943 onward, the Nazi regime was less and less tolerated by the Dutch public owing to the increasingly repressive nature of the occupation. Assuming that students and teachers for some reason bucked this trend defies logic entirely.

In fact, during the occupation, anti-regime activity in schools was a widespread problem for the German occupiers and their Dutch helpers. Although it is impossible to say for certain what motivated most individuals to act out against the regime, the very fact that they did strongly suggests a general antipathy towards not just the occupation itself, but also the goals the occupiers hoped to implement. Students and teachers displayed their antipathy through a myriad of ways, all of which combined to make the classroom an especially uncomfortable place for supporters of the regime. By rejecting the representatives of the occupation in their local context, students and teachers also rejected the goals of the occupation more broadly.

¹⁸¹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 290.

¹⁸² NIOD 020/2047.

In the following chapter, the focus turns back to the institutional changes the German occupiers tried to institute in Dutch society. Unlike those “reforms” discussed in chapters four, five, and six, however, the new initiatives were mostly reactive rather than proactive. As 1942 pressed on, the German occupiers turned to ever more repressive measures that had the dual purpose of punishing those who engaged in resistance and providing economic support for the German war effort, but which nonetheless had a significant effect on the education sphere. Gone were the days in which Seyss-Inquart tried to win the “hearts and minds” of the Dutch populace. Rather, as the war went on, the Dutch would be compelled, by force if necessary, to do the Germans’ bidding. The nature of these newer “reforms” would cause even greater resistance on the part of the Dutch populace, and eventually, would convince even van Dam, one of the most strident supporters of the Nazis’ Germanic project in the Dutch educational realm, to question whether success was possible, or even desirable.

Chapter 8 - The End of Educational Reform

Thus, the policy of the [*Reichskommissar*] is either fruitless in its effect, since it leads to nothing, or even fatal for us since it must lead to a complete suppression of our people. - Jan van Dam, June 1, 1943¹

By mid-1943, the tenor of the German occupation of the Netherlands had significantly changed. On the one hand, reversals in the field, especially in Eastern Europe at the hands of the Red Army, but also in North Africa, where the Western Allies had pushed the Germans out of Africa, followed by the invasions of Sicily and mainland Italy in Summer 1943, made it increasingly likely, even from the layman's point of view, that the Germans would lose the war. These reversals were a partial cause of a significant uptick in resistance activity on the part of the Dutch populace. On the other hand, the German war effort against the Soviet Union required ever larger extractions of materiel and labor from occupied Europe. In the Netherlands as it related to the education sphere, this was most prominent through the increase in forced labor drafts, which hit young Netherlandsers especially hard, many students among them. Moreover, the recall of Dutch soldiers in April 1943, which was a precursor to their interment in prisoner-of-war camps in Germany, ignited the second large strike action during the German occupation.

This concluding chapter focuses on those events, mostly in late 1942 and early 1943 that led to the end of educational reform in the Netherlands. It was during this time of unrest and worsening repression that resulted from the disruptions to higher education because of the forced labor drives, the general increase in resistance activity because of the changing tide in the war, and the April/May Strike of 1943 that work at the central Education Department declined significantly. From then on out, the majority of work done at the Department of Education consisted of either cursory administrative work or active resistance to German goals, such as working against the forced labor drafts of students and department officials. It is also during this

¹ Quoted in Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 284.

time that van Dam even begins to actively help at least one acquaintance involved in direct resistance activities. By this time, Van Dam appears to have lost his prior zeal for educational “reform,” questioning whether it was possible, and if it was, whether it was desirable.²

On the German side, the activities of Seyss-Inquart, Wimmer, and Schwarz in the education realm also begin to lessen. With the exception of historical education, for which some work does continue, the efforts of the Education Department largely stop.³ For the remainder of the occupation, local municipalities and schools were able to continue without much interference from the central government. And so the situation would remain until the late summer and fall 1944, when the southern portions of the country were liberated by Allied armies. Naturally, the nature of the southern portions of the country being an active war zone caused significant disruptions in education, and the same would happen over the rest of the country during Spring 1945 as Allied armies pushed the remaining German forces out of the Netherlands.⁴ Once the Western Allies liberated the country, democratic rule returned and schools got back to the normal process of educating the next generation.

Forced Labor

On May 23, 1941, Seyss-Inquart decreed that all young Netherlands of both sexes were required to register for the *Nederlandsche Arbeidsdienst* (NAD) where they would serve the Dutch volk.⁵ The goal of the Labor Service was “educate Dutch youth in the spirit of a true *Volksgemeinschaft* toward a moral sense of work and, in particular, for a respect for manual labor.”⁶ Under the terms of the new decree, all Dutch youth were to register for labor service by

² Ibid.

³ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 312; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 289.

⁴ Knegtmans, “Jan van Dam und die Reform,” 1108.

⁵ Dutch Labor Service.

⁶ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 97/1941.

the end of their eighteenth year and were liable for service until they reached twenty-five years of age. The idea of work as an educational tool had been a justification that Seyss-Inquart had used before. In July 1940, he stressed that much in a speech he gave in The Hague when he argued that labor service would help educate young Netherlands in the ideals of National Socialism.⁷

The NAD was a successor to the *Opbouwdienst*, which Seyss-Inquart had also seen as an educational institution.⁸ The *Opbouwdienst* dated to the very beginning of the occupation when the new occupation authority was trying to find a way to put the recently demobilized Dutch military back to work. Beginning in July 1940, thousands of mostly voluntary former soldiers began working for the *Opbouwdienst* in various jobs such as road construction, wetland drainage, and land reclamation. The *Opbouwdienst* was meant to be a temporary endeavor for individual workers who would, in time, find regular work. And although it was not required, pressure was put on workers to perform militarily essential tasks, such as working at German airports—this was during the height of the Blitz when those German airports in the Netherlands were prime military targets for British retaliation—or on coastal fortifications in Belgium and France. Workers who were not willing to work on German military projects, and who could not otherwise find work in the Netherlands or Germany, could not receive state benefits, which made even the dangerous jobs in the Netherlands attractive to some.⁹

The *Opbouwdienst*, however, was a short-lived project. The following summer, Seyss-Inquart established the *Nederlandsche Arbeidsdienst*, which started with about 20,000 workers who were simply transferred from the now-defunct *Opbouwdienst*. This “educational”

⁷ De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 179.

⁸ Construction Service. “De rede van den Rijkscommissaris.”

⁹ Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 79–81.

institution, which was designed to instill a Greater Germanic mindset among the youth, was originally also voluntary, but in April 1942, Seyss-Inquart, by way of the Secretary-General of General Affairs, decreed that service in the NAD was mandatory for all persons wishing to be appointed to public service, including teaching personnel in both public and confessional schools, as well as any student who wanted to matriculate into higher education and currents students who wanted to take their university exams. Those who were already employed in public sector or in confessional education were required to perform their labor service by July 1, 1944.¹⁰ Later that year, in October 1942, service with the NAD was made mandatory for all unemployed persons, in addition to those already required to serve. More importantly, however, instead of simply requiring young adults who worked in schools to perform their labor service before July 1, 1944, this new order called up specific age cohorts for service at designated times, with the first group—those born between April 1, 1922 and March 31, 1923, who would have been nineteen and twenty at the time—to perform their service in the first six months of 1943.¹¹

The regulations that were decreed had only minimal initial effect on the educational sector. At first, those who worked in schools and were required to register for labor service could delay their service period. Once the government started calling up specific age cohorts, however, many people simply did not show up at the designated time. School heads and school boards failed to check whether their new applicants had performed their labor service, to say nothing of the universities, which did even less to help the NAD, so that the NAD eventually started checking the records of schools and educational institutions themselves. Furthermore, even

¹⁰ Jap Schrieke, “Departement van Algemeene Zaken - Besluit van den waarnemend Secretaris-Generaal van het Departement van Algemeene Zaken betreffende den Arbeidsdienstplicht (Arbeidsdienstplichtbesluit),” *Nederlandsche Staatscourant*, April 1, 1942.

¹¹ Jap Schrieke, “Departement van Algemeene Zaken - Besluit van den Secretaris-Generaal van het Departement van Algemeene Zaken betreffende de aanwijzing van het aantal arbeidsdienstplichtigen en het tijdstip van opkomst,” *Nederlandsche Staatscourant*, November 4, 1942. Although published on November 4, the order was dated October 12.

though there was little *organized* resistance to the NAD, the Department of Education, which was the most affected department because of the nature of the regulations, did nothing in support of the measures either, meaning that there was not much pressure on prospective applicants to teaching positions to actually fulfill their service.¹² Van Dam claimed, after the war, to have never once done anything to help the NAD in its activities.¹³

Although the NAD did not have a great impact upon education, it did summon tens of thousands of young, unemployed Netherlands for work. Service performed for the NAD was similar in nature to that of the *Opbouwdienst*. Tasks included mostly manual labor, including agricultural work, that were meant to show young people the value of hard work in honor of their fatherland and, in theory, win them for National Socialism and the Germanic project. And the work was, more or less, directly in service to the Dutch nation and not the German occupier.¹⁴ So in that sense, labor service with the NAD really was in the interests of the Dutch volk, but this changed in spring 1942, when compulsory labor service in Germany, known as the *arbeitsinset*, began.

The *arbeitsinset*, or Forced Labor Service in Germany, had been the result of two intermingling factors. First, like many of the major powers during the Great Depression of the 1930s, Nazi Germany engaged in an active attempt to reduce unemployment, and in that effort, the Nazis experienced great success. By 1936, Germany experienced a shortage of skilled workers which only grew as the 1930s went on, such that by mid-1938, the German government instituted compulsory labor service. When Hitler's armies began their conquest of Europe in

¹² De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 180–81.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 180n.

¹⁴ Like the *Opbouwdienst*, labor service for the NAD did not directly benefit the German occupiers. Of course, the German military did, in theory, benefit from better infrastructure and a more productive harvest, but those benefits to the military were by-products of the labor service's goals.

1939, the large numbers of formerly working men who had been drafted into military service created even larger labor shortages in the German economy, which were only exacerbated by the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, and their subsequent defeats during the winter of 1942-43. Those defeats led to increased military drafts and the ever-greater need for military production, further increasing the labor shortages that were already quite prevalent in Germany's economy.¹⁵

The second factor was the nearly opposite situation in the Netherlands. Where the large economies of Germany and the United States combated the depression through large scale state intervention into the economy, the Dutch governments of the 1930s preferred to take a hands-off approach. Thus, in 1936, when Germany was experiencing a labor shortage, unemployment in the Netherlands was extremely high at roughly half a million workers out of a working population of just over three million individuals. Although the Dutch government at that time did look to Germany as a source of inspiration for combating their economic woes, little actual policy resulted, such that, on the eve of the invasion, there were at least two hundred thousand officially unemployed workers in the Netherlands, with perhaps a half million total unemployed. The demobilization of another seventy thousand soldiers after the Dutch capitulation only made matters worse.¹⁶

Already in the late 1930s, the Dutch government had toyed with the idea of sending Dutch workers to Germany to fill out the labor shortages there and briefly even made accepting work in Germany a condition for the continued reception of state benefits, although that policy was reversed, in secret, in 1939. After the German occupation began, this policy of trading state subsidies for work in Germany was re-instituted by the Dutch government of its own accord by

¹⁵ Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 22–23, 657–58, 667.

¹⁶ Ibid., 31–37, 655–57; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 461.

simply not telling the German authorities that the policy had been abandoned in the first place. It was the re-institution of this policy that led to the first wartime labor drafts of Dutch civilians to work in Nazi Germany, even though such a position was, strictly speaking, illegal under Dutch laws that were aimed at preventing the coerced use of Dutch labor on behalf of the German war effort. Despite this coercion, the Germans' propaganda efforts focused on the "voluntary" nature of the work assignments in Germany.¹⁷ To the extent that unemployed Dutch workers were not forced at the point of a gun, the "voluntary" nature of the work assignments is accurate, but the financial coercion employed by the Dutch government and their German overseers should not be ignored.

This changed in two ways during the spring of 1942. On the one hand, labor service became compulsory, with shirkers threatened with arrest and imprisonment. On the other hand, the labor drafts were no longer limited to the ranks of the unemployed, as employed workers had, up to that point, not been shipped to Germany to work in factories, on farms, and in other industries deemed vital to war production. These changes were a direct result of Germany's war effort. The German economy lost roughly six million workers between 1939 and mid-1941, the vast majority to the German military. From mid-1941 when the Germans launched the invasion of the Soviet Union through mid-1942, almost two million more Germans were called into military service.¹⁸ The situation got even worse after the German defeat at Stalingrad and the subsequent declaration of total war in early 1943, with German demands for Dutch conscript laborers reaching into the tens of thousands of individuals per month, although they were rarely able to meet these quotas.¹⁹

¹⁷ Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 49–51, 663–65.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 667.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 669, 681.

Administratively, the Forced Labor Drafts were handled on the Dutch side through the *Generalkommissariat zur besonderen Verwendung* led by Fritz Schmidt and, to a lesser extent, by the *Generalkommissariat für Finanz und Wirtschaft* headed by Hans Fischböck.²⁰ On the German side of the equation, administration was handled by various agencies, including the Office of the Four Year Plan, headed by Hermann Goering as well as the *Reichsarbeitsministerium*,²¹ but in March 1942, the planning and administration of forced labor was centralized under the auspices of Fritz Sauckel, former official in Göring's office, *Gauleiter* of Thuringia, and newly appointed *Generalbevollmächtigter für den Arbeitseinsatz*.²² Sauckel would be the person who coordinated most of the efforts on the German side for the use of Dutch forced laborers, and it would be his office that set the quotas for forced labor participation.

The forced labor draft affected the educational sphere in two ways. First among these was the recruitment, and later forced removal, of Education Department personnel to work in Germany. Beyond the voluntary teacher re-training seminars held in Oldenburg for teachers looking for placement in German schools, the forced labor of workers in the education department was not a problem until the changes implemented in spring 1942 that allowed for the deportation of employed workers to Germany. Even here, the most heavily affected sector of the department that was sent to Germany did not include instructors, but rather those who performed auxiliary services, such as maintenance. For his part, van Dam was a significant defender of the personnel in his department, complaining constantly to Schwarz, Wimmer, and even Seyss-Inquart about the problems that would follow if departmental personnel were sent to Germany in

²⁰ That is, until Schmidt passed away in June 1943. He was replaced as *Generalkommissar zur besonderen Verwendung* by Willi Ritterbusch, who had previously served as one of Seyss-Inquart's *Beauftragte* for the Province of North Brabant.

²¹ Reich Labor Ministry.

²² General Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment.

large numbers. All of the “reforms” that had been instituted in the prior three years, he argued, would be for naught. Moreover, given his position as Secretary-General, with its consequent ability to mark personnel as indispensable, he was able to hold off the worst of the forced labor drafts from affecting teachers.²³ Luckily, Wimmer agreed with him, such that by the end of 1943, only twelve officials in the department had been sent to Germany in the labor service.²⁴

In 1944, the problem of teachers being sent to Germany for forced labor became more serious, but again, van Dam worked against the Germans in this regard. By this time, most people who were being called up for forced labor were not reporting but rather going underground, and this included teachers.²⁵ But teachers going underground because they had been called up for labor service was actually one half of the reason. Just as many, if not more, teachers had gone underground because of the recall of former POWs in April 1943.²⁶ Obviously, the German authorities saw this situation of teachers going underground as untenable, but van Dam continued to drag his feet on the matter. In February 1944, Schwarz sent a sternly worded letter—complete with specific words underlined and the word *Sofort!* (immediately) written in red and underlined twice for emphasis—to van Dam demanding to know how it was possible that the wife of a teacher who had gone into hiding was still receiving his paycheck. Schwarz demanded an answer within one week. Van Dam replied simply that it is an issue of inefficient bureaucracy.²⁷

The problem for the Dutch authorities was political in nature. On the one hand, the inspectorate, headed by Dr. Noordijk, wanted nothing to do with the situation. He did not think it

²³ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 272.

²⁴ Ibid., 273; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 192.

²⁵ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 273.

²⁶ The Dutch military had been released from their status as POWs shortly after the capitulation. In April 1943, the German announced that former soldiers were to be re-arrested as POWs, which led both to large numbers of former soldiers going underground and to the April/May Strike of 1943. See below.

²⁷ NA 2.14.37/285.

possible to fire such teachers, as they were using sick leave as their excuse for not working, but because he kept getting questions on how to proceed, he simply passed the problem up the chain. The provincial and central administrations decided that the best course of action was to turn the matters over to the police, as this was not an appropriate task for the school inspectors.²⁸ Therefore, van Dam turned to Schwarz and Wimmer for instructions on how to proceed. As far as van Dam was concerned, it was not possible to characterize the situation of a teacher who had used sick leave to go underground as having been released. Only a new governmental decree could change that situation, and when Schwarz had ordered him in mid-June to draft such a decree, he came up with the idea that any teacher who had been absent for more than a month would be considered released. Schwarz was not happy with the month-long waiting period and ordered that the period of absence be reduced to only two days, which mirrored the time frame for other government officials who had not reported to work without any notice at all.²⁹ The circular was finally released on August 8, 1944; van Dam had managed to drag his feet for almost six months. By this point, however, central control was beginning to break down. Only a month later, the first Allied troops would enter the country.

The other way in which the Forced Labor Service affected the Education Department was through the impressment of students, especially those in the final years of secondary education and in higher education. The genesis of the plan to send students to Germany came from G. A. Apitz, head of the *Hauptabteilung Soziale Verwaltung*³⁰ of the *Generalkommissariat für Finanz und Wirtschaft*. Sauckel's quotas for the period of April through November 1942 had not been met, falling short by about twenty-four thousand people, despite the fact that the number of those

²⁸ NA 2.14.37/285.

²⁹ NA 2.14.37/285.

³⁰ Main Department Social Administration.

sent to Germany, roughly one hundred, five thousand, had been higher than the number sent to Germany in all of 1941. When Sauckel's demand for twenty-five thousand forced laborers be sent in December, Apitz decided that he could pad the numbers with some five thousand students.³¹

Apitz then informed Schwarz that six thousand students were to report for labor service (he had increased his requirements), who suggested that the number was impossible to fulfill, and even if it were possible, it would engender much resistance among the students, who had formed a strong contingent of the resistance movement over the course of the year. Apitz, who was supported by Schmidt, refused to budge, and sent his requirements directly to van Dam, this time with a further increase in number to between six and eight thousand. Although van Dam protested to Schwarz, arguing that only graduated students should be sent to Germany, his objections were set aside, even though he was able to obtain some minor concessions.³² Instead of reporting for labor service on the nineteenth of December, the students destined for the *arbeidsinzet* could stay in the Netherlands until after the Christmas holidays, their labor service was promised to be no longer than one year, and they were to be installed in locations that made the further pursuit of their studies during their year in Germany feasible. Regardless of the concessions, however, the forced labor draft would mean that the total number of Dutch students studying in higher education in the Netherlands would be cut roughly in half.³³

With the concessions in hand, van Dam assembled the heads of the various universities and informed them of the situation, against which all of the university leaders, save one, strenuously objected. But their objections did little good, as the Germans were intent on

³¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/594-595; Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 196.

³² Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 275.

³³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/595-597; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 274.

following through with the policy. They left their December 9 meeting with van Dam without having gotten any real answers about their concerns and were instructed to keep quiet about the coming labor drafts. How exactly, the news got out is uncertain, given the large number of individuals privy to the otherwise secret information, but it did get out quickly.³⁴ The Council of Nine, an umbrella organization that coordinated student resistance at the nine Dutch institutions of higher education, called for student strikes, many of which occurred, but none of which had a centralized leadership and so all fizzled out. On Saturday December 12, van Dam sent telegrams to the various universities asking for the names and addresses of students, so that he could forward them to the appropriate authorities. That evening, however, the student registry at Utrecht went up in flames. The following Monday, Schmidt gave in. He had not expected the level of resistance to the labor draft that had occurred, and informed Apitz and van Dam that the labor draft would not be possible.³⁵

In early February 1943, a pair of attacks against NSB collaborators spurred the Germans back into action. The first was a deadly attack against Hendrik Seyffardt, a General in the Dutch Army and member of Mussert's newly established shadow cabinet. Two resistance fighters, the communist neurologist Dr. Gerrit Kastein and a university student named Jan Verleun, looked up Seyffardt's address in the local telephone book, went to his house on the evening of Friday, February 5 and simply rang the bell. Seyffardt, who was home alone, answered the door and was greeted with two bullets to the stomach. He died the following day, but not before reporting that the perpetrators of the attack against him had been students. On February 7, Kastein carried out another attack against H. Reydon, the successor to the recently dismissed Dr. Tobie

³⁴ De Jong believes it was via the university rectors, while Knippenberg and Ham believe the news came out through the Education department itself, where many student resistance leaders had contacts. See De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/599-601; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 275.

³⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/599-601.

Goedewaagen as Secretary-General of the Department of People's Enlightenment and Arts.

Kastein had located Reydon in Voorschoten, a small town between Leiden and The Hague, and upon approaching him, shot both Reydon and his wife. Reydon survived the assassination attempt, but his wife did not. Kastein fled to an unknown location where the police could not find him, but after a member of his resistance cell was compromised, he was picked up by the *Sicherheitsdienst* on February 19 in Rotterdam. He was taken back to The Hauge to be interrogated, but instead of submitting himself to the brutal interrogation methods of the SS, he jumped through a closed window, fracturing his skull on the pavement below. He died within hours.³⁶

As a result of the attack on Seyffardt, the Germans conducted *razzia* raids in Amsterdam, Delft, Utrecht, and Wageningen on February 6 that netted about six hundred students and sent them to the concentration camp at Vught.³⁷ Then, on February 9 an even larger *razzia* raid in Amsterdam netted about twelve hundred young people, most of whom were university students, but some who were also secondary school students.³⁸ They too were sent to Vught. Although the Germans had netted just under two thousand students, the plan had been much greater. In meetings with Seyss-Inquart, Rauter, and Schmidt, the discussion had been to arrest as many as five thousand young people, and possibly to execute fifty on the spot, even if those fifty could not be directly connected to resistance activity. Luckily, Seyss-Inquart, with the help of more

³⁶ Ibid., VI/612-618; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 275–76. De Jong and Knippenberg and Ham disagree on the perpetrators of the attack on Seyffardt. Both agree that the shooter was Verleun, but not on the second attacker. De Jong favors Kastein as having been the second attacker, while Knippenberg and Ham suggest it was another person, L. Frijda. All agree that Kastein was the attacker against Reydon and his wife.

³⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/615; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 275–76. De Jong suggests that the second raid in Amsterdam had already been in planning since before the attack on Reydon, specifically since the Saturday evening. Reydon was attacked on a Sunday.

³⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/622-623; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 275.

level-headed German officials, came to his senses and recognized that such drastic measures would be counterproductive.³⁹

As a result of the raids, many students simply stopped going to school, given the danger of collecting so many students in a single place.⁴⁰ If it was not the danger of being collected for forced labor, it was the danger of being arrested in German reprisals. Which factor most students thought more dangerous is difficult to determine, but regardless, such a situation was impossible to endure, even for the German leadership. As a result, on February 17, 1943, Seyss-Inquart released a circular stating that those young men under eighteen years of age and those older students who were engaged in serious study would not be called up for the *arbeidsinzet*. When some students continued to receive calls to report, Seyss-Inquart issued a second circular on the matter in March, exempting all secondary school students from forced labor, but also ordered that students who were nineteen years old needed to take their school exit exams, regardless of whether they were otherwise prepared. Even more students responded by going underground.⁴¹

The Loyalty Declaration

Although the Germans had been somewhat successful in collecting and deporting workers, many of whom were students, for labor in Germany, the goals they had set were almost never met. Their most effective actions had been *razzia* raids collecting students off the street. While some students did, indeed, report when called, they were a small minority. Many more responded to the summons by going underground. Thus, already by early 1943, Seyss-Inquart was at an impasse. His superiors in the Reich were demanding quotas of young Netherlanders to work, but try as he might, those young Netherlanders would not answer the calls. He could not

³⁹ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 92–93.

⁴⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/737.

⁴¹ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 276; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 402–9.

allow that situation to continue. Moreover, university life had been nearly shut down by the February razzias, and this threatened to cause political problems for Seyss-Inquart if Rauter and Harster were able to assert themselves vis-à-vis Seyss-Inquart by arguing that students were a significant portion of the resistance. This might, Seyss-Inquart rightly feared, allow the two SS men to refer the entire question of universities and student labor over to the German security forces.⁴²

In order to help solve the problem, van Dam returned to his request from the previous December—to force students who had completed their studies to join the Forced Labor Service while keeping still enrolled students free of such obligations. According to van Dam, this had several benefits. First and foremost, it would reduce the ongoing student insurrection. But it would also, hopefully, provide a steady stream of graduating students for labor in Germany, and even better, workers who might actually be qualified to perform the work to which they were assigned, instead of students who were, at best, still in training. He granted that the roughly two thousand students who would complete their studies each year was a far cry from the five thousand which Sauckel had been demanding, but it was, nonetheless, better than no students at all, and the German war economy needed all of the labor it could get.⁴³ At the same time, van Dam suggested two further regulations aimed at preventing too many students from using further university study from delaying their labor service in Germany: the loyalty declaration and a general *numerus clausus* limiting the total number of students who were allowed to attend university in any given year.⁴⁴

⁴² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/737.

⁴³ Ibid., VI/737-739.

⁴⁴ Kneegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 280–81.

By this point, A. A. Mussert, leader of the NSB, had been declared by Hitler as the *Leider* of the Dutch nation. Although it was a mostly meaningless gesture, it did give him the ability to insert himself into the internal deliberations at the *Reichskommissariat*. He wasted no time in doing so and used this opportunity to try and strike a blow against his nemesis van Dam (van Dam was one of many Mussert nemeses). Because he had not been consulted, or even informed, about the *razzias* against the students that took place on February 6 and 9, Seyss-Inquart was forced to allow Mussert a seat at the table regarding the loyalty declaration. Where van Dam had wanted to limit the loyalty declaration to students alone, Mussert hoped to not only force students to sign the loyalty declaration, but also hoped to require professors sign along with them. Furthermore, he wanted to insert language that forbade any actions by students that went against the NSB and its student organization. Finally, he wanted to expand the powers of the university curators and rectors. The former would be able to suspend instructors and the latter to suspend students for up to a year, where they had previously been limited to suspensions lasting a single week. Van Dam opposed all of these insertions, save the increased power of the university rectors and curators. Van Dam asked Wimmer to intercede on his behalf, which Wimmer did. In the end, van Dam's position held; the *Leider* was totally defeated.⁴⁵

The second week of March, the government made public two decrees that followed the intent and purpose of van Dam's recommendations. The first regarded the *arbeidsinzet* and was issued directly by Seyss-Inquart. "In order to guarantee, on the one hand, total commitment, including academic youth, to the European fight against Bolshevism and, on the other hand, sufficient academic talent," the Secretary-General in the Department of Education is empowered to implement a *numerus clauses* in all areas of university education.⁴⁶ University students who

⁴⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/739-741.

⁴⁶ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 27/1943.

had completed their exit examinations were required to work in the *arbeidsinzet* for a specified period of time, provided they did not receive a reprieve from either the Secretary-General of the Education Department or from the same in the Department of Social Affairs. The second decree, which was issued by van Dam himself, detailed the new authorities of university rectors and curators, including their increased ability to suspend students, as well as made mandatory the signing of the loyalty declaration. The loyalty declaration declared only that the undersigned would follow the appropriate laws, decrees, and governmental regulations; would not engage or support resistance acts against the German Reich, *Wehrmacht*, or Dutch government such that would endanger the peace and order in the universities.⁴⁷ Three days later, on March 16, the majority of the students who had been interned at Vught were set free.

The declaration itself had been rather reserved in nature. It had called only for the signers to refrain from engaging in anti-German activities *to the extent that they would disrupt the universities*. Moreover, he required only that students sign it “every year.” This latter point had the effect of pushing the requirement to sign the declaration into the winter semester of 1943/44. But without his knowledge, the Germans inserted a clause into the decree that stated, “every year, for the first time one month after this regulation goes into effect...” This meant that the first students were required to sign the loyalty declaration within a month of the order going into effect in order to keep studying.⁴⁸ Van Dam had been too clever by half.

In a radio speech to the Dutch nation, van Dam declared that signing the declaration did not mean that students would automatically, voluntarily register for the *arbeidsinzet* after they

⁴⁷ Ibid., 28/1943. The full declaration reads: “De onderteekende, geboren, te wonende te, verklaart hiermede plechtig, dat hij de in het bezette Nederlandsche gebied geldende wetten, verordeningen en andere beschikkingen naar eer en geweten zal nakomen en zich zal onthouden van iedere tegen het Duitsche Rijk, de Duitsche Weermacht of de Nederlandsche autoriteiten gerichte handeling, zoomede van handelingen en gedragingen, welke de openbare orde aan de inrichtingen van hooger onderwijs, gezien de vigeerende omstandigheden, in gevaar brengen.”

⁴⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/741; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 277.

completed their studies. The order requiring participation in the Forced Labor Service had been released by Seyss-Inquart and was completely separate from the loyalty declaration decree issued by van Dam himself. Even the dates on which the two decrees had been released were different (by a single day).⁴⁹ Van Dam further argued that the loyalty declaration had only two purposes: the maintenance of peace and order in the universities and the guarantee that students would be able to complete their studies. In contrast to the fears of many students, the loyalty decree would, if signed before the deadline of April 10, prevent signers from being shipped to Germany, not cause it, or so he argued. As was by this point nearly formulaic, van Dam ended his address by appealing to the listeners' sense of patriotism: "It is up to you to show whether you will answer these attempts with understanding for our intentions and an attitude, which better than anything negative, witnesses to a truly sophisticated patriotism that is elevated above the influences of the day!"⁵⁰

Regardless of van Dam's efforts to make the loyalty declaration palatable to students and convince them that it was in their best interest to sign it, the Council of Nine advised students to refuse to sign the declaration, and their advice was taken to heart. Only about thirteen per cent of students signed the declaration at all by the deadline, with rates varying from university to university, with some student bodies effectively refusing to sign en masse.⁵¹ Rates increased only slightly after the deadline.⁵² On the other hand, the loyalty declaration was quickly overshadowed by the strike events of late April and early May, during which Rauter decreed that

⁴⁹ Somewhat oddly, the first decree by Seyss-Inquart, 27/1943 was dated March 11, while the second decree by van Dam, 28/1943, was dated March 10.

⁵⁰ "De loyaliteitsverklaring der studenten - Radio-rede van prof. van Dam," *Haagsche Courant*, April 8, 1943.

⁵¹ NIOD 020/457. The rates ranged from 25% at the Technical University in Delft and 20% at the University of Amsterdam to 0.2% at the Free University of Amsterdam and 0.0016% at the University of Nijmegen.

⁵² NIOD 020/457. So, for example, at Nijmegen, the number increased to 0.3%, at the Free University of Amsterdam to 2.1%, while at Delft, it rose to 26.4%.

anyone who had not signed the loyalty declaration by May 5 were required to sign up for the *arbeidsinzet*—about three thousand of the students did just that.⁵³

As a result of the low rates of signing the loyalty declaration, the universities in Tilburg, Utrecht, Groningen and Nijmegen, as well as the Free University of Amsterdam were all closed. The German security forces rounded up thousands of students who had not signed the loyalty declaration and sent them to Germany as part of the *arbeidsinzet*. Thousands more went underground. Although most of the closed universities were reopened shortly, they proved almost empty of students.⁵⁴ In March 1944, van Dam sent a letter to Wimmer describing the general state of affairs in higher education. He noted that although there had been disturbances among the students in the 1943/44 school year, they had not been as bad as the previous year. More problematic was the loss of both students and teachers to the *arbeidsinzet*. On the other hand, too many teachers were going underground, using sick leave as the pretense. Nor were there enough vacancies to fill those positions left unoccupied. As van Dam put it, “the machine cannot be put back into gear.”⁵⁵ Although higher education would struggle through the final year of the war, it was a shadow of its former self. This was made worse by the fact that the Netherlands in fall 1944 and spring 1945 was turned, quite literally, into a war zone, as Allied and German forces fought for control of the crucial Rhine river crossings. Across all of the universities in the Netherlands, these various factors would combine to keep total enrollments to less than two thousand students, when the university student population had traditionally hovered around sixteen thousand annually.⁵⁶ The machine was indeed completely broken.

⁵³ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 282–83.

⁵⁴ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 277–78.

⁵⁵ NIOD 020/479.

⁵⁶ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 277–78; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 286–87.

By this point in the occupation, van Dam seems to have grown weary of the Germans. He had not been a fan of the NIVO but did not actively work against it. The same could be said for the *Reichsschulen*. He had opposed most of the anti-Jewish measures, along with the rest of the Dutch bureaucracy, but again did not entirely stand in the way of the Germans' efforts in that realm, although he was instrumental in saving a small group of about 700 Jewish Netherlands, by working along with his colleague Karel Frederiks, the Secretary-General of the Department of Internal Affairs. The two of them had interceded with Seyss-Inquart to save a number of notable individuals who were, for various reasons, deemed significant to Dutch culture. Compared to the many points on which van Dam had agreed with the Germans' policies, or indeed been an originator of such policies, these few instances of resistance are outliers. The loyalty decree, which was van Dam's last real attempt at implementing major policy, had been an effort to forestall the worst of the Germans' actions against students, but it was largely ineffective in this purpose, since so few students were willing to sign it. With the imposition of forced labor, the *razzia* raids against students, their internment in concentration camps, and other elements of increased repression against the Dutch populace, van Dam began working, more or less, against the ultimate goals of the *Reichskommissariat*.

The April/May Strike

The loyalty declaration, which had been devised as a way to both maintain order in the universities as well as increase enrollments in the *arbeidsinzet*, had been an abject failure. But while the situation in higher education had led to massive resistance efforts on the part of the students, it did not disrupt the entire country in the same way that the recall of POWs would. The very fact that POWs could be recalled was due to an order that Hitler had given the German High Command in the Netherlands shortly after the armistice in May 1940 to release the members of

the Dutch military back into civilian life. Hitler, of course, wanted to show the Dutch that he was looking out for their best interests, but at the same time, forced the soldiers to sign a loyalty declaration stating that they would not engage in anti-German activities.⁵⁷ Contrary to what Hitler might have hoped, however, the former soldiers would, in many cases, not adhere to either the letter or spirit of their pledges.

The process of recalling former soldiers included two stages. The first came in May 1942, when, under orders directly from Hitler, the Germans began considering the recall of the officer cohort of the Dutch military. The reason for this recall was simple. Many Germans officials believed, not incorrectly, that the Dutch Army contained within its ranks important members of the resistance movement that had been picking up steam over the previous months.⁵⁸ Career officers, with their training and organizational abilities, would be essential to the resistance movement, and so in order to crush resistance, it would be necessary to remove the military leadership from the scene. So, on May 9, at the behest of Luftwaffe General Friedrich Christiansen, the commander of German military forces in the Netherlands, former career military officers, cadet officers, and officers of the Dutch Army in the Dutch East Indies who were under the age of fifty-five, were ordered to report to various barracks throughout the country precisely at 2pm on May 15. No reason was given for the order.⁵⁹ However, two days later, the Commissariat for the Interests of the former Dutch Army, a section of the Dutch Department of Defense that had been re-established under German orders to look after the well-

⁵⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/791.

⁵⁸ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 56.

⁵⁹ "Tweede verplichte bijeenkomst ter controle van de voormalige Nederlandsche weermacht," *Leeuwarder Courant*, May 9, 1942, Day edition.

being of former soldiers, posted announcements that those officers required to report to barracks would be eligible for reimbursement of their traveling costs, both to and from their destinations.⁶⁰

But there was no return home for these soldiers as they were all promptly arrested and sent to prisoner-of-war camps in Germany. Two days later, Christiansen made clear their reasoning: “Members of the former Dutch Army have participated to a significant extent in all kinds of hostile acts against Germany. Among them were a considerable number of officers and aspiring officers ... [who] had broken their word.” Moreover, in case the stakes were not clear enough, the notice went on to threaten non-commissioned officers and reserve officers with future arrest should former soldiers continue further anti-German sabotage actions and general resistance.⁶¹ Although some career officers had seen the writing on the wall and did not report to the barracks on May 15, they were a small minority. The vast majority of those who reported, over two thousand career military officers from both the army and the navy, were arrested, although some exceptions were made, such as for members of the NSB, the *weerafdeling*, and those who had actively collaborated with the *Reichskommissariat* in some form or fashion.⁶² Although there were some protests at the train stations as the officers were led away, given the secretive nature of the events, those protests were only attended by people who had happened to be there at that time, making them small in nature and easily controllable.

The underground newspaper *Het Parool* reacted to the arrest of the career officers with its characteristically sharp tongue. Noting that the officers had been arrested for failing to honor the pledges they had been forced to sign in May 1940, the paper wrote: “The way in which this was done, of course in the lowest, worst way, shows again that the occupying power does not

⁶⁰ “Latere Berichten,” *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, May 11, 1942, Day edition.

⁶¹ “Bekendmaking,” *De Telegraaf*, May 17, 1942, Day edition, sec. Eerste Blad.

⁶² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/970-972.

know what is meant by ‘soldier’s honor.’” The paper went on to note that the entire reason these career officers had been released in the first place was not, as the Germans had declared, out of a friendly belief in the racial kinship between the two peoples, but rather because they had hoped that they would be able to “shackle the Dutch volk, in its entirety, into a Germanic front, with the chance then that our Dutch officers could be taken up into the German Wehrmacht.”⁶³

The second stage of the POW recall occurred almost a year later, in late April 1943, when the German high command called for the re-internment of the 300,000 members of the Dutch military. But given the underhanded way in which the arrest of the officer corps had proceeded, even the German High Command in the Netherlands could not have expected to be able to repeat the process so easily. When Christiansen released his decree, he did not mince his words. The soldiers of the Dutch Army would be sent away to POW camps and had “only to thank the instigators who have made this action necessary by their criminal behavior.”⁶⁴ Despite his statements that the reason for the POW recall was a punishment, that was only half the reason. Himmler had imagined the recall of Dutch soldiers as a new reserve labor force for German industry.⁶⁵ Regardless of the motives, however, just as Christiansen had been less reserved in his decree, the population was considerably less reserved in its reaction.

Christiansen’s decree was transmitted to the newspapers the morning of Thursday, April 29. In the town of Hengelo, near the German border, the director of a printing company with ties to the local newspaper decided not to wait for the decree to hit the papers and instead to print large copies of the proclamation that very morning and hang them as placards in the street-facing windows of his printing shop. The shop itself happened to be located on a street located near

⁶³ “De ontvoering der Nederlandsche officieren,” *Het Parool*, May 26, 1942.

⁶⁴ “Bedenkenmaking,” *De Tijd*, April 29, 1943.

⁶⁵ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 95; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 74.

several large factories, which resulted in large numbers of workers seeing the placards during the morning shift changes.⁶⁶ Word of the recall of POWs spread quickly from there to neighboring towns in the region as workers returned home from the overnight shift and informed their friends, colleagues, and neighbors. The reaction was nearly unanimous among the local population, which turned to the greatest weapon they had to protest the Germans' actions—a general strike. By midday, of the forty-one major factories in the Twente region, twenty-eight were already closed as more than twenty thousand workers took to the streets. And all of this was before the newspapers had even published Christiansen's decree.⁶⁷

The German reaction to the events in Twente was immediate but hampered by Seyss-Inquart's absence from the country—he was visiting with Hitler in Berchtesgaden at that very moment. Hanns Albin Rauter, the Higher SS and Police Leader and *Generalkommissar* for Security Matters in the Netherlands took the lead.⁶⁸ The plan had been, since after the February 1941 strike, to declare martial law, but only the Reichskommissar could give that order. This had been officially implemented by order of the Reichskommissar in early 1943, which allowed him to suspend the regular courts and establish police courts, which would preside over little more than show trials.⁶⁹ Because he was unreachable in Berchtesgaden—Rauter tried to call Seyss-Inquart, but could not reach him—Rauter instead ordered SS police regiments into service and sent them to Twente with orders to await the declaration of martial law and then, when it came, to start shooting into any crowds they came across. There would be no arrests and certainly no trials.⁷⁰ At some point during the night of Thursday into Friday, Seyss-Inquart got word of the

⁶⁶ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 96–97; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 113–14.

⁶⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/799–802; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 114–15.

⁶⁸ Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 115–16.

⁶⁹ Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete, *Verordnungsblatt*, 1/1943.

⁷⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/805–806.

unrest in Twente and immediately took a train back toward the Netherlands. In the meantime, he granted the order for martial law in those areas in which strikes had broken out.⁷¹

By the morning of Friday, April 30, the news of the POW recall had spread to the rest of the country, along with rumors of all sorts, including the imminent invasion of the Allies. Strikes broke out almost everywhere that morning, and those places that remained calm in the morning joined in the strikes that afternoon. Rauter called into service all of the SS battalions and German police battalions that were stationed in the country. He then ordered placards be hung in various locales throughout the nation declaring martial law and warning citizens that any groups of five or more individuals congregating on the street or in market squares would be shot on sight. In many places the German police did just that, killing about ninety-five people over the next few days. At the same time, they also arrested hundreds, put them in front of police courts, and “tried” the defendants. In most cases, the defendants were convicted in these summary courts and sentenced to death. The sentences were usually carried out immediately, although, since this was mostly meant as a scare tactic, clemency was offered in some cases, especially if other strikers agreed to go back to work.⁷² Also on Friday, the Dutch government in exile in London had gotten news of the POW recall, and through the BBC’s Radio Oranje broadcasts, argued that the recalled soldiers simply not show up at the appointed time. If necessary, they should go underground. But because their sources of information were limited—they learned of the POW recall through a Swiss newspaper—the Queen and her ministers were not aware of the strikes breaking out across the country.

Over the weekend, the pace of the protests slowed down considerably, hampered by that fact that the 30,000 members of the Dutch railway service stayed on the job and did not join the

⁷¹ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 96.

⁷² Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 115.

strike at all.⁷³ The railways had not had a long history of striking and their refusal to join the strike actions of the rest of the population allowed both for the effective deployment of German police units throughout the country as well as for those individuals who did not want to join in the strike to continue to go to work. By Monday, many of the strikers who had joined in the protests on Friday and over the weekend went back to work, leaving only a hardened core of strikers on the streets, who made easy prey for the German security forces. In some areas, the strike actions continued throughout the rest of the week, but these were mostly isolated stretches of the countryside; the major, nation-wide strike ended on Monday.⁷⁴ Over the course of the five days, hundreds of people were arrested, with over a hundred sentenced to death for participating in the strikes, although some of those sentences were commuted. At least ninety-five had been shot on the streets without even being arrested.⁷⁵

The April/May Strike of 1943, in many ways, marked the very end of any attempts by the Germans to be accommodating to the desires of the Dutch population, and, for that reason, is usually cited as a major turning point in the occupation.⁷⁶ It was clear, even to the occupation authorities, that the Dutch would not be won over to Nazism, but would resist in any way possible. Moreover, the entire impetus for the strike, the recall of the POWs, had been an abject failure. The overwhelming majority of former soldiers simply went underground and did not report for arrest. Between former soldiers and students, as well as the tens of thousands of Jewish individuals who were in hiding, the Netherlands was a nation in open rebellion against the demands and desires of their German occupiers. In response to this fact, but also as a result of the

⁷³ Ibid., 116.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, VI/843; Warmbrunn puts this number lower, at 80. See Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 116.

⁷⁶ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 91–101; Warmbrunn, *The Dutch Under German Occupation*, 13.

ever-worsening war situation, which saw the Soviets both gaining strength and repelling German attacks in the east, the Germans turned to outright repression in the occupied Netherlands, intent on extracting as many resources as possible, whether capital or human, in order to save their teetering empire.⁷⁷

Forced Labor, continued

By mid-1943, the Forced Labor Draft as a whole stopped being an entirely effective tool for the Germans. German attempts at registering the Dutch population for labor in Germany had mostly been a failure, whether through resistance of the Dutch bureaucracy and Dutch industry or through the efforts of the Dutch Resistance to destroy successfully compiled records. To make matters worse for the Germans, most Netherlands went into hiding when called up for labor service, so even if the Germans could successfully compile and maintain accurate records, it did them little good. Although the Germans continued to attempt to register Dutch workers and force them to go to Germany, their efforts were faltering greatly. In the first seven months of 1943, roughly 118,000 Netherlands had been successfully sent to Germany for forced labor, for an average of just over 16,000 workers per month. In August, that number dropped to just over 9,300, while in September it fell further to about 4,400, and fell again in October to just over 3,000. Between November 1943 and July 1944, on average, just over 2,000 workers were deported monthly to Germany for forced labor.⁷⁸

In the summer 1944, there was a short hiatus in the forced labor draft, but by the autumn and winter of that year, the labor drafts picked up again, and in even greater numbers than ever.⁷⁹ Because fewer and fewer Netherlands were actually reporting for labor service when called,

⁷⁷ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 91.

⁷⁸ Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 681.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 682.

whether by going underground or feigning illness, the Germans resorted to *razzia* raids to collect men on the streets and from their homes.⁸⁰ Between September and December 1944, at least 120,000 Dutch laborers were deported for work in Germany, including an astounding 50,000 who were rounded up in the city of Rotterdam over two days in early November.⁸¹ By this point in the occupation, however, the dynamics of the war had changed significantly. The Germans were in open retreat on all fronts and forced laborers from the Netherlands were no longer being put to work in factories or on farms, but rather doing the grunt work of military fortification in advance of the impending Allied onslaught.⁸² Indeed, the first Allied troops reached the city of Maastricht, in the far south of the country in mid-September, liberating it on September 15, 1944.

Two days after the liberation of that city, as the Germans and Allies were engaged in a heated battle over Rhine river bridge crossings at the city of Arnhem as part of Operation Market Garden, the Dutch government-in-exile in London ordered Dutch railway workers to strike in an effort to keep reinforcements and supplies from reaching the German forces there.⁸³ Although the Dutch railway workers dutifully carried out the orders and successfully shut down the Dutch railway system, the German defenders managed to hold off the Allied advance. The German reprisals for the railway strike were unimaginably harsh. Seyss-Inquart, who was never a supporter of the forced labor drafts because of the instability they caused among the Dutch populace, threw caution to the wind and ordered a complete cessation of food imports to the still-occupied and heavily-populated western provinces.⁸⁴ The forced famine that resulted, known as

⁸⁰ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 475.

⁸¹ Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 691; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 477.

⁸² Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 479.

⁸³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, X/355.

⁸⁴ Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 483–85; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, XI/160-161.

the Hunger Winter, resulted in the death of about twenty thousand Netherlands over the next several months.

It is difficult to say how many Netherlands in total were deported to Germany for forced labor for several reasons. First, not all labor contracts were indefinite, and many Dutch workers ended up being sent to Germany multiple times and being counted more than once as a result. Further, many workers escaped the forced labor service illegally, especially those who were sent to work just across the German border and for whom escape back into the Netherlands would have been relatively simple. Finally, an untold number of workers died in Germany, further throwing off the statistics. A rough estimate, taking these factors into consideration would be that somewhat more than 550,000 Netherlands—out of a total Dutch population of about nine million—were sent to Germany to work at some point during the war.⁸⁵

By all accounts, the increase in the use of forced labor was problematic for van Dam specifically, especially as the forced labor drives began to disrupt the educational sphere he oversaw.⁸⁶ The Loyalty Declaration would turn out to be van Dam's last major effort to initiate occupation policy, and it was a failure. The month of March 1943, when the Loyalty Declaration was issued, marked another important milestone for the department—the move to Apeldoorn in the interior of the country. Although the move itself likely had little to do with van Dam's declining interest in the aims of the German occupiers, it does correspond mostly with that apparent change in van Dam's views, and therefore, in many ways, marks the end of educational reform efforts during the occupation.

⁸⁵ Sijes, *De arbeidsinzet*, 623–25; Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, 477. Koll places the number at 560,000 through mid-1944, but does not estimate for the remainder of the war. Given the large raids in Sept.-Dec. 1944, it would stand to reason that the estimate might rise as high as 700,000 Netherlands.

⁸⁶ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 284–90; Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 281–85.

Van Dam and the End of Educational Reform

On August 19, 1942, British, Canadian, and American forces launched a small-scale raid on the French port town of Dieppe. The purpose of the raid was to gather intelligence about coastal fortifications in “Fortress Europe.” The raid was never meant to establish a lasting beachhead in Europe, but rather to test the defenses the Germans had devised. Ultimately, the raid itself was an immense failure, with several thousand Allied casualties and a retreat back to England on the very same day. Although from a military-strategic perspective the raid had failed, it did have consequences throughout German-occupied Western Europe. One of those consequences was the removal of most Dutch government offices from The Hague, which lies along the Atlantic coast in the southwestern Netherlands, to the interior of the country.⁸⁷ Although the planning and execution of the move took some time to accomplish, the Education Department finally moved offices to the central city of Apeldoorn in late March 1943.⁸⁸

The move to Apeldoorn, in many ways, signified the end of any concerted effort at educational “reform” on the part of the German occupiers and their Dutch helpers. Rather, for the rest of the war, the Germans focused on further implementing those changes in Dutch education that had already been introduced, or in the case of historical instruction, conceived of. But the German leadership did this without much success.⁸⁹ It was also around this time that van Dam appears to have lost all motivation to carry out further attempts to work in support of those objectives. In the realm of higher education, the *arbeidsinzet* and the loyalty decree had wreaked havoc across the nation. Those universities that were still open were open almost in name only, given the lack of both instructors and students. Moreover, the rectors and curators of the

⁸⁷ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 282.

⁸⁸ BAL R4901/694.

⁸⁹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 289.

universities had lost all confidence in van Dam's ability to act in the best interest of the nation. His influence in higher education was completely shot.

In primary and secondary education, his status was not much better. The introduction of the eighth school year of primary education had to be pushed back a second time in summer 1943, and, as a result, would not be implemented at all. His attempts to increase the influence of the state, especially in the confessional schools, were met with significant and effective resistance. The Catholic and Protestant school associations were, for all intents and purposes, still *de facto* independent of the central government and the attempts by van Dam, the Germans, or their other collaborators to control them met with failure, despite the *de jure* control they had attained. The *arbeidsinzet* continued to cause problems for teachers in the lower schools as well, and van Dam had to spend much of his time attempting to get exemptions for teachers and secondary school students from the forced labor drives, all in an effort to simply keep the schools running. In many ways, van Dam's efforts in Apeldoorn were just holding actions to keep the department running and to prevent the education system in the country from collapsing entirely.

It was also in mid-1943 that van Dam appears to have undergone a personal change of opinion regarding National Socialism and the German occupation more generally. In a draft letter, intended probably for Wimmer, with whom he was acquainted on a friendly basis, he criticized the inefficiency and corruption of National Socialism, including the Germans. Seyss-Inquart's policies were pointless as they did not do not lead anywhere, and if they did lead somewhere, that usually ended up being the repression of the Dutch people. The Dutch were simply too individualistic to accept a political ideology such as Nazism, which was too complicated, often contradictory, and sometimes outright random in its efforts and effects.⁹⁰ It is

⁹⁰ Ibid., 284.

unclear whether the letter was ever sent, but its contents nonetheless reveal van Dam's state of mind at the time.

Moreover, van Dam also started to tangentially participate in the resistance. An old acquaintance of his from his days as a military reservist lived in Apeldoorn and van Dam, who was granted a car and chauffeur for his personal and professional use, routinely picked up the man's wife on his way to and from the office. While he likely did not know, at first, that this woman was a courier for the resistance movement in Apeldoorn, he did eventually learn the truth yet far from doing anything to sabotage the woman's efforts, he instead put his car and chauffeur at her disposal.⁹¹ Furthermore, it was during his time in Apeldoorn that van Dam's greatest and most far reaching efforts to save the roughly 700 Jewish Netherlands deemed to be culturally significant took place, although those efforts had started in the latter part of 1942.

At the same time, however, van Dam did not discard his affinity for German culture, nor did he renounce his membership in the SS. While in Apeldoorn, he continued to expend significant effort on his publication *De Waagschaal*, which continued to appear until August 1944. But this focus on extra-departmental activities was somewhat of a common occurrence in Apeldoorn. Other departmental officials spent their time writing plays and doing other non-job-related activities.⁹² But otherwise, for the most part, work at the department in Apeldoorn came to a standstill.⁹³

Unsurprisingly, this situation led some of van Dam's adversaries to use his waning efforts on behalf of the German occupation against him. Jap Schrieke, who attempted to blame his own failures regarding the prosecution of confessional school boards who had defied the appointment

⁹¹ Ibid., 289–90.

⁹² Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 283–84.

⁹³ Ibid., 280, 283.

decree is one such example. The NSB declared him “Public Enemy Nr. 1” due to the “the untenable state of the department of education due to the impossible attitude of van Dam” and attempted to have him sacked from his office.⁹⁴ Hanns Albin Rauter, the *Generalkommissar für das Sicherheitswesen* and Higher SS and Police Leader in the Netherlands, complained to Seyss-Inquart about several alleged offenses van Dam had committed, including helping to save Jews, and defending a man who had murdered a Dutch police man (van Dam was acquainted with the murderer’s father, and appears to have intervened on the father’s behalf).⁹⁵ Dr. Harster, the head of the security police and SD in the Hague attempted to work against him as well. The SS magazine *Storm* declared that the Department was “the strongest crutch of confessionism” and that “its leaders covered for those whose lack of belief is well known.”⁹⁶ But despite these efforts, van Dam retained the confidence of those most important to his position within the Education Department and his personal well-being: Seyss-Inquart, Wimmer, and Schwarz.

In his final report to the Party Chancellery on November 23, 1943, Schwarz listed a number of “radical measures” for which he thought van Dam’s support had been necessary.⁹⁷ The right of confessional schools to appoint their own teachers had been revoked and could only proceed with the approval of the Secretary-General, and therefore also of his direct superior, Schwarz. The state gained the authority to determine the curriculum and to punish financially those schools that did not comply. In this way, *Mein Kampf* was introduced in secondary schools, physical education in primary schools, and German propaganda school films in both. The state was also able to dismiss teachers and school heads as necessary, which it was able to accomplish through the appointment of a school inspector in general service, whose office was filled with

⁹⁴ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/357; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 287–88.

⁹⁵ NIOD 020/567.

⁹⁶ Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 305–6.

⁹⁷ NIOD 020/2047.

Greater-Germanic thinkers. By using these authorities, the position of the confessions could be broken, especially through the closing of confessional teacher training colleges, the removal of clerical school heads, and the reduction of clerical teaching salaries. The school inspectorate had been filled with Dutch Nazis of a Greater Germanic mindset, while Jewish children had been removed from the schools. Parity between the German Schools in the Netherlands and Dutch schools was achieved, as was the introduction of German language instruction in primary education and an increased emphasis placed upon German language in secondary education. Becoming a German instructor was made more appealing by freeing them from the *Arbeitseinsatz* as well as exempting them from arrest as POWs. These new German language teachers were trained in SS schools and were opened to the Germanic ideal. Twelve thousand school books were “cleansed” and those that were anti-German or written by Jews were removed from circulation. And a school history book on the Germanics as well as a new book for German language instruction in the primary schools were both introduced. As Schwarz put it regarding van Dam, “despite some relapses into a false sense of humanism, on the whole, he has proved himself.”⁹⁸

Van Dam would stay in the position of Secretary-General until the end of the war. In March 1945, he moved back to Amsterdam, shortly before Apeldoorn was liberated by Allied armies. On May 7, he was suspended by the Minister of Education and five days later, he was arrested by Dutch Resistance fighters. He would spend the next four years, to the day, in various prisons. Over the course of the winter and spring of 1946, a parliamentary commission was established to look into his activities during the occupation. The commission established that he had mostly acted as a mouth-piece for the German occupiers, helped them carry out their plans,

⁹⁸ NIOD 020/2047.

but also had, for the most part, done his best to serve the interests of the Dutch nation. The commission, however, did not have all of the facts in front of them, especially the *Gedanken und Vorschläge* and *Reform* pieces, which spelled out his part in initiating many of the “reforms” he later attempted to blame on the Germans. But also working in van Dam’s favor were his various actions toward the end of the war, such as his role in saving Jewish Netherlands, his work against forced labor, and his model status as a prisoner after the war. Despite the commission’s report, however, he was not freed. In 1948, after several years’ wait, he was put on trial for his actions in support of the German occupiers, for which he was found guilty and sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment on November 8, 1948. Through several interventions, including Cardinal De Jong, as well as a Royal commutation (which was given to many prisoners, not just van Dam), he was eventually freed on May 12, 1949. Although he attempted to reenter professional service, those doors were closed to the former professor. He lived out the rest of his life in relative obscurity working odd jobs in the educational field and as an editor to make ends meet. He died on October 30, 1979, aged 83 years.⁹⁹

His work during the German occupation is somewhat of a mixed bag, although certainly not nearly as clean as was judged by either the parliamentary commission or at his trial. Without question, many of the “reforms” that the Germans instituted during the occupation were actually his ideas. In fact, it was in light of these ideas that he was chosen in the first place over van Genechten.¹⁰⁰ Van Dam proposed the introduction of German language and physical education long before he was in a position to carry out those “reforms.” Van Dam proposed the curtailing of clerical authority; indeed, his initial proposal went further than the “reform” eventually adopted in 1941. Van Dam argued long before he was appointed that the influence of the state

⁹⁹ Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 291–303.

¹⁰⁰ NIOD 020/2047.

needed to be increased and that education must be given in a national sense.¹⁰¹ In those areas of school “reform” with which he did not agree, he was nonetheless a willing tool of the German occupier, although the same could be said of both van Poelje and Reinink.¹⁰²

His motivations for his actions remain equally suspect and ambiguous. He stated both during the war and after that he was only looking out for the best interests of the Dutch people.¹⁰³ There is no reason to believe that van Dam himself did not believe that was the case. But it does beg the question, what, exactly, he thought those best interests were. Long before the war started, he had been fascinated by Germany and German culture. Already in the 1930s, he had moved in *völkisch* circles in the Netherlands and had been a leader within that movement, which was capped off with his joining the SS in September 1941. Once the war broke out, he argued over and over and over again that the future of the Dutch people lay with the German Reich. That future was one in which Germany would be the leading force in Europe and it was, therefore, in the best interests of the Dutch people to ally itself with Germany, to be a partner in the future Germanic Reich that the Germans were attempting to build. Although it does appear that van Dam did not believe the Dutch would have a choice in the matter—he was convinced, as so many others were especially in the early days of the conflict, that the Germans would win the war and become the undisputed masters of Europe—his belief in the inevitability of German victory does not negate his predilection for the type of society that the Germans were hoping to build. If anything, they were mutually reinforcing. The inevitability of German victory confirmed his own beliefs in, and affinity for, German culture and the German people.

¹⁰¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/338; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 245–49; Alberts and Zuidervaat, *De KNAW en de Nederlandse Wetenschap Tussen 1930 en 1960*, 18–19; De Pater, *Het schoolverzet*, 40–41.

¹⁰² Knippenberg and Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg*, 302–3.

¹⁰³ Among numerous other examples: “Radiorede prof. dr. J. van Dam”; “Nederlands onderwijs in nieuwe banen - Prof. Van Dam over de arbeid van zijn Departement”; Knegtmans, Schulten, and Vogel, *Collaborateurs van niveau*, 291–303.

Conclusion

The efforts of the German occupiers and their Dutch collaborators to create a new type of education in the Netherlands were largely a failure. The German occupiers had entered the country with the express goal of winning over the Dutch populace for National Socialism in order to eventually incorporate the Netherlands into a Greater Germanic Reich. In the educational sector, as Schwarz outlined, this process flowed along two paths: a direct path through German educational institutions like the German International Schools and the *Reichsschulen* and an indirect path through Dutch schools. Both paths proved unsuccessful avenues for the creation of a new Dutch national and cultural identity for several reasons.

The direct path was inhibited, on the one hand, by resistance from within. This included infighting within the SS over the ultimate authority over the two *Reichsschulen*, opposition on the part of the NSB against the German International Schools, the NIVO, and the *Reichsschulen*, and a lack of acceptable teaching staff. But even if this avenue had been effective, it was aimed only at the future elite of the new order, and therefore did not have an appreciable influence on the larger population. Moreover, the use of these schools as models for the reform of Dutch education was largely ineffective. Had the Germans been able to cement their control and continue down this direct path, it is certainly possible they might have encountered more success, especially if the populace ever resigned itself to permanent German hegemony, but as that never happened, it is impossible to say if such a success was possible, let alone likely.

The indirect path, while broader, was resisted by the majority of those whom it affected. Dutch school administrators and teachers were, by and large, unwilling to acquiesce to the demands of the central government in The Hague (and later Apeldoorn). Whether it was the appointment decrees, the introduction of new subjects like German language instruction, changes

to already existing subjects like historical instruction, the extension of primary education to an eighth school year, the use of banned books, etc., there was simply too much opposition on the part of teachers and local administrators. Additionally, significant structural obstacles existed that made the attempted “reforms” nearly impossible. Primary school teachers were not prepared to teach German language, nor were there acceptable numbers of qualified professionals for the introduction of physical education, to say nothing of the lack of space and appropriate material. Even when it came to the introduction of propaganda films into the classroom, the shortage of film stock became problematic. Just as with the direct path, had the Nazis been able to secure their place atop the Dutch state indefinitely, it is certainly possible that these efforts would have been more successful, but whether or not that is the case is impossible to say.

In his reports back to the Office of the Deputy Führer/Party Chancellery, Schwarz was acutely aware that more time was necessary for the “reforms” about which he raved to be fully implemented. He was under no delusions that the work he was attempting to implement would be quick or easy. The steps that the occupiers and their Dutch helpers had taken were introductory and would need to be followed up with further efforts if they were to bear fruit.¹⁰⁴ The changing tide of the war, the increased resistance of the Dutch populace to Nazi rule, and the increasingly repressive nature of the German occupation essentially put an end to any hope of success in the immediate future. German defeat would make success impossible.

In this inquiry, however, I have been just as much, if not more concerned with the Germans’ goals in the educational sphere as with the actual “reforms” implemented. In this instance, it is clear that the goals of the German occupiers in the educational realm were largely in lock step with the larger German goal of incorporating the Netherlands into the Greater

¹⁰⁴ NIOD 020/2047.

Germanic Reich. In order to fully incorporate the Dutch nation into this new European empire, it was necessary to win the Dutch over to National Socialism, to a racist, *völkisch*, Germanic mindset which would then prepare them for future incorporation into the Reich. This was the impetus behind the “reforms” introduced in the educational section. And the entire leadership of the *Reichskommissariat* agreed in this larger goal.

While the question of the motives of the German leadership in the Netherlands, as well as Nazi leaders in Berlin, is, in my view, clear, it is more difficult to determine the exact motives of their chief collaborator in the Netherlands, Jan van Dam. Van Dam clearly was sympathetic to Nazi rule. He was sympathetic to the *völkisch* tendencies of the SS, even joining the organization in September 1941. His two pieces on education reform written before he was appointed to lead the Education Department show that many of the various “reforms” he proposed were essentially similar to the same ideas promoted by the Germans, indeed this had been one of the reasons for his appointment in the first place. At the same time, he does not appear to have been a “diehard” member of the SS clique in the Netherlands. All evidence suggests, for example, that he did not share the virulent antisemitism of the SS. Moreover, his growing antipathy toward the German occupation, especially in the last two years of the war, suggests he had lost confidence in the correctness of his earlier views.

It is equally difficult to say where van Dam stood on the question of the Greater Germanic Reich. He does not appear to have taken a public stance on it during the war, indeed, he may not have even been aware of this goal of the occupation, since concrete plans for the incorporation of the Netherlands into the Reich were never made, remaining instead in the realm of conjecture and possibility, being put off until the future European settlement was more clearly visible. Van Dam certainly believed that the relationship between the Netherlands and Nazi

Germany would be much closer after the Nazis won the war, but whether van Dam saw that relationship looking like the federated empire preferred by Mussert or the more centralized empire preferred by the Germans is unknown. By way of speculation, given his overall tendencies in favor of the SS, it stands to reason that, at least in the early part of the occupation, van Dam would have preferred the more intimate relationship between the two countries, but whether or not that is the case is impossible to know. During his trial, he denied any motives other than doing what was in the best interests of his country and fellow Netherlands. But then, that was also the motive he most often gave during the early years of the occupation when he was clearly working in support of goals he himself shared. And quite frankly, under the circumstances, what else would he have said? Given that the most damning evidence of his direct collaboration—his two pre-appointment writings on educational reform—were unknown, he had a significant amount of plausible deniability regarding his actions on behalf of his German superiors. He, like most other senior Dutch bureaucrats, could argue that they were simply carrying out the orders that were given them. Had he quit in protest, his work would have been carried on by someone else. So, his protests that he was only trying to work in the interest of the Dutch people could not be rejected outright. Nor should they.

In my estimation, van Dam appears to have taken the mostly pragmatic view that Nazi rule over the Netherlands was unlikely to end any time soon. In the near term, the Nazi occupiers' goals and his own goals lined up almost perfectly, and so van Dam believed that his collaboration with the regime was in the best interests of the Dutch nation. Whether or not van Dam viewed these "reforms" through the long-term lens of the creation of a German-dominated Germanic empire in Europe is more difficult to say. Either way, the changing tide of the war and the increased repression of the German occupiers against the Dutch people removed the

pragmatism behind van Dam's initial choice of collaboration, for even he did not believe the Germans' efforts at this later stage were really in the best interest of the Netherlands. It was around this time, early to mid-1943, that van Dam began working against his German superiors. So even if van Dam was a true believer early in the war, he was not so strongly attached to his own views about educational reform to ignore the damage being done to the Netherlands generally and Dutch education specifically through German repression.

Ultimately, however, van Dam's motives are secondary to the overall history of educational "reform" attempts in the Netherlands during the German occupation. His initial support and later antipathy for many of the Germans' efforts had little, if any, effect on the Germans' overall designs, of which education was but a single piece in a much larger puzzle. In the education sphere specifically, van Dam was able to work against some measures, such as the introduction of German language in the third year of primary education, but then it was a matter of degree more than substance.¹⁰⁵ He was also able to effectively counter the draft of many students and educators into forced labor, or at least significantly reduce their total numbers, but this too was really in defense of the education sector writ large, for further disruptions, especially of teachers, might have actually caused a breakdown in primary and secondary education as had already happened in higher education. But for the most important changes, van Dam either largely went along with the Germans or was sidelined entirely.

Although van Dam was a central figure in the education sector during the occupation, his work must be seen through the lens of the German occupiers' goals, and in that lens, as Schwarz noted, van Dam had, despite some humanistic misgivings, proved himself useful. But despite the utility that van Dam offered, the task the Germans were attempting to complete in the

¹⁰⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, V/344.

Netherlands was simply too gargantuan to be effectively forced through in the short period during which they had total control of the education sector. Even if there had been no resistance to their overtures, and there certainly was significant resistance from the Dutch populace, their task would have taken many, many years to complete. It was, after all, an attempt to influence the next generation of Dutch adults, and so the fruits of that effort would have only been vindicated had the Germans maintained their control for decades into the future.

But the future the Nazis hoped for, the future at which their attempts to change education in the Netherlands were aimed, never arrived. Instead of a thousand-year Reich, Hitler's empire crumbled under the combined military might of the wartime Allies after only thirteen years in power. The Nazis' grandiose plans at a Greater Germanic Reich, their efforts at educational "reform" in the Netherlands, and their very existence as a governing power crumbled away with it.

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Vita

Joshua Sander was born and raised in Nashville, TN where he took an early interest in German history, language, and culture. Upon graduating high school, he spent a year as an exchange student in Goch, Germany, located on the Dutch border, where his interest in Dutch-German relations and Dutch history and culture first developed. Upon returning to the United States, he attended George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, where he earned his B.A. and M.A. in history. After spending several years working for an educational publishing company, he returned to academia at the University of Tennessee to pursue a PhD in history in 2012. At UT, Mr. Sander has pursued his interest in Dutch-German relations through his dissertation project which focuses on German educational policies in the occupied Netherlands during the Second World War. His research has been supported by numerous internal and external agencies, including the UT Center for International Education, the UT History Department, the UT Graduate School, the William J. Fulbright Foundation, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the German Historical Institute, the American Association of Netherlandic Studies, and the Central European History Society, among others.