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Dutch Resistance to the Nazis during World War Two

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SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

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Senior Honors Paper

Dutch Resistance to the Nazis during World War Two

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Peter Höyng

May 10, 2003
Abstract:

When the Netherlands was invaded on May 10, 1940, the Dutch people were unprepared for the Nazi Occupation that ensued for five years. For the Netherlands, the actions of the Nazis were unthinkable, due to their stance of neutrality since World War One. After the Nazis invaded, the Dutch Jews became a focal point in a plan for a Final Solution and the Reichskommissar, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, was placed in charge of Occupied Holland.

There was a multifaceted response to the orders of the occupying power and the Dutch were not united in their action. Whereas the majority of the Dutch population organized resistance movements that helped place Jews into hiding, others aided the Allies, while still others actively thwarted the Nazis. In many areas, such as the economy and with the underground movement, the Dutch actively resisted the occupying power. However, there were members of the Dutch population who, in their own interest, remained passive and merely accommodated the Nazis. In contrast, at least 150,000 people were active in collaboration with the Nazis and fought against the Dutch resistance organizations. Because the subject of collaboration is precarious, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Dutchmen collaborated with the Nazis. Overall, historical research suggests that, the Dutch resistance had far-reaching effects and through acts of passive and active resistance, they were successful in their work. However, the amount of collaboration within the Netherlands must be taken into account with the resistance before a conclusive decision about its success can be made.
Introduction:

Before one can understand the complexity of the relationship between the Dutch people and their Nazi occupiers, the background of the Netherlands before the Nazi invasion must be explained. The Netherlands was unified by the Hapsburg Empire of Spain in 1543, when many of the provinces in the Low Countries were joined together, but the Netherlands fought for its independence which it finally received in 1568. After becoming a republic, the Netherlands enjoyed a period of economic and colonial prosperity, becoming a major power in the world at that time. After many conflicts between Spain and France, a combined Holland and Belgium became the Kingdom of the Netherlands after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Following a tumultuous period of unification, the Netherlands and Belgium were separated, creating the current Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1830 (Ganse). During World War One, Holland remained neutral, while most of the neighboring countries in Europe were involved in conflict. When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, the Netherlands again maintained their stance of neutrality, until the Germans invaded the Netherlands eight months later on May 10, 1940. In a five-day struggle, and after the obliteration of Rotterdam, Germany had completely occupied the country and the Dutch were forced to surrender. From this point, the Dutch were given a choice to resist or accommodate and collaborate with the Nazis. At this time, the population of the Netherlands numbered eight million, with a Jewish population of about 140,000 (Chapman-Hester 1).

Because the geography of the Netherlands is so flat, there is little space that could be used to set up a resistance movement, in the manner as was possible in Poland, Italy, France, and other countries, due to their size and various terrains. The boundaries of
Holland also were impediments in the establishment of resistance movements within the country. The border that Holland shares with the North Sea was closely patrolled by the Germans and fewer than 200 Dutch were able to escape by sea. As compared to Norway, which was invaded one month before the Netherlands, the success of 200 is overshadowed by the 80,000 Norwegians who were able to escape to neutral Sweden (De Jong 31-32). The British military intelligence was able to have a regular courier service to occupied France and drop secret agents and supplies, which was impossible in Holland due to the fact that all of the airfields were controlled by the Germans.

Therefore, by understanding the actions of the Nazis within the Netherlands as a background, the acts of resistance became even more necessary in maintaining a semblance of normalcy in a state of occupation. The Dutch are strongly independent and their stance of neutrality was largely based on the geographical disadvantages of their country. In describing their viewpoint, “Wij willen onszelf zijn en blijven” is a common phrase meaning, “We wish to be and remain ourselves”. The Dutch policy of neutrality dates back to World War One, when the Dutch Prime Minister, Cort van der Linden, maintained a strict policy of neutrality, protecting the Dutch from invasion and a compromise of their values (Hirschfeld 13). Queen Wilhelmina left Holland on May 14, 1940, in hopes to continue the Dutch government abroad. Once in England, she released a statement that proposed a continuation of the struggle against the Nazis from London and she asked for understanding of her escape, which in her mind, enabled her to take the necessary steps to continue the resistance of the Nazis. Although the Dutch government did not provide for a transfer abroad of their seat of government, she proclaimed London
as the temporary seat of the Dutch government, which made it possible for the continued existence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (15).

After their country had been taken over, the Dutch had a choice to resist the actions of the Nazis to protect themselves and other Jewish citizens or follow a policy of accommodation or direct collaboration. Therefore, in the following paper, I will address the topic of how the Dutch chose to face their wartime occupation and also explore the issues of resistance and collaboration. While many Dutchmen risked their lives for their Jewish neighbors, there is an underlying fact that many others obliged the Nazis’ commands, in addition to those who directly collaborated with them.

**Occupying Government**

According to Louis de Jong¹, one of the foremost experts on the subject of Holland during World War Two, with some exceptions, the only people who really knew what would happen to the Dutch Jews were the highest officials in the Nazi German administration in Occupied Holland. Commissioned by Adolf Hitler, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, originally a player in the “Anschluss” in Austria, was sent to Holland to control the activities of the Nazis there as the Reichskommissar of the Occupied Dutch Territories (De Jong 7). Because the royal family had fled to Britain during the time of the invasion, German rule in Holland was direct, while Queen Wilhelmina established a government-in-exile in London. Seyss-Inquart came to the Netherlands from a post in Poland, where he had been involved in merciless population transfers, which would be a valuable experience and useful to his goals in Holland. Under him, he had five
Generalkommissare, who helped him to carry out his actions among the Dutch Jews (Lozowick 144). Immediately after his arrival in Holland, he initiated anti-Jewish legislation and activities, which as he testified in the Nuremberg Trials after the war, he did so at his own initiative, without receiving direct orders from Adolf Hitler in Berlin.

After Seyss-Inquart came to the Netherlands, a Reichskommissariat Niederlande (Netherlands Reich Commissariat) was established as the provisional form of the Nazi occupation administration. The Reichskommissar, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, was appointed as the head of the Commissariat, where he could employ Dutch authorities and German police in the exercise of his administration (Hirschfeld 20). One of the measures of his control was his creation of a propaganda ministry. At the beginning of the war, there was no sort of propaganda organization in the Netherlands that could be compared to those in Germany. Thus, the Departement “van Volksvoorlichtung en Kunsten” (Dutch Propaganda Ministry) was created in November 1940 (See Appendix for pictures).

Another attempt in securing the occupation was the reliance on civil servants. By 1941, there were 1596 civil servant, white-collar workers, and other workers employed by the Commissariat; by 1942, there were over 2000 workers, one-third of whom were Dutch (23). Therefore, Seyss-Inquart was not overly successful in manipulating the work force in the Netherlands.

Jews in the Netherlands

While Seyss-Inquart’s control of the work force in the Netherlands had minimal success, he achieved more success in controlling the Jewish population in Holland.

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1 Louis de Jong published Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, the most comprehensive history of the Netherlands during World War Two to date. This work, published in 27
Seyss-Inquart’s strongest legacy was undoubtedly in his policies of persecution of the Jews. The definition of being a Jew in Holland was defined by a law similar to those developed in Nuremberg in October of 1940 (Lozowick 145). In 1940, the Amsterdam City Council, under order from the occupying Germans, sent out two forms to all of the Departments of Education throughout the Netherlands. Form A was to be filled out by Aryans and Form B was for non-Aryans. As an employee of the state, every civil servant received both forms and had to choose which one to use. Many people were angered by this action by the government, but in the end, the forms had to be signed, thereby making it easier to identify the Jews. This obedience to bureaucratic regulations aided the Germans, through a passive accommodation of the German orders. If a larger number of Dutch citizens had refused to fill out those forms and not distinguished themselves by a category of race, it would have been more difficult for the Germans to isolate certain groups of Jews based on identification by these forms. In addition, their refusal to obey the orders of the Germans would have sent a strong message to the Nazis that many Dutchmen were not willing to accept their anti-Semitic policies (Kopf 93).

Immediately following the distinguishing of Jews based on their Aryan descent, Seyss-Inquart wanted to lessen the Jews to the same low status as to which the Jews in Germany had been lowered. Initially, he tried to deprive them of the businesses they had built up and isolated them in Dutch society (De Jong 7). Also, he tried to rid Jews of their property by making them report businesses under their ownership and also restricted their activity. Some 10,000 businesses were closed in the months that followed, with Jewish owners being removed from 8000 businesses under joint ownership and 3000 larger businesses that were targeted for German takeover (Lozowick 145-46). By volumes, is considered to be most important study of the Netherlands during this time period.
August of 1941, all Jewish property was blocked, in addition to their bank accounts, financial papers, and valuables. By this time, many extermination camps had been established and he wanted the Jews to be removed to Eastern Europe in order for the Nazi German administration to accomplish their goal; therefore, he knew they would need help from the Dutch civil service, help from the areas of the Dutch administration that they controlled, and also help from the Jews. “They did not want any resistance; they insisted on compliance. First of all, they intended to create a situation, akin to the one that had been realized in Germany, in which the non-Jewish majority would take but little notice of what happened to the Jews” (De Jong 7).

As explained by Louis de Jong, the Nazis wanted to kill all Jews who were considered pure Jewish blood, which included 140,000 Dutch citizens. Of those 140,000 people, 10,000 of them were of mixed marriages with non-Jews, so they were not immediately affected. If the Nazis had not won the war, those 10,000 people would have been deported (39). Of the remaining 130,000 full Jews, at least 107,000 were deported and killed by the Nazis, which comprised 82% of the Dutch Jewish population. Though it seems difficult to comprehend such a mass exodus of the Jewish population, there are six reasons why this was possible by the Nazi party:

1) almost no one realized the fate that was in store for those who were deported
2) the overall deception of the Germans was cunning and effective
3) compared to Jews in other countries, the Jews in the Netherlands were less vigilant and were not as defensive and as some other Jews
4) they received virtually no help from the Dutch authorities in Holland
5) the deportations started nearly a year before the Spring of 1943, when the mass strikes during that year had made both the people in general and parts of the civil service more inclined to resist the Nazis.

6) the Netherlands is very isolated, there was no neutral Sweden where they could easily go and even if neutral country had been closer, it would have been impossible to relocate 107,000 people—the Danish Jews who were saved by going to Sweden only totaled 6000 (De Jong 40).

Despite the difficulty of transportation, 3000 Jews were able to escape to Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Spain. Though 107,000 Jews were deported out of Holland, the Dutch Resistance was able to put 25,000 people into hiding, 16,000 of whom were undetected. In addition, some Jews refused the help that was offered to them, believing that being deported gave them more of a chance of survival than going into hiding.

In terms of deception, to ease the fears of those people in Westerbork, the Germans told the Jews that they were needed in labor camps because their help was necessary for the continuation of the war effort. Also, the Jews were deceived when they were told that all Jews found in hiding would be sent directly to Mauthausen. This was untrue because most Jews were sent to Westerbork before being sent to another concentration camp outside of Holland. Another form of deception was used in Auschwitz-Birkenau in the form of communication. Those who were not immediately killed in gas chambers or ovens were made to write postcards or letters to their families to inform them that they were safe and that working conditions were tolerable. Very few letters actually left the camps and they were instead sent to the Jewish Council, to
reassure other Jews that life in Auschwitz-Birkenau was actually not as bad as the rumors depicted (17).

The Germans also manipulated the Jewish Council, or Joodserad, to help them round up Jews, insisting that the Jewish community select a group of representatives who would serve as liaisons between the Nazis and the Jews. Leading rabbis and administrators usually became members of the Jewish Council, having the responsibility to implement all of the Nazis’ orders. The Jewish Council was responsible for informing the Jewish community that men and women between the ages of 16-44 would be required to go to Germany to be part of their labor force. The Germans insisted that the Council distribute and collect the forms for the forced labor and it was also up to them to inform the Germans as to the number of Jews they could “process” in one day. When the Council would receive quotas, they would often round up random people on the street or would have to choose whom to deport (Kopf 96) (See Appendix for pictures). At this time, few people could conceive that people who were being sent for ‘work’ in Germany were actually being exterminated in concentration camps (96-97).

Later in 1941, the chairman of the Jewish community and two rabbis were summoned by the Dutch Nazis and were ordered to set up a Jewish Council. The first and primary job assigned to them was to collect all of the weapons in the possession of the Dutch Jews. From the moment that the Jewish Council was founded, it served as a tool of the Nazis in power in helping them to obtain their objectives (Lozowick 148). The Nazi Security Police also published a warning in the newsletter published by the Jewish Council, saying that whoever failed to report for deportation as required would be arrested and sent to Mauthausen and that any Jews who did not wear a badge would also
be sent there, where they would work in a stone quarry until death. Also, any Jew who changed their place of residence to evade deportation, as in hiding or escaping the vicinity, would also be arrested and deported. Still, only a few people reported, so the Germans continued their raids to maintain their quotas of deportees (148). By this time, rumors began circulating about Westerbork and other concentration camps throughout Europe, and the Jews tried to either escape the country or go into hiding. Located in northeastern Holland, near the German border, Westerbork served as a transit camp, from which many Jews were sent to other concentration camps.

The progress of deportations in Holland differed from what was occurring in France during the same time. In France, the deportations began at a rapid pace, but within a few months, the Nazis began to encounter increasing difficulties, which somewhat slowed the number of people being deported. Also, anti-Semitism was traditionally more widespread in France, when compared to the Netherlands, in addition to the fact that many more of the French more willingly cooperated with the Nazis. In Holland, most of the Jews were rounded up in quick arrests. Also, the documents of the Security Police in Holland do not reflect any growing concern about their inability to carry out their mission on time, they were instead worried about how much effort would be needed to complete the task (159). The Security Council in France was forced to try large-scale arrests in order to assemble all of the Jews for deportation. In May 1943, the Dutch Joodserad was notified that they must give up 7000 of their employees for deportation and despite initial protests, they were still forced to obey the Nazis’ orders. Many failed to report and as a result, the Jewish Quarter in Amsterdam was surrounded, and after a house-to-house search, 3000 Jews were arrested to meet the quota of 7000
Again, the Joodserad obeyed the orders of their Nazis occupiers and betrayed many of their own Jews. Through a more active resistance against the Nazis, the Jewish Council may have been able to save more of its people.

With division of opponents, the Germans never made an announcement that they would deport all Jews because that would have allied the Jews with the members of the Dutch resistance. If the Jews joined a Protestant church, they could have been exempt from deportation (De Jong 10-11). When the Jewish Council was established in 1941, the members agreed that they would never participate in any activities that would be contrary to Jewish honor. However, after awhile, the principle of self-preservation became more important and some Jews were compromised by the Council (11-12). At that time, there were 140,000 Jews living in the Netherlands, consisting of two groups: Dutch Jews and immigrant Jews from Germany and Austria, who escaped racial politics by the Nazis beginning in 1933. In March 1942, the Jewish Council was given to understand that German Jews were to be deported to labor camps in Eastern Europe. Therefore, they did not warn any of their Dutch Jews contacts because they did not think that they would be affected. However, once the Yellow Star of David was introduced to all Jews in May 1942, all groups of Jews were at risk (12-13). The Nazis told the Jewish Council that the Jews that were deemed necessary to carry out the Council’s social activities would be allowed to remain. Therefore, after this statement, the Council drew up a list of 35,000 people, half of whom were exempt from deportation and the other half of whom were vulnerable to the actions of the Germans. Many of the so-called vulnerable people were immediately deported to Westerbork, before moving on to other concentration camps in the East. By 1943, all of the exempt Jews had disappeared and
the Council was made to choose new groups of Jews to deport. Their first shipment was 7000 Jews and by September 1943, the Jewish Council themselves were sent to Westerbork because they had served their purpose for the Nazis (13). Though the Council had been trusting of the Nazis’ promises of exemption, the Council again was only a tool of the Nazis’ greater plan of Jewish extermination throughout the Netherlands.

During the Summer of 1942, most people in Occupied Europe believed that the Allied Forces would soon land and liberate them. The Allies themselves believed they would be able to land at that time and quickly end the war, which would have saved many Jews before they were exterminated by the Nazis. However, because the Allies were not able to move as quickly as they initially thought, the Germans were able to liquidate most of the Jews from Holland in 14 months. Again, during this time, there was little resistance from the Jewish Council. Also, there was little resistance by the German Jews who were in Holland during the Occupation. They were closely controlled by the German SS and occupied most of the important positions in Westerbork. One of their main function was to draw up a list of inmates who would be sent to “labor camps” in Eastern Europe (14). Once in Westerbork, many Jews tried to remain there because comparatively, they lived in much more humane living quarters and were permitted to live, as compared to other concentration camps. By this time in the war, most of the Jews knew what was ahead of them if they were deported from Westerbork. Of the 140,000 Jews in Holland in 1940, at least 80 percent of them died before the war’s conclusion.
Resistance to Nazis

All resistance to German activities in Holland was based on a resistance to the German four-pronged policy used to control the Dutch:

1) to transform the Netherlands into a National Socialist state, which, if the Germans had won the war, would have become part of das “Grossgermanische Reich”

2) to fully exploit the Dutch economic potential, including the Dutch labor force

3) to purge the Netherlands of its “Jewish problem”

4) to prevent all aid to the enemies of the Nazis, whether by espionage, sabotage, or by guerilla fighters

As explained by de Jong, any act that was contrary to one of these goals was an act of resistance (32-33). With their first goal, the Nazis failed almost completely because they lost the war and the Netherlands was given back its independent status. Also, the Nazi movement in Holland during the war never garnered support from more than 1.5 percent of the population, due to the fact that the Netherlands never completely identified with the Germans, as did parts of Belgium and France. One act of resistance was listening to British and American broadcasts on contraband radios. Also, Nazi stamps were affixed to the left-hand corner of envelopes because the Dutch people believed that the right-hand side should be reserved for Queen Wilhelmina stamps. In addition, the traditional greeting of hallo served as an acronym during the war, meaning “Hang alle landverraders op”, or “Hang all traitors”.

In 1940, many Dutchmen actively resisted the Reichskommissar’s ban on flags by celebrating the birthday of Prince Bernhard with the displaying of carnations, which
greatly angered Hitler and resulted in the dismissal of the mayor of The Hague (Hirschfeld 35). The German defeat in the Battle of Britain, their failure to invade the United Kingdom, the failed invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, and the entry of the United States into the war all helped to give the Dutch hope and further strengthened their resistance movement. The Dutch Nazi movement, the “Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging” (Nationalist Socialist Movement, the NSB) helped the Nazis to “nazify” Dutch society (37-38). The Nazis and the NSB collaborated on the requirement that all professionals join the professional organizations established for them by the new administration. These organizations had formerly been voluntary, however most Dutch people regarded the NSB party leaders as politically and morally corrupt and thus, very few were willing to join the organizations (39). A large number of doctors refused to join the professional organization for doctors, which had been established by the Nazis, called the “Artsenkamer”. Their conduct is a rare example of the successful refusal of a profession to be gleichgeschaltet (centralized, fully controlled action.) This was due to the fact that the doctors had a special position within Dutch society and a collapse of medical care would have been disastrous for the occupying power as well as for the Dutch people. They were also helped by their illegal resistance organization, Medisch Contact, in giving medical attention to those in hiding (40).

**Resistance by Individuals and the Church**

There were some courageous Dutch men and women who resisted earlier German orders. One law professor, for example, drafted a petition to Reichskommissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart, in which he stated that he and his colleagues, as well as the majority of
Dutch teachers, were against the identification of the Jews by the Star of David (Kopf 93-94). The Dutch churches responded to the German anti-Semitic measures in varying degrees. Many Protestant churches read letters of protest about the war and the Nazi occupation from the pulpit, in addition to their sermons. However, for the most part, their statements and petitions were not effective in changing policies or rallying non-Jews to protest. In fact, in order to save some of their community's own Jews, they sometimes helped the Germans in deadly actions against Jews from other communities. However, some other churches told their congregation members that anti-Semitic measures were in direct conflict with the idea of Christian charity.

Luckily, most Jews did not accept the authority of the Jewish Council, one of their first acts of resistance. Especially during the years of 1942-43, the Council was seen as subservient to the Germans and many of the Jews knew not to trust the actions of the Council. If the Jews actually did conform to the decrees of the Council, it was due to pressure from the Nazi army or police, instead of agreement with the Council (De Jong 18). There were several instances where the Jews refused to conform to the Council and their requirement. For example, to receive assistance from the Jewish Council, one was supposed to pay a special tax, which was unpaid by one-third of the Jews. In 1942, 2600 Jews were ordered to report for work in Dutch labor camps, and only 900 responded. Half of the Jews who were supposed to be deported to Westerbork refused to show up and either went into hiding or tried to escape. In 1943, of the 7000 Jews who lost their exemption from the Nazis and were supposed to be sent to Westerbork, only 700 followed the orders of the Nazis (19). There were more Jews who joined the resistance movement than non-Jews, so many of the Jews who were in hiding from the Nazis aided
the underground movement. Those who were able to escape the Netherlands were aided by resistance organization in Holland, Belgium, and France.

Of the many Jews who decided to go into hiding, most of them did not possess their own hiding place, as was the case of the nowadays-famous Anne Frank family in Amsterdam. Many Dutch non-Jews hid the Jews, but also were responsible for the obtainment of false identity papers, food coupons, and often money. Of the 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands, 25,000 of them went into hiding, and one-third of those were captured before the war was over (De Jong 20-21). It took a lot of courage for non-Jewish families to open up their homes for Jews. Resistance workers, numbering at least 2500, helped place the 25,000 Jews with hiding places, papers, food coupons, and money, for them to survive.

** Strikes and Protests **

In the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands during World War Two, there was not a single stage that was not protested by public protests or acts of the resistance by Jews and non-Jews alike. In the Fall of 1940, the Germans demanded that no more Jews could be admitted to the Dutch Civil Service. As a result, in November 1940, all Jews were dismissed from the civil service and the students from two of the nine major universities in the Netherlands went on strike. Riots ensued throughout the country, and after the death of a Dutch Nazi and the attack on a German police patrol, many Jewish men were sent to concentration camps. On February 25, 1941, the entire working population of Amsterdam and a few neighboring cities went on strike, protesting the persecution of their fellow Jewish citizens, with the strike lasting for two days, until it
was broken up by the Germans. By that time, all of Holland’s Jews had been moved to Amsterdam, so they could be more easily controlled, rounded up, and deported. Besides halting all production for two days, this strike also made Seyss-Inquart realize that the Dutch were serious in their protest against the Nazis actions and thus he proceeded with caution, using the following tactics: fear, division of opponents, and deception (De Jong 8-9). The fear was directed against Jews and non-Jews alike, with the understanding that any non-Jews who resisted and helped their Jewish neighbors would also be sent to concentration camps. In an early deportation, 900 Jews, including the 400 who had been taken from Amsterdam, were sent to Mauthausen where most of them were killed. In addition, those Jews who were caught in hiding were threatened to be sent to “labor camps”, including the likes of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sobibor (9-10).

After the Germans announced that all members of the Dutch armed forces, who had been released from captivity after the Germans had taken over in May 1940, would have to report to be sent to prisoner-of-war camps, there was a protest in the Spring of 1943. (34). Another strike occurred in September 1943, when the Dutch railway, industrial, transport, and shipyard workers refused to continue working for the Nazis, thus shutting down these sectors of society. These strikes were important because though the Netherlands was occupied, their protests sent a message of active resistance to the Nazis. In addition to these strikes, there was resistance to the German attempts at Nazification in July 1940 when, the leaders of Holland’s six most important pre-war political parties, having drawn up a common program, refused to have it published because the Nazis had crossed out all references to the Royal House of Orange and to Dutch independence. Like in the Netherlands, the French also organized major strikes
against the Vichy regime and their propaganda, in addition to preparation for their liberation (French Resistance 1).

**Resistance by the Professional and Economic Elite**

There were others groups in society who helped to lead resistance movements throughout different parts of society. Members of trade unions and employee organizations, including farmers, artists, and especially writers and sculptors, and most members of the medical profession resisted the formation of new organizations for their professions, led by the Dutch NSB, which would replace their old organizations (35). In April 1943, all university students were ordered to sign the following declaration of loyalty to their Nazi occupiers, in order to continue their studies:

> The undersigned...declares...herewith that he will obey according to honor and conscience all laws, decrees, and other orders applying in the occupied Netherlands; and that he will refrain from all actions directed against Germany, the German armed forces, or Dutch authorities; and [that he will refrain from all actions] which endanger the public order in the universities...Those who sign this loyalty-statement are permitted to continue their studies, *provided that the number of those who sign does not exceed a certain percentage as determined by German need for slave labor* (Mason 117)

During the war, only 15% of Dutch university students signed the loyalty statement, so many Dutch students actively rebelled by refusing to sign the statement, while knowing the consequences of their actions. Many organizations of university
students protested and many university professors signed a letter, in protest of these actions, that was sent to Seyss-Inquart.

However, Arthur Seyss-Inquart was more successful in exploiting the Dutch economy. An important concept for the Nazi administration was to keep the Dutch economy intact, because only if the national economy could operate independently and the currency could be retained, would their economy be useful to the Nazis (Hirschfeld 27). Therefore, the Nazis wanted to keep Holland independent, yet closely connected with the Third Reich so that the Dutch could manage the economy under the close watch of the Nazis. Dutch industries were to be left with only enough supplies to satisfy limited wartime requirements (28). The policy of the Reichskommissar was to influence the Dutch to accept an alliance with Nazi Germany and to prompt them to undergo Nazification (34).

The Netherlands has always relied on trade to maintain its vitality and Germany had been one of their major trading partners. Also, Britain had enacted a blockade, so Holland had to rely on Germany even more for the raw materials they needed. Of course, Germany was happy to comply, but in return, the Dutch had to agree to produce weapons to help support the German war effort. The Dutch knew that to have any sort of viable economy, they would have to comply with the German demands, making it difficult to resist them (De Jong 36). Statistics show that by the end of the war, half of the Dutch industry worked exclusively for the German war effort, with more than half of those orders being for military supplies. In 1943, 2-3% of all of the weapons acquired by the German armed forces were made by the Dutch, including 8% of all radio sets and 14% of all shipping. German control was very strict, so sabotage did not occur very often and in
fact, the Germans were quite satisfied with the expediency of Dutch deliveries, which was more than could have been said for the Belgian and French deliveries. By the end of 1943, the French had delivered 70% of all orders placed by the Germans since June 1940, while the Belgians had delivered 76%, and the Dutch had delivered 84%.

In the beginning of 1944, there was more resistance by Dutch industrialists and their contributions to the war effort began to decrease. Because, by that time, most of the south of the country had been liberated, including the only coal mines in the Netherlands. However, the North was still controlled by the Germans and they continued to exploit the Dutch until the end of the war. The Dutch industrialists complied with the Germans mainly to save their industries and to allow their employees to continue to have a job, instead of being unemployed like many other Dutch citizens. If they had not been employed by Dutch companies, they could have been sent to Germany for forced work (37-8). In 1940-1941, some Dutch volunteers went to work in Germany, in addition to some others who were forced to by the Dutch administration. The ones who were forced to leave were told that they would lose their unemployment benefits otherwise, which was a trick in order to get them to leave. Some of the early volunteers escaped and returned back to Holland, while others were aided by resistance groups in hiding from the Germans. In total, of the 800,000 Dutch citizens who received the order to leave for Germany, 500,000 of them worked in Germany, while the other 300,000 remained in hiding (38). Therefore, this was a large effort of active resistance against the Nazis.

The mayors of the municipalities, with the exception of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, were placed under the direct supervision of an appropriate Provincial Commissioner and were made dependent on the instructions of the Interior Ministry and
the relevant Secretary-General (Hirschfeld 41). As the military situation deteriorated, due to the defeats on the Eastern Front and in the Mediterranean, the German occupation of the Netherlands became more brutal and ruthless. Concentration camps in Holland, such as Westerbork, Vught, Amersfoort, and Ommen became household names, while entire branches of Dutch industry stopped production or worked on German orders alone (52).

The effects of the war and the collapse of the transportation system caused catastrophic holdups in supplies, culminating in the “Hunger Winter” of 1944-45. Some public relief measures were instituted, but many citizens in the Randstad area (Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, and The Hague) received food rations that contained less than half the essential nutritional requirements. More than 20,000 people starved to death or died as a consequence of dietary deficiencies, while the black market flourished and developed into a largely accepted and indispensable institution. Although prices sometimes exceeded the official rates by more than 100 percent, tens of thousands of Dutch people left the towns for the countryside, in hope of finding a better supply of food. While the German military authorities, expecting an Allied invasion, began to evacuate the population from the coastal regions, this mass exodus further damaged economic conditions, making the economy beyond the scope of any relief measure. Economic and social pauperization increased the willingness of many Dutch people to participate in resistance activities and the actions of the underground resistance organizations become more effective and began to affect the German authorities and their Dutch contacts with some severity (53). With their lives threatened, many Dutchmen were eager to help the resistance in order to feed themselves and their families.
Popular Underground Movement

Regarding the Nazis' fourth goal, as presented by Louis de Jong, the prevention of any aid to the Dutch by Germany's enemies also was not fully successful. The intellectual and economic elite were not the only ones who helped to resist, as many "ordinary" Dutchmen helped develop the underground movement. The success that the underground movement did achieve was due to help given to the "onderduikers", or underdivers, who went into hiding (De Jong 41-42). The "onderduikers" were given hiding places, false identity papers, and often some money from underground organizations. The largest underground organization, which was begun in 1943, had 13,000 workers, who aided in their cause. In order to help place the future onderduikers, an exchange was held, which was disguised as a meeting at which to discuss the Bible. Instead, information about new hiding places and people who needed to go into hiding was exchanged. This organization encompassed three smaller ones, who had the tasks of:

1) collecting information about the action of the police and whether or not they had planned raids, information about traitors, and also pro-German spies

2) the falsifying of official documents and stamps that were used by the underground workers

3) raids on population registers, food offices, labor offices, police stations, and sometimes prisons, in addition to the capturing of Dutch weapons (De Jong 42).

By 1943, very few British arms were available to resistance organizations. A minimal number of preparations had been made by the prewar government to facilitate secret contracts in the event that the country would be occupied. The Dutch government had mistakenly believed that they would be able to hold off the Germans for at least a few
weeks, if not months, instead of the reality of five days. Therefore, they did not have as much time as they thought to prepare a resistance against the Nazis. In addition, the Netherlands did not have strong military significance to the Allies because their land was so flat. Allied strategists knew that they would not be able to successfully land and launch a large-scale attack on the Dutch coasts, as they had been able to at Normandy. Thus, the Allies gave more aid to the French Resistance (De Jong 43).

Underground Organizations

Early in 1943, the Dutch Intelligence Service in London was reorganized and in 1944, a new organization called the SOE was created. The British SOE had a slow beginning and the Germans captured many of their men when they were parachuted into occupied territory (De Jong 44-45). During 1944, there were at least ten secret transmitters at work in the Netherlands, who help reveal all of the German machine gun nests to the Allies. In August 1944, the SOE was able to drop 30,000 hand weapons into Holland, where most were quickly hidden by members of the Dutch Resistance. The Nazis were able to detect 15,000 of the weapons, but the remaining arms helped the Dutch Forces of the Interior provide substantial help to the liberating armies in the eastern and northern parts of the country.

In 1943, the Dutch Underground Press began to publish resistance newspapers. At that time, there were only a few bulletins that were either hand-copied or mimeographed (See Appendix for pictures). By the end of the war, there were over 1000 papers in existence; in addition, the resistance movement had improved the means of copying and distributing the papers, increasing their proliferation (De Jong 45). In the summer of 1943, the Germans confiscated all radios, which shows they viewed the radio
broadcasts as a threat (De Jong 45-46). At that time, there were over 1 million sets in the
country, 400,000 of which were retained and hidden by the Dutch. By the end of the war,
the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation had in its possession more than
70,000 different issues of more than 1200 different underground papers. Dutch
underground groups were able to help 3000 Allied officers, and other men who had been
prisoners-of-war, to pass from the Netherlands via overland routes to Spain, where they
could rejoin their units.

The Dutch NV, Naamloze Vennootschap ("Anonymous Company"), a resistance
group that worked to sabotage the Nazi efforts, also organized young men and women to
find and escort Jewish children into hiding. A young man would approach the home of a
Jewish family and offer to take their child into hiding. Then, a young Dutch woman
would accompany the child on the train to a point outside of the city where the child
could be hidden with a Dutch family (Kopf 112). "A more subtle form of resistance
occurred whenever Jews did not succumb psychologically to the dehumanizing treatment
inflicted on them by their captors. In ghettos, and in concentration camps, as long as they
remained alive, many Jews did whatever they could to protect the children. They
continued to teach them about Jewish traditions and holidays; they sang songs and told
stories, and they remained dedicated to providing whatever care they could while the
children were alive" (Kopf 204).

In addition, the LO, Landelijke Organisatie Voor Hulp Aan Onkerduikers (Central
Government Organization To Help People In Hiding), which was begun to help people in
hiding, was instrumental in the protection of the onderduikers. Also, the LO helped
attain extra ration books and make counterfeit ones (Bentley 4). The LO often
maintained a low profile, especially when compared to the KP, which was a fighting group who was active in sabotage. The KP attacked railroad tracks, and telegraph and telephone lines. In addition, they also targeted German supply points and some German soldiers and Dutch collaborators. The Order of Service, or the OD, helped to prepare the Netherlands for the return of the House of Orange after their liberation. As its main mission, the OD helped to collect intelligence and prepare for Holland’s liberation (4-5).

The most unique feature of the Dutch underground movement was the organization, NSV, whose sole task was to collect money that was needed to keep all other groups in action and to provide financial support to the many people in hiding (De Jong 46). For example, the more than 30,000 railway workers who went on strike in September 1944, were able to receive their weekly wages and even their Christmas bonuses due to the aid of this organization (46-47). The total expenses of this organization alone amounted to 100 million Dutch Guilders, the equivalent of 50 million U.S. Dollars during wartime. After the war ended, all expenses were accounted for, not a single cent was misplaced, and all the people and companies from whom money had been borrowed, were repaid by the government. In addition, it was almost impossible for the Germans to trace the records of this intricate organization. Unfortunately, there was no postwar registration of who had taken part in all of the underground operations. Louis de Jong estimates that there were at least 60,000 people who assisted, which does not include all of the people who offered their homes for the onderduikers (47). Of those 60,000 workers, more than 10,000 of them were either shot by the Germans or perished in concentration camps, after they had been discovered by the Germans” (47-48).
Many of those who aided in the underground movement did so due to religious or political convictions. Those who helped realized the reports on their actions helped to spur on the Allied leaders and helped to sway public opinion in Allied countries. They also knew they were fighting an evil, which was a threat to civilization as a whole, thus saving many lives (48). While some other countries, such as Poland, France, and Greece, had internal struggles within their underground movements, over how their countries would be reorganized after the war. However, the Dutch had fewer problems because their underground resistance followed a Dutch tradition—it shunned excesses and was moderate in its actions (48-49). In 1944, Queen Wilhelmina, who completely identified herself with members of the Dutch underground movement, characterized the Netherlands as a “nation of heroes”, who helped Holland regain their independence. Louis de Jong, characterizing the Dutch people’s actions during World War Two, said, “Most people, however anti-German their feelings, tried to protect themselves, their families, and their property, adapting themselves to the increasingly difficult circumstances of daily life. It was but a minority that proved willing to accept great personal risks and to put everything, even life itself, at stake. Nations of heroes do not exist. But there were among the Dutch tens of thousands of ordinary human beings, men and women, who did save the country’s soul” (50).

**Collaboration**

Despite the overall defeat of the Nazi occupation, one must not overlook the uncomfortable fact that many Dutch people actively collaborated with the Nazi regime. Many believe that Dutch citizens were “devoted to their Jewish friends and constantly
provided them with not only material necessities, but also the psychological connections that made life in hiding bearable,” like Miep Gies who helped the Frank family. However, many Dutch citizens simply stood by while Jewish men, women, and children were taken from their homes and rounded up on the streets. While some pinned yellow pieces of cloth to their clothing in order to express their sympathy for those who were forced to wear the Stars of David, many who participated in the demonstrations were relatively anonymous within the crowds.

While it is clear that both perpetrators and rescuers were active participants in the horrifying events that unfolded during the Holocaust, it is important to recognize that the majority of bystanders also ‘acted’ when they chose not to resist Nazi policies or not to help save their Jewish friends, neighbors, and fellow countrymen...Of course there were others who were as brave as the Franks’ protectors, but it is important to recognize that more than 80 percent of the entire Jewish population would not have died at the hands of the Nazis if so many of their fellow Dutchmen had not been accomplices, collaborators, or willing bystanders to the round-ups and deportations of the Jews (Kopf 94, 111-112).

In this quote, Kopf implicates a large portion of the Dutch population for not showing enough resistance to their occupiers. In her opinion, if those in Holland had been more unified in their resistance, more lives would have been saved.

A major tool used by the occupying power was the Dutch press. “Nazi opinion held that the function of the press was solely to ‘instruct’ and ‘guide’ the population; it was therefore used as an ‘enormously important and significant instrument to influence
the masses’ through state propaganda” (Hirschfeld 119). During the first few months of the Occupation, the Germans promised the Dutch newspapers that there would be very little censorship, except for some restrictions on the printed material. However, on May 16, 1940, Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau, which is similar to the Associated Press, was taken over by the Nazis, thus controlling the news throughout the country (119). At the beginning of the war, there were over 700 daily and weekly newspapers; but, by the end of the war, 184 newspapers remained in existence. Thus, after the Nazis were defeated, an entire restructuring of the Dutch Press was required (121). In contrast, during wartime, there were over 1000 underground newspapers, five of which are still in existence today, such as Het Parool and Vrij Nederland, which are now major national newspapers. According to Hirschfeld, there are four classifications that can be given to the official newspapers in the midst of the war:

1) Newspapers which were in support of Germany policy with few to no reservations, largely papers that supported the NSB and their propaganda

2) Newspapers which were benevolent towards the German Reich, but did not have any clear ties to the NSB

3) Newspapers which believed some sort of cooperation was unavoidable and thus tried to restrict any publication of Nazi articles

4) Newspapers which tried to keep their content neutral (123)

Therefore, in the public sphere, the Dutch press generally supported or tolerated the Nazis as a means to keep their businesses in existence. Without the Underground Press, little news could be heard without the obvious bias of the Third Reich and the NSB, the Dutch Nazi Party.
Collaboration of Dutch Civil Service and Police

Another act of accommodation was by the "Rijksinspectie van Bevolkingsregisters", the Central Registration Office of the Netherlands. Instead of refusing to identify and separate the registered Dutch Jews, the office simply gave the Nazis complete lists of the Jews who had been registered with them (Hirschfeld 145).

Even more so than the civil service, the Dutch police are most often implicated in collaboration with the Nazis. As realized by the Nazis, "...they were to be the agents of the occupation authorities and the nucleus of a future armed police force, which was intended to develop into a faithful reflection of the Nazi police apparatus in the Reich" (162). Upon entering the Netherlands, the Reichskommissar tried to model the police force after the ones in Germany, like the SS. Before the Occupation, the police units in the Netherlands were completely disorganized and were divided into five different groups throughout the country, often under the jurisdiction of each town's mayor. Thus, the Nazis immediately created a centralized police force, in order to retain order in Holland. By the Fall of 1940, the Inspector-General of the Dutch Police, who was in control of all police units, was introduced (Hirschfeld 164). By 1943, the Dutch Police Officers received training at the Schalkhaar police training battalion, where they were, "...instructed by German and Dutch SS and police leaders and subjected to a mixture of Prussian barrack drills, Nazi ideology, and practical training in the struggle against organized resistance" (Hirschfeld 168). For many people throughout Holland, the Schalkhaar training camp became a name synonymous with police terror and brutality, and thus one of the worst forms of direct collaboration.
After their intensive training, the newly formed Dutch forces were required to assist in the squelching of organized resistance, the searches for enemy Allies, and in the arrest and transfer of Dutch Jews to concentration camps (Hirschfeld 170). Though the Dutch police initially resisted cooperation with the Germans, by 1942, the Dutch policemen were actively removing Jews from their homes and off the streets of Amsterdam. Many policemen were under the threat of losing their jobs and pensions, so they acquiesced to Nazi orders (Kopf 95). Enough police, however, were so uncooperative and resistant to Nazi orders, that in 1943, an auxiliary police force made up of volunteer Dutchmen took over the job of rounding up the Jews for deportation. In Amsterdam alone, more than 1000 citizens signed up for the task (Kopf 95-96). While the Dutch police collaborated with their occupying power, they were in direct contrast to the other Dutch citizens who assisted the Allies and helped augment the underground resistance. In addition, a shrewd system of bonuses was used by the police force. For every Jew a policeman arrested and sent to a concentration camp, that same policeman received a generous bonus, financed with funds stolen from the Jews. As is attested to by one of the leaders of the Bureau Inlichtingendienst (Intelligence Bureau), "The main support of the German forces in the police sector and beyond was the Dutch police. With it, not ten percent of the German occupation tasks would have been fulfilled...Also it would have been practically impossible to seize even ten percent of Dutch Jewry without them" (Hirschfeld 173).
Dutch Nazi Party and Government during the Occupation

After the invasion of the Netherlands, the remaining members of Parliament organized a National Committee, which became the Nederlandse Unie, or the Netherlands Union. At this time, the announced their agenda that, “…would gather together all Dutch people for resolute work for the preservation and strengthening of fatherland and people’s community, … and would fortify and strengthen national unity in the political, cultural, and socio-economic sphere” (Hirschfeld 71). Because of their fierce loyalty to the Netherlands and their rejection of the NSB, the Nederlandse Unie was prohibited and disbanded by the Nazis in 1941, paving the way for the success of the NSB. A scarce few parties were still existent in the Netherlands, due to the overwhelming control of the NSB. In February 1941, members of the NSB, descended upon the Amsterdam quarter where many of the Jews lived. They attacked their property and building, in addition to many Jewish citizens. The Nazis encountered violent opposition from the Jews and Dutch workers and in the riot, one of the Nazi perpetrators was killed. In response, the Nazis closed off the area, evacuated the non-Jewish population, and created the first Jewish ghetto in Amsterdam. A few days later, a German police patrol encountered violent opposition at a Jewish business in the area and acid was sprayed on them. In response, a raid was conducted on the neighborhood and 400 Jewish men between the ages of 20-35 were arrested, in full view of Jews and non-Jews, and sent to Buchenwald and Mauthausen (Lozowick 147). Therefore, beginning in 1941, the Dutch police and the NSB collaborated with the Nazis in power in the persecution of their fellow citizens.
A major benefit extended to members and sympathizers of the NSB was the exemption from forced labor in Germany. In addition, members of the NSB were given preferential treatment as to employment; thus, once anti-Nazi was removed from office, a member of the NSB would be put in their place (Mason 17). Supporters of the NSB were allowed to keep their radios and their bicycles were almost virtually safe from German confiscation.

Post-War

After the war, members of the Resistance were active in the mass arrests of Dutch collaborators. “It has been estimated that in Holland, between 120,000-150,000 persons were arrested in connection with charges of collaboration...thus roughly one out of every seventy Dutchmen were arrested” (40). People involved in the NSB, the police, German organizations in the Netherlands, and those with leading positions in pro-Nazi newspapers were all arrested. At first, most of the collaborators were placed into internment camps and were tried in Special Courts designed for trials of collaboration. After being reeducated in the camps, most of the collaborators were returned to general society (Mason 140). In The Hague, for example, 52,000 cases were received at the court. Of those cases, 12,000 were released with no charges, 25,000 received a conditional settlement, and 5,000 received an unconditional settlement. The remaining cases were sent to higher courts (83). Therefore, most collaborators received small jail sentences or monetary fines as rectification of their wrongs. With the exception of Seyss-Inquart, who was executed after the Nuremburg Trials in Germany, after their sentences were served, all other collaborators were allowed to return to Dutch society.
Conclusion

The establishment of a resistance movement within the Netherlands was difficult due to Holland’s geography and their unpreparedness for the occupation. The underground organizations that were organized were successful in hiding the onderduikers and providing the Allies with valuable information. However, many other Dutchmen accepted the Nazi orders or collaborated with their regime, thereby preventing aid to many more Jews. As was earlier stated by Hedda Rosner Kopf, if more of the Dutch were involved with resistance organizations, many more lives could have been saved. Therefore, the plight of the Dutch Jews, though part of the Nazis’ Final Solution, was partly caused by the lack of resistance of the Nazis.
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Appendix

**Dutch Underground Poster**

**FREE HOLLAND WELCOMES THE SOLDIERS OF THE ALLIES**

Father and Daughter printing an underground newspaper

Jewish women being stopped by the police

Dutch propaganda poster, representing everything that is forbidden to Jews

"Voor Joden Verboten"