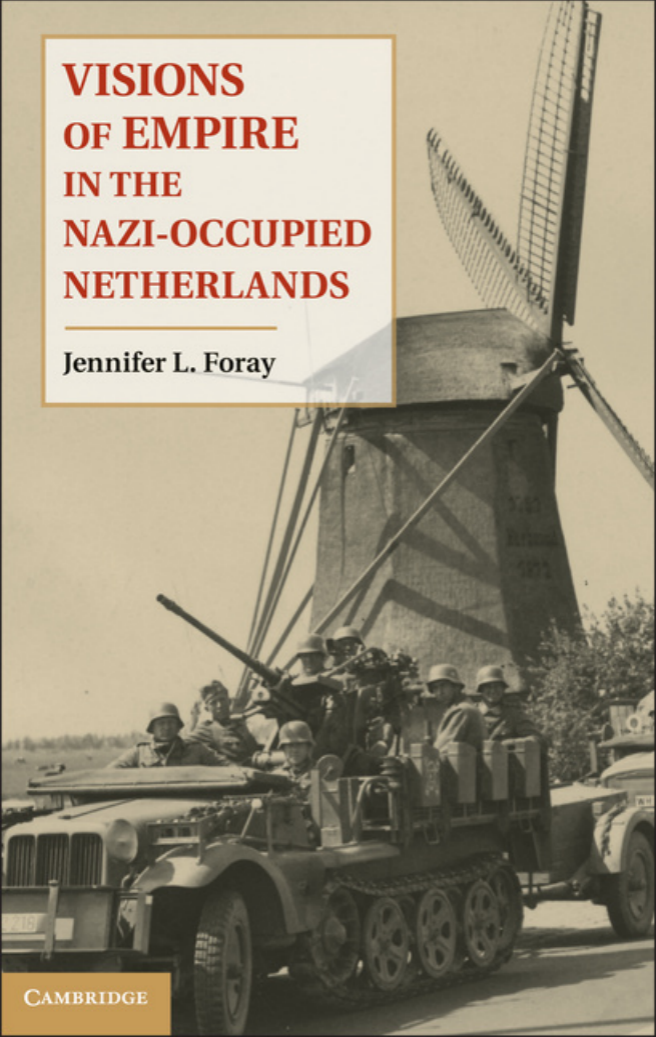


**VISIONS
OF EMPIRE
IN THE
NAZI-OCCUPIED
NETHERLANDS**

Jennifer L. Foray



CAMBRIDGE

Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands

This book explores how the experiences of World War II shaped and transformed Dutch perceptions of their centuries-old empire. Focusing on the work of leading anti-Nazi resisters, Jennifer L. Foray examines how the war forced a rethinking of colonial practices and relationships. As Dutch resisters planned for a postwar world bearing little resemblance to that of 1940, they envisioned a wide range of possibilities for their empire and its territories, anticipating a newly harmonious relationship between the Netherlands and its most prized colony in the East Indies. Although most of the underground writers and thinkers discussed in this book ultimately supported the idea of a Dutch commonwealth, this structure wouldn't come to pass in the postwar period. The Netherlands instead embarked on a violent decolonization process brought about by wartime conditions in the Netherlands and the East Indies.

Jennifer L. Foray is an assistant professor of history at Purdue University. Foray received her PhD and MA in Modern Western European History from Columbia University and her BA in Anthropology from Fordham University. She is the recipient of a Fulbright Grant to the Netherlands, a Foreign Language and Areas Studies fellowship, and a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) grant. For the 2010–2011 academic year, Foray served as a Kluge Fellow at the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Her teaching and research interests include imperialism and decolonization; social and cultural responses to war and trauma, especially memorialization and commemoration; and the Netherlands. This is her first book.

Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands

JENNIFER L. FORAY

Purdue University, Indiana



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To Brian

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Abbreviations

ARP	Anti-Revolutionary Party (Anti-Revolutionaire Partij)
CC	Contact Group (Contact Commissie) of the Grand Council of the Resistance
CDU	Christian Democratic Union (Christen-Democratische Unie)
CFLN	French National Liberation Committee (Comité Français de la Libération Nationale)
CHU	Christian Historical Union (Christelijke Historische Unie)
CPN	Communist Party of the Netherlands or Dutch Communist Party (Communistische Partij in Nederland)
GAC	Grand Council of the Resistance (Grote Advies Commissie der Illegaliteit)
GAPI	Indonesian Political Federation (Gabungan Politik Indonesia)
GOIWN	Community of Former Dutch Resistance Workers (Gemeenschap Oud-Illegale Werkers Nederland)
Indies NSB	Dutch Nazi Party of the East Indies (Indische NSB)
ISDV	Indies Social Democratic Association (Indisch Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging)
KNIL	Royal Netherlands Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger)
KVP	Catholic People's Party (Katholieke Volkspartij)
LKP	National Action Groups (Landelijke Knokploegen)
LO	National Organization for Assistance to Those in Hiding (Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers)
NBS	Dutch Forces of the Interior (Nederlandse Binnenlandse Strijdkrachten)
NICA	Netherlands East Indies Civil Administration
NMA/MG	Dutch Military Authority (Militair Gezag)
NSB	Dutch Nazi Party (Nationaal Socialistische Beweging)
NVB	Dutch People's Movement (Nederlandse Volks Beweging)

NVV	Dutch Federation of Trade Unions (Nederlandse Verbond van Vakverenigingen)
OD	Order Service (Orde Dienst)
Partindo	Indonesian Party (Partai Indonesia)
PI	Association of Indonesian Students in the Netherlands (Perhimpunan Indonesia)
PII	Indonesian Islamic Party (Partai Islam Indonesia)
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia)
PNI	Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia)
PSII	Indonesian Islamic Union Party (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia)
PvdA	Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid)
RSAP	Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (Revolutionair Socialistische Arbeiderspartij)
SDAP	Social Democratic Workers Party (Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij)
SI	Islamic Union (Sarekat Islam)
Unie	Dutch Union (Nederlandse Unie)
VC	Fatherlands Club (Vaderlandsche Club)
VIV	United Indies Volunteers (Verenigde Indië-Vrijwilligers)
VOC	East Indies Trading Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie)
WIC	West Indies Trading Company (West-Indische Compagnie)

Introduction

For centuries, the Netherlands functioned as a “political dwarf” in Europe but a “colonial giant” on the world stage.¹ To be sure, the Dutch colonies in the East and West Indies were smaller than those of Britain and France. Still, generations of Dutch political and military leaders boldly proclaimed that their possession of the resource-rich East Indies afforded the small continental nation a disproportionately prominent position alongside the larger imperial powers. This book explores the inner workings of this self-styled colonial giant, as seen during a pivotal moment in its history: the wartime years of 1940 to 1945. Occupied by the Germans in May 1940, the Dutch metropole would spend the remainder of the war essentially cut off from its overseas colonies in the East and West Indies. The West Indies would remain under the formal jurisdiction of the Dutch government-in-exile located in London for the duration of the war, whereas colonial officials in the East Indies governed the archipelago until their surrender to invading Japanese forces in March 1942. These circumstances may have separated metropolitan society from the nation’s traditional overseas colonies, but despite this break – or perhaps because of it – the Dutch became extremely attached to their empire and, above all else, the East Indies. Wartime discussions of the colonies emphasized both continuity and change, a desire to forge a future that both resembled and improved on the country’s colonial past. For this to happen, however, the Dutch would need to look beyond their present circumstances of foreign domination and oppression, and instead set their sights on the liberation of both metropole and colony. Liberation held out the promise of the “resurrection of the Netherlands,” although

¹ As described by H. L. Wesseling in his “The Giant That Was a Dwarf or: The Strange Case of Dutch Imperialism,” in Wesseling, *Imperialism and Colonialism: Essays on the History of Dutch Expansion* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997); and “Myths and Realities of Dutch Imperialism,” Proceedings of the Second Indonesian Dutch Historical Conference (Working Papers), 1978.

the precise contours of this purported resurrection were subject to heated debate in occupied Holland. Leading the charge to create this new “imperial consciousness” was a small but authoritative group of anti-Nazi resisters who specialized in clandestine press work.

At least on the surface, these resisters had little reason to be so concerned with the colonies. Most obviously, of course, they had more pressing matters with which to contend. By virtue of their underground work, these resisters were constantly on the run from German authorities, who in the spring of 1942 had prescribed the death penalty for those found guilty of organizing resistance. Further, in the decades immediately preceding the war, the overseas territories – as they had been called since the Constitutional Revision of 1922 – hardly commanded front-and-center attention for most Dutch citizens in the metropole. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Dutch policy makers and members of the general public were infinitely more concerned with the effects of the international economic crisis, such as massive unemployment, and with the rise of fascist parties in neighboring countries. At this time, the continued presence and importance of the colonies were simply assumed as fact. Certainly, the Dutch Communist Party (CPN) had begun to call for immediate and unequivocal Indonesian independence, but the politically marginal position of this group ensured that its demands for independence would be ignored or rejected out of hand. Within the two halls of parliament, talk of colonial reform – prompted largely by Indonesian nationalists’ demands in the colony itself – could be heard on occasion, but little came of such discussions. In the interwar period, European empire was, as stated by Raymond Betts, “just there”: A small but vocal minority of the public opposed continued colonial rule, but the majority was “casually and contentedly supportive.”² Such was indeed the case in interwar Holland.

If Dutch resisters were not steeped in a prewar political culture dominated by colonial concerns, they also lacked the kind of personal connections to the Indies that would explain their wartime preoccupation with the empire. In the 1920s and 1930s, the leading Dutch socialist and communist parties maintained connections with like-minded Europeans, Indo-Europeans, and Indonesians living in the colony, but they did not create truly imperial parties uniting colony and metropole under one organizational roof. Further, only a handful of the resisters examined in my work could claim first-hand experience in the East Indies, let alone the Dutch West Indies, those colonial step-children in South America and the Caribbean. Among resisters, Abraham Rutgers of the *Trouw* organization was exceptional for his overseas work and extensive knowledge of the colonies. A botanist and zoologist by training, Rutgers spent nearly twenty years in the East Indies, where he held an array of governmental and nongovernmental positions before

² Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 19.

being appointed by the queen to serve as governor of the Dutch colony of Surinam. Upon his return to the metropole, he advised the queen, ministers, and parliament on economic cooperation between the Netherlands and the East Indies, a position he would hold until the German invasion of May 1940. The trajectory of Rutgers's career was exceptional by any measure, but his prior involvement in colonial administration was especially unique among his clandestine peers. By contrast, a number of former colonial administrators, military officials, and experts held prominent leadership positions in both the Dutch Nazi Party (NSB) and the *Nederlandse Unie*, an extremely popular mass organization that sought to promote national unity and represent Dutch interests under German occupation. The colonies were no mere abstraction for these men, but rather an integral component of their private and public lives. For instance, when these Dutch Nazis spoke about the Indies – and since the party's founding in late 1931, they had much to say on this subject – they did so out of direct experience, vested interests, and organizational ties with the party's East Indies branch, established in 1933.

Admittedly, no amount of prewar contacts could have bridged the physical divide separating metropole and colony during the World War II period. With the German invasion of May 1940, Queen Wilhelmina and her ministers fled to London, where they would remain for the duration of the war. From unoccupied England, the Dutch government continued to rule the colonies in accordance with prearranged plans specifying that, in case of precisely this type of emergency, the overseas territories were to sever all ties with the European metropole. Dutch colonial officials, ordered to maintain limited contact with the queen's London government, were largely left to their own devices in administering the colonies. The West Indies would remain "free" for the duration of the war, although both Surinam and Curaçao were later placed under American and British guardianship at the request of Queen Wilhelmina. The fate of the East Indies was quite different: Japan invaded the colony in January 1942 and, with the Dutch surrender in early March, assumed control of the Netherlands' precious East Indies. From this point until the Japanese capitulation in August 1945, the Dutch metropole was largely cut off from the East Indies. Only sporadic, highly censored information left the East Indies, and all personal lines of communication between those living in the German-occupied territory and those living in the Japanese-occupied territory were severed. As well-connected as the Dutch underground considered itself, neither these clandestine activists nor the public at large truly knew what was happening in their overseas domains. They may have suspected the tenor of developments then unfolding, but they could not confirm their suspicions. When the resisters – or anyone else in occupied Holland, for that matter – wrote about the East Indies, they did so in an informational vacuum of sorts, and they did so without guidance from their government-in-exile.

Taken together, then, these factors raise the following question: Why did these resisters, seemingly so removed from the colonies and constantly on the run from German authorities, concern themselves with the Dutch empire? These resisters did not treat the colonies as a tangential concern, a trivial matter to be resolved once the motherland got its affairs in order. Rather, with each passing month of the war, the so-called colonial question, and, specifically, “the Indies question” assumed an ever-more prominent role. Particularly after the Japanese occupied the East Indies in March 1942, these resisters focused their attention and that of the Dutch public on the future of the East Indies and the kingdom. With an increasing sense of urgency, the major clandestine organizations in the occupied Netherlands charged themselves with producing concrete guidelines and policies concerning the country’s imperial future. In the absence of legitimate Dutch rulers, these resisters came to see themselves as colonial policy makers, lobbyists, and experts. All of them were determined to see their wartime plans put into effect, to the benefit of Dutch and Indonesians alike.

It is against this background of foreign occupation at home and imperial loss overseas that this work explores how the experiences of the wartime years shaped and even transformed Dutch perceptions of their empire. I explore whether the experiences of domination, oppression, and the loss of sovereignty and self-determination at the hands of the Germans led the Dutch to reconsider their historical position as imperial rulers. As the colonial occupiers found themselves in the awkward and unexpected position of being occupied by a foreign power, they now began to question the very meaning of empire. Was there a place for a Dutch empire, or for any European empire, in a postwar world expected to bear little resemblance to that which came before? Were the Indonesian people prepared to govern themselves at this moment in time, and, if not now, then when would they be? Further, and perhaps most disturbingly for some, had the Dutch colonizers treated the Indonesian people as brethren or as mere subjects to be exploited and abused? That is, were the Dutch no better than their new Nazi masters? This book examines how, during the period of 1940 to 1945, certain segments of Dutch society struggled to answer these questions in the absence of their legitimate government and, in the process, attempted to create a general “imperial consciousness” deemed to be lacking in prewar Holland.

The experiences of war and occupation at home could have resulted and indeed did result in two very different trajectories of imperial-minded thinking and policy. On the one hand, the presence of this foreign and highly oppressive occupier could have resulted in an upsurge of sympathy, even support, for colonial subjects in the East and West Indies. Such was the stance taken by the politically leftist clandestine organizations, which sought to prepare their fellow citizens for the tremendous political reforms expected to follow in the wake of liberation. On the other hand, this occupation, which swiftly removed the Netherlands from a world community

in which it had long considered itself a leading power, could have made the Dutch hold on ever more tightly to the overseas territories they considered to be their rightful properties. Those who saw the war as proof of the indivisibility of the Dutch empire drew on a decades-old idea – known simply in English translation as “Indies lost, disaster born” – which prophesied catastrophic consequences should the Netherlands lose its precious colony. Without the East Indies, not only would the Dutch economy collapse, but the Netherlands would lose its prominent international standing. So, for those falling on this side of the spectrum, colonial reform remained out of the question, at least in the foreseeable future, especially if such reforms were granted in response to Indonesian nationalism or pressure from other outside forces such as the United States. Any changes, whether affecting the larger imperial structure or the individual colonies, would be determined solely by Dutch authorities in The Hague and in the colonies.

With my presentation of these two opposing responses on the part of the Dutch resistance, I do not mean to imply that the clandestine colonial dialogue revolved solely around these two poles. On the contrary, these underground discussions and attempts to formulate policy directives were marked by ambiguity and ambivalence, especially among those most eager to see change. Also evident was the attempt to obtain a workable consensus, an approach that had characterized Dutch political life for centuries. During the war, this drive toward consensus building in the colonial realm found expression in the idea of a Dutch commonwealth modeled on that of Great Britain. The commonwealth option seemed to stand solidly between the two poles, one calling for the resurrection of the Netherlands’ traditional empire and the other calling for the implementation of far-reaching reforms. Neither empire nor nation-state, this commonwealth would allow the Dutch to maintain their historic relationship with the people and resources of the Indies, but at the same time would allow the Indonesians to work toward autonomy and independence, albeit under Dutch tutelage. Lastly, and no less importantly, proponents of a Dutch commonwealth anticipated that this structure would find favor with the purportedly anti-imperialist United States, widely expected to dominate the postwar peacemaking process and to preside over the dismantling of the traditional European empires.³

³ For further discussion of this enduring “American anti-imperialism” idea, particularly as it concerned the Dutch empire and the East Indies/Indonesia, see Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920–1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 26–27; Gerlof D. Homan, “The Netherlands, the United States and the Indonesian Question, 1948,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 1 (Jan., 1990): 123–141, pages 124–125 especially; Gerlof D. Homan, “The United States and the Netherlands East Indies: The Evolution of American Anticolonialism,” *Pacific Historical Review* 53, no. 4 (Nov., 1984): 423–446, pages 434–435; and Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 43–44.

Tentative clandestine discussions concerning a potential Dutch commonwealth assumed concrete form in early 1943, after the queen herself, speaking in a radio broadcast from London, explicitly referred to this possibility. In her speech of December 7, 1942, Queen Wilhelmina announced her intention to convene, after the war, a conference that would address the structure and form of the postwar Kingdom of the Netherlands. Without committing herself to its creation, she envisioned a “renewed commonwealth” that would include the European Netherlands and its overseas territories: The Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, and Curaçao would each have complete freedom regarding internal affairs but would cooperate on matters of mutual concern, such as foreign affairs and defense. Importantly – and contrary to enduring perceptions in both the Netherlands and the English-speaking world – the queen did not promise Indonesian independence, whether inside or outside the bounds of a Dutch commonwealth, but she also did not preclude the possibility of far-reaching political changes either.⁴ Yet in the occupied metropole, this particular speech, intended to commemorate the first anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, was seen by resisters as promising both Indonesian autonomy and the creation of a commonwealth. Not only did the queen’s public statements validate their previous suggestions about the need for democratic reform, but they provided these resisters with a workable framework on which they could now build. Henceforth, the clandestine publications would situate their discussions of the future of the Dutch empire within the context of this speech, regardless of whether they saw in it a means of effecting positive change or a dangerous experiment that could only harm Dutch interests. Importantly, too, the commonwealth option allowed the oft-conflicting clandestine organizations to achieve a rare moment of consensus. In the final weeks of the war, the Indies Commission, a newly formed organization consisting of representatives from the major underground organizations, expressed its support for the postwar imperial conference to which the queen had referred in her speech of December 7, 1942. This interresistance group also anticipated the creation of what it termed a “reborn Commonwealth,” which in their view would only work if freely accepted by a majority of people in both the European Netherlands and the Indies.

⁴ Mark Mazower, for instance, notes that the entire colonial discourse in the occupied Netherlands was limited to the queen’s famous December 1942 speech in which she “offered to turn the Dutch Empire into a commonwealth”: *The Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1999), 195–196. On the other side of the interpretative spectrum stands David Barnouw, who states the queen did not raise the prospects of independence but rather wished only to restore the Kingdom of the Netherlands: N. David J. Barnouw, “Dutch Exiles in London,” in *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940–1945*, ed. Martin Conway and José Gotovich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 229–246, with these comments appearing on page 244.

As a result of both their individual and joint efforts along these lines, the resisters of the underground press played a pivotal role in shaping and promoting a general awareness of empire, even if they firmly and at times vehemently disagreed as to how this awareness should inform governmental policy toward the Indies. Especially during the final two years of the war, theirs was an ambitious and earnest discussion of the political, ethical, religious, and economic aspects of Dutch colonialism, whether past, present, or future. Each group of resisters trusted that its wartime work to these ends would better prepare the country's political leadership and the Dutch people for what lay ahead of them after their own liberation from the Germans. Even as they focused on seemingly mundane matters, such as the precise type of army to be employed in the military battle to liberate the Indies from Japan, these underground writers and organizers engaged in a high-stakes political project: They realized, and they wished to impart to their fellow citizens, that the very future of the kingdom was at stake. With each passing year of the war, these discussions also became increasingly mutual, as leading Dutch resisters on the political left joined forces with like-minded Indonesian nationalists in the German-occupied European Netherlands. Together, they advanced the cause of colonial reform and Indonesian autonomy. In turn, these resisters came to expect that these particular Indonesian colleagues – Western-educated, nationalist but cooperative, fervent and moderate at the same time – would lead a newly autonomous or possibly independent Indonesia.

I contend that the colonial question, as articulated during the wartime years, was never concerned with the colonies alone, nor was it simply another topic to be hashed out by the resistance while they lived their lives in hiding. The colonial question, in fact, tapped into the Dutch psyche in a manner nothing short of profound. It encompassed numerous other topics with which these underground movers and shakers were concerned, such as the prospects of a new postwar political system and society guided by the principle of “renewal.” The very future of the Netherlands as a regional, continental, and international power was made to hinge upon the projected status of the East Indies within – or outside of – the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Through their consideration of the colonial relationship, the Dutch were reminded of their nation's Golden Age of the seventeenth century as well as its more humble present-day position as a middling power caught between much larger and more powerful entities. The questions swirling around the fate of the East Indies also made the Dutch question their purported traditions of tolerance and neutrality as well as their moralistic worldview that for generations had placed the ethical, respectable Netherlands in a category different from that of its imperial neighbors. At their core, these wartime discussions about this “Indies question” concerned the very identity of the Netherlands.

For generations of Dutch political and military leaders, the East Indies had long served as a vital source of riches that accorded the small continental nation a disproportionately prominent position alongside the larger imperial powers. Yet the East Indies were much more than this. In the words of Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, European colonies constituted “an imaginary and physical space in which the inclusions and exclusions built into the notions of citizenship, sovereignty, and participation were worked out.”⁵ Certainly, the East Indies both reflected and in turn helped shape metropolitan culture and politics in the Netherlands, just as British India and French Algeria did for their respective metropolises. However, I would posit that these phenomena were amplified in the Dutch empire, with its emphasis on quality over quantity. When their fellow Europeans were seizing new territories on the supposed “Dark Continent,” the Dutch consolidated their rule in regions where their explorers, merchants, and trading companies already held sway. In this environment, the Asian archipelago assumed an importance beyond all realities, and so by the time the Germans entered the European Netherlands in May 1940, the Dutch had long since staked their identity on their possession of the East Indies. They would continue to do so under German occupation, even as they considered the prospects of colonial reform.

Naturally, contemporary readers know the ultimate fate of the Dutch-Indonesian relationship. Indeed, the decolonization of the Indies and the creation of the independent nation of Indonesia in 1949 lurk in the background of this wartime story. The European Netherlands was liberated from German rule in early May 1945, at which point Dutch colonial officials began to plan their return to the East Indies. They would not return, however, at least not in the manner they had expected. On August 17, 1945, two days after the Japanese surrender, Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Although the timing of this announcement took the Dutch by surprise, the involvement of these two men did not: Considered enemies of the colonial state because of their noncooperationist stance during the 1920s and 1930s, both men had spent years in Dutch detention. Once freed by their new occupiers, Sukarno and Hatta elected to cooperate with the Japanese, at least to the extent allowable by Indonesia’s position as part of the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.” However, their August 1945 declaration of independence failed to impress lawmakers in The Hague, who dismissed it as a meaningless gesture offered by marginal and desperate extremists. The Netherlands’ first postwar government refused to

⁵ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56, with this quotation appearing on page 3.

recognize either Sukarno or his Republic, a policy adopted by successive governments. The next four years saw both intense, protracted negotiations and violent conflict in the forms of two Dutch “police actions” intended to subdue the republic by military force. Finally, in late 1949, the Dutch agreed to transfer sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia, giving rise to the independent nation of Indonesia. Viewed through this prism of decolonization, we can see the wartime years as the final heyday of European imperialism. We know that independence lay on the horizon not only for Indonesia, but for scores of other European colonies in Asia and Africa as well. Still, these postwar events were not preordained; the Kingdom of the Netherlands need not have fractured as it did, at the exact moment it did. In order to understand this final collapse, we must redirect our efforts backward to the wartime years, and we must look for continuities bridging the wartime and prewar periods.

In the larger course of Dutch history, the pivotal years of 1940 to 1945 occupy an exceptional yet surprisingly marginal position. To be sure, popular audiences and scholars alike remain highly captivated by – if not wholly obsessed with – the wartime years, and any visit to a Dutch bookstore would reveal a seemingly endless supply of new works examining the Holocaust of the Dutch Jews or the achievements of famed resisters. Typically, however, such studies examine the wartime years in chronological isolation, as if this five-year occupation constituted a mere blip on the radar screen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Indeed, the first postwar historians deemed this “a special period, demanding a special historiography” emphasizing the exceptional, even “un-Dutch” nature of the German occupation.⁶ This approach has proven remarkably difficult to shake, especially because the wartime experiences of the Kingdom of the Netherlands have been examined in geographical isolation as well. For decades, historiography of the Dutch empire at war has examined either the German-occupied metropole or the Japanese-occupied East Indies, but not both simultaneously. Admittedly, within the first two years of the war, the European Netherlands had lost contact with the East and West Indies, but this does not mean that after 1940 the Dutch simply wrote off their empire. In fact, quite the contrary seems to have been true in the metropolitan Netherlands. The presence of German troops at home and the Japanese threat overseas only served to underscore the centuries’ worth of historic, economic, and cultural connections existing

⁶ Hein A. Klemann, “Did the German Occupation (1940–1945) Ruin Dutch Industry?” *Contemporary European History* Vol. 17 No. 4 (Nov. 2008): 457–481, pages 461–462 especially. Similarly critical commentary appears in Pieter Lagrou, “The Nationalization of Victimhood: Selective Violence and National Grief in Western Europe, 1940–1960,” in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, eds. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, Publication of the German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 243–257, page 244.

between the Netherlands and the East Indies. This is not to say, as recently alleged by one scholar, that unrequited longing and delusional nostalgic fantasies dominated Dutch colonial thinking during the period of 1940 to 1945.⁷ This view also oversimplifies a nuanced, complex reality and imposes clarity and conformity where none existed.

Further, in the extensive Dutch- and English-language historiography concerned with Indonesia and the Dutch-Indonesian relationship, 1945 or even 1942 denotes a clean break with the Dutch colonial past. This preoccupation with a “zero hour” has obscured significant long-term developments, such as the Netherlands’s refusal to grant the Indonesians greater participatory powers during the first few decades of the twentieth century. These policies isolated moderate Indonesian nationalists and further entrenched the views of more radical nationalists, thus souring Dutch-Indonesian relationships long before the Japanese arrived in the archipelago. Contrary to those who would focus solely on postwar Dutch missteps or the Indonesians’ “political awakening” under Japanese rule, the historical subjects of my study – both Dutch and Indonesian – perceived more durable processes at work. For instance, during the war, politically leftist resisters behind the clandestine publication *Het Parool* continued the discussion first initiated by the country’s Social Democratic Workers’ Party (SDAP) in the 1930s. By contrast, the communist resisters of *De Waarheid* both explicitly reaffirmed and deviated from their party’s prewar stance calling for immediate and unqualified Indonesian independence. These and other organizations responded to the shifting political terrain around them, but they did not place their experiences into tidy “prewar,” “wartime,” and “postwar” boxes, as more contemporary analyses would have it. With my focus on these clandestine writings and plans, I aim to connect these various periods, thus locating this wartime discourse within the larger discussion of the colonial situation that began well before World War II and continued, with increasing urgency, in the immediate postwar years.

At first glance, the wartime situation in the Dutch metropole seems comparable to that of other European imperial powers during this time. After all, as Eric Jennings has demonstrated in his study of Vichy imperialism, France also saw renewed interest in its colonies during the beginning of the

⁷ Anne L. Foster also states that “memories of anticolonial rebellion, of why the Dutch believed they had to create the island prison of Boven Digoel, of indigenous political parties so contentious they had been banned, had faded from Dutch minds in the midst of four years of longing and not knowing.” Foster provides no documentation in support of these claims, and, on a more trivial level, does not explain her focus on “four years” as opposed to five (the entire duration of the war) or even three (the duration of the Japanese-occupation of the Indies): “Avoiding the ‘Rank of Denmark’: Dutch Fears about Loss of Empire in Southeast Asia,” in *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945–1962*, eds. Christopher E. Gosha and Christian F. Ostermann (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2009), 68–83, pages 70–71 especially.

war, and for a variety of reasons. For those still smarting from the German defeat of 1940, the French colonies provided a source of much-needed national pride, whereas, alternatively, the emerging collaborationist government hoped to use the colonies as a means by which to extract concessions from the Germans. Then, as the war continued, Vichy officials looked to export Philippe Pétain's National Revolution to French colonies such as Madagascar and Indochina, which would function as living laboratories of Pétainist programs and policies.⁸ Here, however, is where the wartime situation of the Netherlands and France diverge. First, the collaborationist Vichy government retained formal connections to French possessions overseas, although admittedly its hold over these colonies would not last for the duration of the war. Even in Indochina, where the Japanese asserted their military authority as early as June 1940, Vichy officials remained in charge of day-to-day activities. So too did the British empire experience a measure of continuity not seen in the Dutch case: Metropolitan Britain was neither occupied by the Germans nor forced to dismantle its vast overseas empire despite a number of profound wartime losses, such as that of Singapore in February 1942. In some respects, the wartime situation of the Belgian empire appears most similar to that of the Dutch. A small continental nation, Belgium relied on its few but highly valuable overseas territories to bolster its international standing. Also defeated by invading German forces in May 1940, the Belgian government – minus King Leopold, who had elected to remain in German-occupied Belgium and share the fate of the troops under his command – reconstituted itself in London, where it would be able to oversee the African colonies of Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. Indeed, the Belgian authorities would retain control over their territories for the next five years, which allowed them to deliver to the Allies ample stores of colonial products, resources, and manpower, mostly originating in the Congo.

By contrast, the Dutch metropole could claim little authority over the East and West Indies after the Germans launched their invasion of Western Europe in May of 1940. Dutch colonial authorities, vested with the authority to act independently of the new government-in-exile, remained in place in the East Indies until March 1942, at which point they too were deposed by the Japanese conquerors. On the other side of the world, in the West Indies, the Dutch would retain their position as colonial rulers, but the presence of the American and British military certainly limited the Netherlands' room to maneuver. As much as they might have liked to, the Dutch simply could not carry on their imperialist project in a manner even vaguely resembling that seen before the war. The Dutch living in the German-occupied

⁸ Eric T. Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9–12. See also Anne Raffin, *Youth Mobilization in Vichy Indochina and Its Legacies, 1940 to 1970* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

Netherlands had only their government-in-exile, which from its new home in London had vowed to protect the empire. As explained by Martin Conway, these colonies provided Queen Wilhelmina and her ministers with “a distant opportunity to act out the rituals of sovereignty and contribute, however obliquely, to the Allied war effort.”⁹ For the Dutch, this opportunity would prove to be a temporary one. With the Dutch surrender to the Japanese in March of 1942, the East Indies ceased to be a major strategic concern for either the Allied or Axis powers; rather, the colony was simply incorporated into Japan’s Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. Seemingly overnight, the Netherlands had lost not only its own sovereignty, but its centuries-old relationship with its colonies as well, a double loss that made the Netherlands unique among its imperial peers. Cut off from the collection of islands big and small by which the Dutch had staked their reputation as an international power, the colonies assumed an importance out of proportion with present conditions. The precise message may have varied at different points in the occupation, but the focus on the individual colonies and the empire at large remained constant in this occupied society.

This most serious discussion of Dutch imperialism in its past, present, and future forms was led by the resisters of the nation’s highly developed underground press network. Under German occupation, resisters literally papered the country with publications ranging from simple mimeographed flyers to daily news bulletins with national circulations of nearly half a million. By war’s end, there were nearly 1,200 publications.¹⁰ During the course of the war, thousands of Dutch men and women worked for this extensive underground press, whether as editors and staff writers, occasional contributors, printers and type-setters, distributors and couriers, or armed guards.¹¹ This

⁹ Conway’s remarks pertain specifically to the Belgian government-in-exile and, later, the Free French, but they are also applicable to the Dutch case: “Legacies of Exile: The Exile Governments in London During the Second World War and the Politics of Post-war Europe,” in *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940–1945*, ed. Martin Conway and José Gotovich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 255–274, with this quotation on page 256. For a brief but insightful discussion of de Gaulle’s attempts to establish legitimacy vis-à-vis the French metropole, Vichy, and the Allied powers, see Denis Peschanski, “Legitimacy/Legitimation/Delegitimation: France in the Dark Years, a Textbook Case,” *Contemporary European History* 13 no. 4 (Nov 2004): 409–423.

¹⁰ In 1954, Lydia Winkel of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (then the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogdocumentatie, now the Nederlands Instituut for Oorlogsdokumentatie, or NIOD) published the first indexed, annotated registry of these clandestine publications: *De Ondergrondse Pers 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954). Now twice revised, the most recent edition of this work appeared in 1989 (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers), containing entries for 1,176 wartime publications.

¹¹ Whereas the larger publications could presumably claim the “employment” of a hundred individuals, the majority of publications likely relied on the assistance of only a handful of people at most. Given the total number of nearly 1,200 publications, it is not unreasonable to assume that at least 10,000 individuals were involved with the clandestine press. Still, all numbers are provided as illustrative, not definitive, especially because estimates concerning

was obviously a massive operation, primarily vested with providing both accurate news and words of hope and encouragement to a people living under Nazi rule. Yet the leaders of the various clandestine press organizations hardly conceived of themselves as mere reporters or editorialists. As Frans Goedhart, one of the first and most prominent of these clandestine writers, stated shortly after the war, his resistance work had been more than simply a technical matter. Rather, it was a “journalistic-political task,” and its leaders constituted a sort of illegal political council.¹² These resisters, who represented the spectrum of political and religious beliefs in the Netherlands, were the “opinion makers” of this wartime society, or at least they aspired to be. Time and time again, they proved themselves to be astute observers and interpreters of Dutch culture and society, and they did not hesitate to call out behavior they deemed traitorous, hypocritical, unethical, or simply “un-Dutch.” Put simply, they envisioned themselves as the soul of a nation in desperate need of guidance. They aimed to impart their respective political and religious beliefs to the general population; encourage their fellow citizens to debate and discuss these ideas among themselves; and, finally, take concrete actions to these ends.

In the Netherlands, as elsewhere throughout Europe, war and occupation narrowed personal horizons: Invaded and defeated by foreign powers, their legitimate political leaders removed or otherwise absent, individuals and communities turned inward, seeking protection and comfort in familiar places and ideas. At the same time, the war also prompted them to question the nature of the social contract between ruler and ruled. Especially after 1943, when the tide of war began to turn in the Allies’ favor, Europeans set their sights even wider. If initially the Dutch resisters of the clandestine press primarily aimed to stimulate resistance or at least obstructionism among the public at large, they reevaluated and refocused their mandate halfway through the occupation. From this point onward, resisters from across the political, religious, and social spectrum would use their hard-fought “moral

the number of resisters in the occupied Netherlands remain necessarily uncertain. Louis de Jong, the author of the monumental fourteen-volume study of the Netherlands during World War II, estimates that during the period of 1940–1944, 20,000 resisters – out of a total population of approximately 9 million – were involved with the country’s clandestine press: L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 7, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1976), 1008. More recently, Dick van Galen Last has claimed that 20,000 people were engaged in the production and distribution of illegal newspapers, but he does not provide supporting evidence for this figure: “The Netherlands,” in *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. Bob Moore (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 214. By contrast, David Barnouw cites 30,000 people involved with the clandestine press, again, without documentation or evidence: “Dutch Exiles in London,” in *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940–1945*, ed. Martin Conway and José Gotovich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 229–246, with this figure appearing on page 240.

¹² Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C (’s Gravenhage, 1949–56), 40–46.

authority and self-sacrificing ethos” to prepare their citizens for life after liberation.¹³ For politically leftist resisters, this would mean tearing down the long-standing “pillar” system (*verzuiling*) that had divided Dutch society into clearly demarcated political and religious groupings since the late nineteenth century. By contrast, conservative resisters – largely stemming from Orthodox Protestant and specifically Calvinist circles – aimed to restore the political and social order as it had existed at the moment of German invasion in May 1940. Regardless of their particular leanings, however, all of these groups fully expected that their wartime discussions and conclusions would find expression in postwar Dutch society. Some of these resisters were no strangers to the world of politics, having served in leadership positions in the Communist, Socialist, and Calvinist-conservative parties – that is, before July 1941, at which point the Germans formally disbanded these political parties. Other resisters had been trained as journalists, and so the transition to clandestine writing and publishing must have been quite natural. Some resisters were members of the country’s intelligentsia and professional class – professors and teachers, economists, lawyers, and so forth. Collectively, these underground activists crafted a new political system, one rooted in wartime conditions but distinctly oriented toward the postwar period. This is not to say that each and every one of these resisters expected to play a role in national politics once the country had been liberated from the Germans, but rather this type of resistance work was as concerned with the future as it was with the present.

My study is based primarily on the work of five leading resistance organizations whose publications have been termed the country’s “big periodicals.” Distributed on a national level, these five maintained “a high level of editorial sophistication” and “reflected the sentiments of substantial segments of the population.”¹⁴ In comparison to the hundreds of other papers seen throughout the country, these publications both shaped and reflected the discourse as it occurred on a national level. Their print runs numbered into the tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands near the end of the war. Because each of these five major publications stemmed from a certain prewar political party or grouping of like-minded individuals, each paper’s editorial stance tended to reflect these ideological leanings and agendas. Likewise, editors assumed that their readership would originate

¹³ Martin Conway and Peter Romijn, Introduction to Special Issue on Political Legitimacy, *Contemporary European History* Vol. 13 No. 4 (Nov. 2004): 377–388, pages 384–385 for this discussion of “narrowing horizons”; Peter Romijn, with Martin Conway as co-author and the assistance of Denis Peschanski, “National Legitimacy – Ownership, Pretenders, and Wars,” in *The War on Legitimacy in Politics and Culture 1936–1946*, eds. Martin Conway and Peter Romijn (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 67–107, with comments about the resistance movement’s “moral authority and self-sacrificing ethos” appearing on pages 68 and 99.

¹⁴ Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch under German Occupation 1940–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 225.

from the same circles, but they also intended their papers to reach as wide an audience as possible, as their overarching goal – at least initially – was to stimulate active and passive forms of resistance among the general public.

Vrij Nederland (“The Free Netherlands”) was the first of these major publications to appear, but would undergo a number of ideological transformations during its early existence. Founded by a group of politically inexperienced students, the paper aimed for political and religious neutrality, but it soon adopted a more overtly Calvinist stance. Then, in its final incarnation – and under the leadership of Henk van Randwijk, a writer and former children’s home director – *Vrij Nederland* alternated between left and center, secular humanist and Protestant, but was clearly socialist leaning in the realm of economic affairs. Initially less concerned with the colonial situation, this organization would later join forces with *Het Parool* to provide critical and comprehensive analyses of the various facets that, taken together, constituted the “Indies question.”

De Waarheid served as the official paper of the underground Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN). Initially, the Dutch communists – among the earliest and most pursued of resisters – received official directives from Moscow, although after June 1941, they steered their own course. Seen over the duration of the occupation, the anticolonial stance of the Dutch Communist Party was hardly as consistent and doctrinaire as its leaders would later proclaim, but postwar analyses, typically written by communist historians, have largely overlooked the more nuanced position assumed by the CPN during the years of 1940 to 1945.¹⁵

Het Parool was the most professional of the underground publications: The majority of its editors and writers had been career journalists and/or politicians before the war, and the paper’s reportage and editorials reflected this extensive training and experience. In its political orientation, *Het Parool* was socialist but formally unaffiliated with the country’s Social Democratic Workers Party. Of the nation’s leading clandestine organizations, *Het Parool* was most concerned with long-term trends and developments in the colonies. Cofounder Frans Goedhart and his fellow editors not only offered the first significant contributions to an underground colonial discourse, but their critical self-reflection paved the way for an extensive treatment of the Dutch empire in its past, present, and future forms.

During the course of 1942, a group of Calvinist resisters left *Vrij Nederland*, citing political, religious, and personality differences with editor in

¹⁵ See, for instance, Joop Morriën’s very brief discussion concentrating solely on a March 1942 article in *De Waarheid: Indonesië los van Holland: de CPN en de PKI in hun strijd tegen het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1982), 104–105. A more extensive and nuanced examination of the Dutch communists’ wartime position appears in Hansje Galesloot and Susan Legêne, *Partij in het verzet: de CPN in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1986), 244–250.

chief van Randwijk. Together with other like-minded resisters, they founded *Trouw* (“Faith,” or “Loyalty”), the first issue of which appeared in February 1943. For the remainder of the war, *Trouw* would serve as the unofficial mouthpiece for the views of the now-underground Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP). It was the only major clandestine publication to support the complete restoration of the Dutch empire as it had existed before May 1940. *Trouw* was also unique in having a female resister, Gesina van der Molen, on its editorial staff. Indeed, van der Molen was the only woman to assume a leadership role in the world of clandestine politics. A journalist, professor of law, and devout Calvinist, van der Molen served as a leading intellect and editorial contributor, in which capacities she helped craft and articulate the organization’s unwaveringly proimperial stance.

Je Maintiendrai – its title a reference to William the Silent’s sixteenth-century struggle against Spain – was unique in that its revolving editorial board and staff writers included the *crème de la crème* of the country’s prewar political and intellectual establishment, many of whom had spent the first few years of the war together in German detention centers. In contrast to leaders of other underground organizations who cut their political teeth during the German occupation, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* had every reason to expect that they would dominate the seats of government after the war. Indeed, many of *Je Maintiendrai*’s editors and staff writers would become household names after 1945. Catholics, Protestants, liberals, humanists, conservatives, and moderate social democrats all found representation within *Je Maintiendrai*, and the resulting position emerging from this conglomerate was distinctly centrist, although in certain matters the group leaned to the right or left. As a wartime group, these resisters were particularly critical of the divisive nature of Dutch politics and society, which for decades had been characterized by rigidly demarcated groups, or “pillars,” organized largely along denominational lines. *Je Maintiendrai* was not opposed to change per se, but wished for cooler heads to prevail: They expected that idealistic political newcomers and their ambitious wartime plans would naturally give way to the more established politicians who formulated their decisions based on years of experience and expertise.

If the Dutch resisters of the clandestine press appointed themselves the nation’s de facto political authorities, they were not the only ones to do so, and for this reason, my work also explores the colonial contributions offered by other segments of society. In fact, during the first two years of the war, as the resistance struggled to obtain resources and popular support, the Dutch Nazi Party (NSB) and the newly created and immensely popular *Nederlandse Unie* – the Dutch Union – took the lead in fostering a general awareness of empire. Dutch Nazi and *Nederlandse Unie* leaders expressed divergent views of the colonial situation, nearly all of which would find expression in subsequent clandestine discussions and among society at large. However, unlike the resisters, who discussed the colonies while on the

run from the German authorities, members of these two groups earnestly – and mistakenly – believed that they maintained some kind of legitimacy vis-à-vis their German occupiers. Bound up with all of these colonial discourses, whether clandestine or above ground, was a complex array of emotions. A sense of nostalgia, national pride, and smug self-satisfaction at times bordering on self-righteousness was nonetheless coupled with unease, fear, and the conviction that without its precious East Indies, the Netherlands would experience a fatal blow from which it might never recover. Yet whereas the *Nederlandse Unie* seemed content to focus on the nation's glorious imperial past and Dutch Nazis angrily fixated on the territories purportedly stolen by the jealous Allied nations, the resisters broadened the scope of these discussions. They confronted an extensive range of questions and topics, and especially during the final stage of the war, they joined forces with Indonesian colleagues to plan the future of the kingdom. The fact that postwar realities bore little resemblance to the wartime scenarios and carefully crafted plans envisioned by these resisters is significant, but constitutes only part of the picture of Dutch imperialism and decolonization. I offer this book as a study of an occupied people that, over the course of World War II and in a myriad of ways, came to confront its own status as a foreign occupier.

Although some of these groups and resisters have been the subject of dedicated studies in the Netherlands, they have neither been examined in depth nor in any comprehensive manner. Quite intentionally, I have avoided the approach employed by Walter Lipgens, whose *Documents on the History of European Integration* paints a highly selective portrait of European wartime sentiment. In the first installment of this multivolume tome, Lipgens presents excerpts from clandestine publications – typically appearing out of context – as proof that the various national resistance movements of Europe actively supported and worked toward a postwar European union or federation. Nazi ideology and plans for a “New Order,” he argues, ended the long-standing predominance of the European nation-state, as these Dutch and other resisters presciently realized.¹⁶ In contrast with Lipgens, I examine the work of leading organizations by focusing on trajectories and evolution over time, evident throughout the political spectrum of the occupied Netherlands. Further, whereas Lipgens sees supra-nationalism and

¹⁶ The first volume of this work explores continental plans for European union during the years 1939 to 1945; the second plans for European union seen in Great Britain and in governments-in-exile during this same period. The third examines “the struggle for European union by political parties and pressure groups in western European countries 1945–1950,” and the fourth and final volume focuses on “transnational organizations of political parties and pressure groups in the struggle for European Union 1945–1950.” Selected excerpts from the Dutch clandestine press, accompanied by Lipgens' analyses, appear as “Ideas of the Dutch Resistance on the Postwar Order in Europe” (Part II, Chapter VII) in *Documents on the History of European Integration: Volume 1, Continental Plans for European Union 1939–1945*, ed. Walter Lipgens (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 556–608.

federalism, my work points to the resurgence of the traditional nation-state, a trend also noted in more recent analyses of wartime and immediate post-war developments.¹⁷ Resisters, politicians-in-exile, and members of the general public fully expected that the Kingdom of the Netherlands would rise again, even if they did not know exactly what form it would assume. The nation's postwar leaders might elect to join a Western European or continental association; they might bring the Netherlands into a newly refashioned international organization. The Kingdom of the Netherlands could become a commonwealth, or it could remain as it was on the eve of the German invasion, with imperial authority firmly vested in the European metropole. However, regardless of its precise form, the Netherlands would rise again – of that these resisters were sure.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY AND ORTHOLOGY

For these resisters and all others concerned with the Dutch empire, semantics mattered tremendously. Specifically, the names “Indies” and “Indonesia” were not interchangeable terms. For approximately the first half of the war, resisters and other contemporary writers – with the exception of the Dutch communists – referred to the Asian colony by its traditional name of *Indië* (“The Indies”) or *Nederlandse Indië* (“Dutch East Indies”), whereas the people of the Indies were typically called *Indonesiërs*, or Indonesians. However, after the queen's reference to *Indonesië* in her influential December 7, 1942, radio speech, most resisters began to employ this name too. This was not a matter of splitting hairs, for “Indonesia” was the name universally preferred by nationalists in the colony itself. To protest the growing popularity and implications of this name, the conservative Calvinist resisters of *Trouw* continued to refer to the “East Indies.” In doing so, they cited the position of former ARP leader and Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn, who had argued that “Indonesia” did not exist: The islands and peoples of the East Indies formed a political entity insofar as they were united under Dutch authority.¹⁸ Indonesia became the accepted term from 1945 onward, but again, those opposed to Indonesian independence or even limited autonomy continued to use the colonial name. In my text, I have tried to maintain original usage when possible.

No such rhetorical debates exist for the West Indies, perhaps because shortening this name would have been impossibly confusing. Not insignificantly,

¹⁷ See, for instance, Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 562–566; Peter Romijn, with Martin Conway as coauthor and the assistance of Denis Peschanski, “National Legitimacy – Ownership, Pretenders, and Wars,” in *The War on Legitimacy in Politics and Culture 1936–1946*, eds. Martin Conway and Peter Romijn (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 67–107, page 70 and 93–104 especially.

¹⁸ Hendrik Colijn, *Koloniale vraagstukken van heden en morgen* (Amsterdam: N.V. Dagblad en Drukkerij De Standaard, 1928), 59–60.

the West Indies were hardly accorded the pride of place given to the East Indies, which clearly functioned as the crown jewel of the Dutch empire.

In the Dutch language, *Nederland* refers to the country of the Netherlands, as does Holland, a name used in both English and Dutch. Technically, “Holland” refers to the provinces of North and South Holland, but because of the historical significance and population density of cities located in these provinces, the name is often used to connote the country as a whole. Similarly, *Hollander* refers to a Dutch man or woman. In my use of these and other words, I have tried to retain original usage but at the same time avoid potential confusion for an English-speaking audience. For Indonesian names, locations, and organizations, I have tried to account for both original spelling and a major 1972 language overhaul. In most instances, I refer to Indonesian places and individuals as they would have been known and spelled in the first half of the twentieth century; accordingly, Batavia, not the present-day city of Jakarta, appears as the administrative capital of the Dutch East Indies. In certain instances, however, I follow the lead of scholars such as William H. Frederick and Frances Gouda, employing modern spelling if this is the more recognized form – thus, “Sukarno,” not the more traditional “Soekarno.”¹⁹

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the original Dutch or German into English are my own, and, accordingly, I bear full responsibility for any inaccuracies. All Dutch and German terms, of which there are plenty throughout the book, are italicized only on their first appearance in the text.

¹⁹ William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1989), xv; Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920–1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 11.

War Comes to the Kingdom

The German occupation of the Netherlands formally began on May 15, 1940, and would last for nearly five years. During the first year of this occupation, the Dutch struggled to make sense of the new situation in which they suddenly found themselves. In just a matter of days, the Netherlands had lost its neutrality, its sovereignty, and much of the port city of Rotterdam, which had been destroyed by the *Luftwaffe* in an attempt to force the Dutch to surrender. The queen, the royal family, and the Dutch cabinet had fled the country for London. From their adopted home in England, Queen Wilhelmina and her ministers assumed control of the Dutch empire, or, more precisely, the overseas territories of this historic empire. The European motherland had been occupied, so reasoned this new government-in-exile, but as long as the East and West Indies remained free, the Kingdom of the Netherlands continued to exist. In German eyes, however, this kingdom had come to an end on May 14 when the Dutch commander in chief, General H. G. Winkelman, capitulated to the invading forces. Hitler now put into effect his plans – formulated the previous October – for a military administration of the Low Countries and France; on May 15, he announced that *Wehrmacht* General Alexander von Falkenhausen would serve as military commander for both Belgium and the Netherlands. Falkenhausen's reign proved exceptionally short-lived, however, as a mere few days later, Hitler changed course. Instead of a military administration, the Netherlands would see a civilian administration under the authority of Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart, an Austrian lawyer who had played a prominent role in the *Anschluss* of 1938 before serving in occupied Poland.

Under Seyss-Inquart, the constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands remained in effect but was rendered superfluous by Hitler's appointment decree of May 18, which granted the *Reichskommissar* authority to issue decrees carrying the force of law. In administering the occupied country, Seyss-Inquart could look to his four *Generalkommissare*, or commissioners general, who were charged with overseeing the newly created departments

of Administration and Justice, Finance and Economy, Special Affairs (alternatively titled Political Affairs and Propaganda), and Security/Police Concerns. These commissioners general assumed authority over the Dutch governmental agencies already in existence, merging them and creating new organizations if and where German interests would be best served. Of these four men, Hanns Albin Rauter would become most familiar to the Dutch: As both *Generalkommissar für Sicherheitswesen* (Commissioner General for Security) and *Höher SS und Polizeiführer* (Leader of the SS and Police Forces, or simply HSSpF), Rauter directed all security and police organizations, both German and Dutch, in the occupied country. Hitler also appointed a military counterpart, Air Force General Friedrich Christian Christiansen, to Seyss-Inquart's civilian-led administration. *Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden* (Commander of the Armed Forces in the Netherlands) Christiansen was to concern himself with overtly military matters, such as the maintenance of the country's coastal defenses. During the first few years of the occupation, the Dutch public witnessed the direct involvement of German troops only in exceptional circumstances, such as those presented by the February Strike of 1941, and even then, the SS police organizations, not the Wehrmacht, were employed first. As the war continued, however, and as material conditions steadily deteriorated, these German military forces assumed an increasingly prominent position in the occupied Netherlands.¹

As was the case throughout German-occupied Europe, the type of occupation regime instituted in the Netherlands informed local responses and behaviors, as did Dutch cultural norms, traditions, and self-perceptions. This is not to say, however, that a coherent, consistent plan informed the Nazis' new continental empire. As Mark Mazower has recently demonstrated, Hitler's ill-planned acquisition of new territories during the period between 1939 and 1941 created an unmanageable, unsustainable behemoth. Improvised, chaotic, and ideologically inconsistent, this was an empire driven by the will of the *Führer*; Hitler's imperial project failed to differentiate between short-term and long-term goals and neglected to consider, for instance, the "catalytic impact of the war itself." Within this Nazi New Order, competing worldviews, agencies, and individuals struggled for primacy, with bloody consequences for the occupied peoples of Europe. In the interest of forging a racially pure "Greater Germany" populated solely by those of superior German stock, Hitler and Himmler purged those deemed subhuman and waged a myopic race war against the peoples and territories of Europe. By contrast, party officials advocated a system of indirect rule, particularly in Western Europe and Scandinavia, whereby indigenous collaborators and mass movements would be granted a measure of autonomy. According to this second model, German administrators would govern

¹ Jennifer L. Foray, "The 'Clean Wehrmacht' in the German-occupied Netherlands, 1940–1945," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 4 (October 2010): 768–787.

newly conquered European territories as if they were overseas colonies: They would exploit “native” labor and resources and, by allowing the illusion of self-government, ensure compliance and contributions to the German war effort. However, the tensions between these two competing views were never resolved, and as a result, neither German victory nor the creation of a racial utopia would come to pass.² Shelley Baranowski, by contrast, sees a more consistent ideology informing the Nazis’ continental project: The war of 1939 and its ensuing conquest of European territories prioritized ethnic cleansing and mass murder. Unlike the more traditional European empires, the Nazi New Order was not content “to control and exploit diverse people to the metropole’s advantage; rather, it would subject entire peoples to elimination because the regime perceived them as a threat to the survival of the ‘racial community.’” This would be an empire based on violence and destruction, pure and simple, demonstrating none of the restraint typically exhibited by European colonial authorities who sought to protect their own interests and assets.³ Regardless of how we might assess the driving forces and practices of this Nazi New Order, Hitler undoubtedly imposed a new geopolitical order on Europe.

At least initially, Hitler’s chosen administrator for the occupied Netherlands aimed to employ a lighter touch in his corner of the Nazi empire. Upon his formal inauguration in late May 1940, Reichskommissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart declared that “the normal state of affairs in the Netherlands” would be interrupted only if necessitated by exceptional circumstances. The Dutch would not suffer unnecessarily under his rule, provided that their institutions and authorities enforced his laws and the Dutch population accepted “the situation with intelligence and self-control.” The Germans, he reassured them, had not come to the Netherlands as colonizers or to enforce Nazi political convictions but rather sought closer connections between the German and Dutch people, who were already linked by racial kinship.⁴ His initial correspondence with Hitler also reaffirmed this seemingly cooperative approach. Reiterating his mandate to protect the

² Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, for instance, 5–7, 11, 245–248.

³ Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 232, 239.

⁴ Seyss-Inquart’s public pronouncement, reprinted in Document 138, *Documents of the Persecution of the Dutch Jewry 1940–1945*, assembled and edited by the Joods Historisch Museum of Amsterdam, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Polak and van Gennep, 1979), 37; Seyss-Inquart’s first written statement to the Dutch people, appearing in the *Verordnungsblatt für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete* of June 5, 1940. All official decrees and statements issued by Seyss-Inquart and other leading German authorities in the Netherlands were organized and bound according to their year of issuance: *Verordnungsblatt für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete / Verordeningenblad voor het bezette Nederlandsche Gebied*. 5 vols (’s-Gravenhage: Rijksuitgeverij, 1940–1945), hereafter referred to as simply *Verordnungsblatt*.

interests of the German Reich, the Reichskommissar affirmed that public order and the position of the German military in the Netherlands were to be “secured” and the country’s economy bound, as closely as possible, to that of Germany. These goals, he stated, were most likely to be successful if they appeared to be the result not of German force but rather of Dutch cooperation. Specifically, the cultivation of a “political will” resting on the creation and good work of mass organizations – whether political, cultural, economic, or paramilitary in nature – would allow the Dutch to believe that they had instituted such far-reaching changes themselves.⁵ Put simply, the Dutch were to “self-Nazify,” which would be of maximum benefit to all involved: The Dutch could convince themselves that they retained a measure of autonomy and would therefore remain compliant colonial subjects, and the occupiers need not expend valuable resources that could best serve German interests elsewhere.

To obtain their objectives, whether the isolation and deportation of the Jews or the complete mobilization of the Dutch economy for the German war effort in 1943 and 1944,⁶ Seyss-Inquart and his Generalkommissare relied on the support provided by countless Dutch administrators and agencies. Foremost among them were the secretaries general, the permanent and nonpartisan heads of the various departments, such as the Departments of Justice and of Economics and Finance. Nearly all of these administrators had elected to remain at their posts under German occupation, and with his first major decree of May 1940, Seyss-Inquart vested these secretaries general with the ability to promulgate and issue their own laws.⁷

⁵ Seyss-Inquart’s “First Report Concerning the Situation and Developments in the Occupied Dutch Area,” dated July 19, 1940, was included in the legal proceedings of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. In his testimony, Seyss-Inquart noted that this written brief was nearly identical to the oral instructions he had received from Hitler upon his appointment, in mid-May 1940, to the position of Reichskommissar for the occupied Netherlands: “Erster Bericht über die Lage und Entwicklung in den besetzten niederländischen Gebieten, 29 May-19 July 1940,” *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, Official Text, English Edition, Volume XXVI (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), Document 997-PF, 413–429, and Testimony by Arthur Seyss-Inquart, *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal*, Official Text, English Edition, Volume XV, pages 610–668, and Volume XVI, 1–113.

⁶ Mazower’s earlier-cited work examines the Nazis’ continental aims and devotes particular attention to Eastern Europe, the centerpiece of the Nazis’ imperial project. For more detailed discussions of occupational policy in the Netherlands, see, for example, L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 4, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1972), 25–26; and Peter Romijn, “Restoration of Confidence: The Purge of Local Government in the Netherlands as a Problem of Postwar Reconstruction,” in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath*, eds. István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 173–193.

⁷ “Verordnung des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete über die Ausübung der Regierungsbefugnisse in den Niederlanden/Verordening van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied tot uitoefening van de regeeringsbevoegdheden in Nederland” (Vo. 3/1940), dated May 29, 1940, *Verordnungsblatt* June 5, 1940.

Other political structures were denied the opportunity to “self-Nazify.” The Reichskommissar swiftly disbanded both houses of the Dutch parliament but allowed political parties to remain in existence, albeit with certain conditions: In July 1940, the three major Communist and Socialist parties – the Communist Party of the Netherlands, the Social Democratic Workers Party, and the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party – were placed under the “supervision” of M. M. Rost van Tonningen, a leading radical within the Dutch Nazi Party. One year later, all political parties, including those leftist groups already placed under supervision and various fascist splinter groups, were formally disbanded by order of Seyss-Inquart. In December 1941, Seyss-Inquart formally declared what would have been blatantly obvious by this point – the Dutch Nazi Party would be the only political organization permitted in the occupied Netherlands.

The Dutch Nazi Party (*Nationaal Socialistische Beweging*, or NSB) did not originate with the arrival of the Germans in 1940, nor was it even the first fascist party established in the Netherlands. In fact, in comparison to their ultra-right competitors, the Dutch Nazis could appear moderate, a Northern European imitation of Mussolini’s Fascists instead of Hitler’s National Socialists.⁸ Established in 1931 by a respectable Dutch civil engineer named Anton Mussert, the NSB professed authoritarian, corporatist, nationalist, antiliberal, and anticommunist principles. Mussert’s party directed its vitriol toward Dutch parliamentary democracy and its corrupt, weak, and misguided practitioners, who, under the spell of international capitalism, Marxism, or perhaps both, had proven completely unable to confront the political and economic crises of the early 1930s. Promising something to everyone, the Dutch Nazi Party made a strong showing in the Netherlands’ provincial elections of 1935. Two years later, the party won four seats in the second chamber of parliament, a gain that, for party leadership at least, seemed to signal the NSB’s arrival as a legitimate political contender. However, rather than signaling the coming of a Hitler-style seizure of power, the 1937 election represented the peak of the Dutch Nazis’ electoral success, as government restrictions, grassroots anti-Nazi efforts, and

⁸ For the origins and early existence of the Dutch Nazi Party, see Bob Moore, “The Netherlands,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R.J.B. Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 453–469, pages 453–457 and 468 especially; Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 242–266. A more extensive Dutch-language discussion of these early fascist parties appears in Ivo Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld van de geschiedenis der Nederlanden: Een historiografische en bibliografische studie* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Academic Archive, Amsterdam University Press, 2006 reissue; originally published in 1956 by Van Loghum Slaterus, Arnhem), 51–71, and Robin te Slaa and Edwin Klijn, *De NSB: ontstaan en opkomst van de Nationaal Socialistische Beweging, 1931–1935* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom, 2009).

improving economic conditions diminished the party's appeal.⁹ Frustrated and marginalized, Mussert and his party responded by adopting an increasingly radicalized stance emphasizing anti-Semitism and race over inclusivity and national solidarity.¹⁰ From its inception in 1931, the NSB had allowed Jewish members, but with this racist turn, these Jewish members and their fellow coreligionists were removed from the party and held up as the biological enemies of the Germanic peoples and Western civilization. Now preoccupied with this ever-present, ever-threatening "Judeo-Bolshevism," the Dutch Nazi Party appeared to signal its preference for German National Socialism over Italian Fascism.

The Germans' arrival in May 1940 ushered in a new phase for the nine-year-old party, which had long been accustomed to existence on the political margins of Dutch society. The party became more vocal and visible, especially after Seyss-Inquart disbanded all political parties save the Dutch Nazi Party in late 1941. Not surprisingly, its ranks swelled with opportunists expecting to gain countless personal and professional advantages as members of an ascendant party, and true believers, too, came out of the shadows to declare their long-standing support for Dutch – and German – National Socialism. Yet even under these rather favorable circumstances, the Dutch Nazi Party never came close to achieving a dominant position in Dutch society, and to Mussert's great disappointment, a collaborationist government of the sort established in Norway under Vidkun Quisling was never instituted in the Netherlands.¹¹ In December 1942, Hitler did anoint Mussert "Leader of

⁹ For the various reasons contributing to the declining popularity of the NSB, see G. A. Kooy, *Het Echec van een "Volke" Beweging: Nazificatie en Denazificatie in Nederland 1931–1945* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum and Company N.V., 1964), 5.

¹⁰ This dual process of marginalization and radicalization is examined in some detail by Dietrich Orlow, "A Difficult Relationship of Unequal Relatives: The Dutch NSB and Nazi Germany, 1933–1940," *European History Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1999): 349–380. However, whereas Orlow sees a deliberate process of radicalization set in motion by an increasingly frustrated and even paranoid Anton Mussert, Bob Moore states that "the more radical posture seems to have come from newer members and increasing German influence rather than from any deliberate decisions from the leadership": Moore, "The Netherlands," in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, 455–456.

¹¹ During the war, Mussert would claim that the NSB's membership numbered 100,000 men and women, but postwar appraisals point to lower figures. L. de Jong cites 27,000 members in June 1940, with membership rising to 75,000 by the end of 1941; 63,000 in late 1943; and, in July 1944, another increase, when the party numbered 74,000: L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 6, Eerste Helft ('s-Gravenhage 1975), 367–368. More recent works provide higher membership figures for the entire wartime period and cite a maximum membership of 87,000 obtained in October 1941 at the height of German military successes: See, for instance, Koos Groen, *Fout en niet goed: de vervolging van collaboratie en verraad na de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Hilversum: Just Publishers, 2009), 36, and Chris van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden: Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 8th Ed. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Contact, 2003), 186.

the Dutch People” – an empty title – and shortly thereafter allowed him the authority to appoint an “NSB Secretariat of State,” an assembly of leading Dutch Nazis assuming a purely advisory role. The Dutch Nazi leader was fortunate to receive even these privileges: Seyss-Inquart, HSSpF Rauter, and other leading German officials widely considered Mussert a political and personal liability. Especially aggravating was Mussert’s persistent adherence to his own form of Dutch nationalism, which on multiple occasions put the “Leader” at odds with his German overseers.¹²

Further, the NSB remained sharply divided between Mussert and his (relatively) moderate Dutch nationalist wing of the party on the one hand and the radical, pro-German – or *völkisch* – faction commanded by M. M. Rost van Tonningen on the other. Rost van Tonningen, although born in the Dutch East Indies and educated in the Netherlands, spent much of his adult life working in Vienna, where he cultivated close personal connections with leading German and Austrian Nazis, including *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler. Returning to the Netherlands in 1936, he joined the NSB and quickly assumed multiple leadership positions: He edited the party’s new daily paper, *Het Nationale Dagblad*, directed the party’s Department of Foreign Affairs, and served as one of four party representatives in the second chamber of parliament. Acting in these capacities, Rost van Tonningen proclaimed the merits of racial purity and the *Führerprinzip* and advocated closer political and ideological union with Nazi Germany, including the creation of a National Socialist Netherlands and its annexation into a “Greater Germany.” The rift between these two men and their respective party groupings – a divide that preceded the German occupation – remained palpable during the wartime years, when individual German administrations made known their preferences for either the radical Rost van Tonningen or the comparatively moderate Mussert. Still, regardless of which faction and leader appeared to possess the upper hand at a particular moment in time, or which high-ranking German lent his support to one man or the other, the NSB continued to suffer a “deficit in legitimacy” in the occupied Netherlands. Further, although Rost van Tonningen would acquire a number

¹² HSSpF Rauter carefully documented the unpopularity of Mussert and his NSB, as well as Mussert’s ceaseless attempts to insert himself into the German administrative apparatus: Persönlicher Stab Reichsführer-SS collection of the Deutsches Reich Archiv (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde), NS19, Files 1543, 2860, 3279, 3363, and 3403. Situation reports compiled by representatives of the German Foreign Office in the Netherlands frequently noted the Dutch public’s hostility toward these perceived traitors: “Berichte und Meldungen zur Lage in und über die Niederlande, Vom 1940 bis 1944” collection, Bd 411, Zeitraum 1940–1944, Signatur R 101102, Fichenummer 2845–2847, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt (Berlin). Wehrmacht reports discussing Mussert and the NSB in some detail include Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nrs. 19–26, January–June 1942, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), Wehrmachtbefehlshaber RW 37–23, and the IC-Wochenberichte, June–November 1943, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber RW 37–25, Militärarchiv (Bundesarchiv Freiburg, Germany).

of high-ranking positions, serving as the president of the Netherlands Bank and the Secretary General for Economics and Finance, neither he nor his “Greater Germany” worldview would prove able to displace Mussert and his “Greater Netherlands” idea.¹³

Even as they kept both Rost van Tonningen and Mussert at arm’s length, German occupation authorities in the Netherlands did not hesitate to utilize the Dutch Nazis to further their own objectives. Most notably, they relied on the NSB to recruit volunteers to fight on the eastern front and to ensure that anti-Jewish legislation was implemented on the local level. NSB leaders encouraged their men to volunteer for the “Greater Germanic” SS (the Dutch SS) or a Dutch unit of the *Waffen-SS*, although the majority of the 22,000–25,000 Dutch volunteers who served with the *Waffen-SS* were not members of the party.¹⁴ In the final year of the war, German authorities also allowed the Dutch Nazi Party to create a paramilitary “Home Guard” (*Nederlandse Landwacht*) intended to help stem the tide of resistance-led assassinations of both Dutch Nazis and lesser German officials. Like so many other efforts of the Dutch Nazis, the Home Guard made a great deal of noise but accomplished little. By contrast, Dutch Nazis did have the opportunity to affect local politics, especially from 1943 onward: As Seyss-Inquart and other civilian authorities dismissed mayors, civil servants, and other functionaries deemed unreliable or otherwise recalcitrant, they increasingly appointed Dutch Nazis as their replacements. So too did individual

¹³ These various and enduring tensions – between Mussert and Rost van Tonningen, between Dutch nationalism and Nazi-style *völkisch* policies, between these two leading Dutch Nazis and the Netherlands’ German occupiers – have been amply examined in both English- and Dutch-language scholarship: for example, Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 264, 266–280; Dietrich Orlow, “A Difficult Relationship of Unequal Relatives: The Dutch NSB and Nazi Germany, 1933–1940,” *European History Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1999): 349–380, and *The Lure of Fascism in Western Europe: German Nazis, Dutch and French Fascists, 1933–1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 96–98, 106–108, 126–128, 143–149; Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 202–203; Jan Meyers, *Mussert: een politiek leven* (Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt, 2005), 134–137, 174–191, 194–202, 214–234; and R. Havenaar, *De NSB tussen nationalisme en “volkse” solidariteit: de vooroorlogse ideologie van de Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1983), 115–130, 147–155. The term “deficit of legitimacy” appears in Peter Romijn, with Martin Conway as co-author and the assistance of Denis Peschanski, “National Legitimacy – Ownership, Pretenders, and Wars,” in *The War on Legitimacy in Politics and Culture 1936–1946*, eds. Martin Conway and Peter Romijn (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 67–107, pages 79 and 85 in particular.

¹⁴ The authoritative work on the subject of the Dutch SS remains N.K.C.A in’t Veld’s *De SS en Nederland: Documenten uit SS-archieven 1935–1945*. 2 Volumes, with English summary of the Introduction (’s-Gravenhage: RIOD, 1976; reprinted in 1987 as a one-volume work). These membership figures appear on page 137 of in’t Veld’s “The SS in Relation to the Netherlands,” *The Netherlands’ Journal of Sociology* 13 (1977): 125–139.

party members help enforce anti-Jewish legislation, reporting to German authorities, for instance, noncompliant businesses that continued to serve Jewish patrons. More gravely, Dutch Nazis denounced those Jews who had evaded deportation, and in this capacity they acted as “Jew hunters,” typically receiving a cash payment for their services.¹⁵ The “Leader of the Dutch People” may have possessed few powers and responsibilities, and he never presided over the fascist Netherlands in the manner he envisioned, but his party continued to occupy a central place in the German-occupied Netherlands. As such, Mussert believed himself to be not only the nation’s rightful advocate vis-à-vis its new rulers, but its savior too. He alone could protect the glorious Dutch empire from the malevolent forces that sought to destroy it.

THE MAKINGS OF AN OCCUPIED SOCIETY

Writing in what is now a decades-old study of the occupied Netherlands, historian Werner Warmbrunn described the first few months of the occupation as a sort of “honeymoon” period, with the German authorities on their best behavior and the newly occupied Dutch pleasantly surprised by the mild nature of German rule.¹⁶ However, more recent analyses, such as Peter Romijn’s sweeping study of wartime Dutch mayors, portray a people groping their way through the new circumstances in which they found themselves after May 1940. With his analysis of local government, Romijn reveals profound unrest and confusion: Emboldened groups of Dutch Nazis rioted in the streets and tested the power of local Dutch leaders and police forces to control them, and German authorities gave these homegrown Nazis broad room to maneuver in the hopes of determining whether Dutch society was “prepared to accept the ‘New Order’.”¹⁷ Gerhard Hirschfeld terms the dominant response seen during this initial period of occupation as “attentism.” Originally used by the French to describe their own wartime situation, and subsequently popularized by Hirschfeld in his works on Dutch collaboration, attentism describes a wait-and-see approach to the new situation, adopted as a means of ensuring peace, security, and other personal and national interests. For Hirschfeld, this attentist behavior was “thoroughly characteristic of the first phase of the occupation, in which not only the essential elements of the subsequent collaboration were formulated, but also the determining factors for a later resistance were

¹⁵ Of course, not all of those men and women who engaged in such behavior belonged to the NSB. See, for instance, Ad van Liempt, *Hitler’s Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews*, trans. Stephen J. Leinbach (New York: Berg, 2005).

¹⁶ Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch under German Occupation 1940–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 11.

¹⁷ Peter Romijn, *Burgemeesters in Oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2006), 99–101, 160–161.

established.”¹⁸ Early in the occupation, Dutch politicians, civil servants, even leaders of the doomed Jewish congregations and associations adopted this accommodationist approach and engaged in discussions, both among themselves and with German officials, about how best to achieve their own goals under these new circumstances.

However naïve it might seem in retrospect, this drive toward reaching some form of *modus vivendi* with the German occupiers grew out of centuries-old Dutch traditions and policies. From its earliest days as the Republic of the Netherlands, the country’s political system operated on the principle of consensus building. Compromise and tolerance were considered the best means of preserving geographic and economic interests, whether at home or in the world community. Closely linked to this idea, the principle of neutrality came to represent the highest international expression of consensus building, the most effective way to protect the country and its overseas territories from hostile or potentially hostile forces. Indeed, because this politics of neutrality had successfully shielded Dutch soldiers, civilians, and territory from the worst ravages of World War I, this neutral stance was endowed with further legitimacy and even moral authority.¹⁹ It is not surprising, then, that especially during the first few months of the occupation – when the German authorities had not yet revealed their hand – leading political figures and civil servants expressed their desire to work with the new occupiers. The Germans, so they reasoned, were simply one more group to work with, and as long as the new occupiers did not go too far, it was in the best interests of the Netherlands and the Dutch people to work with them. Furthermore, it was better for loyal and trained Dutch civil servants to remain in their posts during these uncertain times than to let their positions be filled by Dutch Nazis who would surely fall over themselves to actualize National Socialist policy.²⁰

This approach was best exemplified by the work of Hendrik Colijn, one of the leaders of the conservative Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party. A

¹⁸ Gerhard Hirschfeld, “Collaboration and Attentism in the Netherlands 1940–1941,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 3, *The Second World War: Part 2* (July 1981): 467–486, with this statement on page 469, and Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 5–6.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Peter Romijn’s comments to this effect, appearing in his “Restoration of Confidence”: The Purge of Local Government in the Netherlands as a Problem of Postwar Reconstruction,” in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath*, ed. István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 174.

²⁰ Three years prior to the German invasion, the Dutch government had created a set of guidelines – the so-called Directives (*Aanwijzingen*) of 1937 – meant to prepare civil servants in case of an enemy occupation, but these remained only vague guidelines. Particularly during the first two years of the German occupation, civil servants were constantly forced to interpret at what point their remaining in office better served the occupier than it did their own people.

former colonial official in the Indies, Colijn had led five different governments between 1925 and 1939. Now, with the Germans firmly entrenched in The Hague, Colijn resigned himself to the new situation and urged his fellow citizens to do the same, albeit with a kind of pragmatic optimism. At the end of June 1940, he published the short but influential booklet, *Op de grens van twee werelden* (*On the Border of Two Worlds*), laying out his plans for Dutch-German collaboration. Its central premise was simple: Germany now ruled the Netherlands and would soon control all of Europe, and the Dutch needed to adjust their attitude and behavior accordingly. Still, for Colijn, this situation did not imply the end of Dutch autonomy, and he urged the nation to realize the opportunities standing before it. As the occupying power, Nazi Germany would look to control Dutch economic, political, and social affairs, but the Netherlands might be able to retain some of its independence if its people elected to cooperate with the German authorities. To these ends, Colijn called on the Dutch to constitute themselves into a new, broadly based national organization, which would then negotiate directly with the German authorities. Speaking to Seyss-Inquart, Colijn volunteered himself to lead this movement and thus work with the Reichskommissar and his representatives.²¹

For Colijn and his supporters, the changed circumstances of the German occupation, although certainly unfortunate, held out the possibility of breathing new life into Dutch politics and society, a cause made popular during the economic and political crises of the 1930s. When governments came and went with alarming frequency, seemingly unable to mitigate the effects of the Depression, Dutch parliamentary democracy came to serve as a flash point for popular frustrations. Singled out for especially scathing criticism was the long-standing “pillar system.” The Dutch constitution of 1848 specified the separation of church and state, but intervening decades had seen the development of political parties along denominational lines. When these parties solidified their support with their respective constituencies, the *verzuijing* or “pillarization” of society resulted, with distinct and rigid Roman Catholic, Protestant (Calvinist and other groups), Liberal/Secular, and Social

²¹ In assessing his personal motives for offering his support to the Germans in this fashion, one must note that since World War I, Colijn was widely known for his pro-British sympathies. When the Germans arrived in the country in 1940, they were well aware of his leanings in this direction. Colijn, therefore, had every reason to fear that this reputation could harm him. He would later die in a German concentration camp. Colijn’s positions and efforts are effectively summarized in Gerhard Hirschfeld, “Collaboration and Attention in the Netherlands 1940–1941,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 3, *The Second World War: Part 2* (July 1981): 472–474, and Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 57–61. Throughout the occupation, the various clandestine publications would continue to refer to Colijn’s *Op de grens van twee werelden*, usually failing to explain its main points, as they assumed readers were thoroughly familiar with them.

Democratic groupings dominating both political and social life. Well into the twentieth century, these pillars formed exclusive subcultures, each operating its own political parties and lobbying groups, trade unions and guilds, youth organizations, newspapers, and radio stations. Accordingly, Dutch elections resembled a census, with each pillar aiming to register and mobilize its respective constituents, not gain converts from among the public at large.²²

During the interwar period, various groups and individuals from across the political spectrum challenged the dominance of this pillar system, each proposing an alternative restructuring of Dutch political and social life, whether along supradenominational, corporatist, or even more strictly authoritarian lines. Such plans, seen as overly ambitious, too eccentric, or poorly timed, came to naught. However, in the summer of 1940, a new mass movement seemed poised both to realize these reformers' aspirations and to fulfill Colijn's most recent calls to unite and negotiate. This *Nederlandse Unie*, or "Dutch Union," aimed to unify this politically and socially fragmented society and at the same time ensure Dutch autonomy and self-determination even under German occupation. In the process, the Unie would also serve as a political foil to the newly ascendant Dutch Nazi Party. Of course, the establishment of this new mass movement was contingent on the approval of German authorities, and after repeated discussions with the Unie's originators, Fritz Schmidt, the *Generalkommissar zur besonderen Verwendung* (essentially the minister for political affairs and propaganda), assented to its creation. After all, a popular mass movement could only further German interests: A party of this sort would allow the Dutch to believe that political agency and authority remained in their hands and, as a result, would help facilitate the self-Nazification of the Netherlands. The Unie did not advance a particularly radical agenda, as it appeared to infuse National Socialist conceptions of *Volk und Vaterland* with a dose of traditional Dutch nationalism. It was anticommunist, antiliberalist, and anticapitalist on the one hand and "Dutch socialist" on the other, promoting national and empire-wide solidarity, agricultural development, and the creation of an organic and corporatist economy – all principles similarly advanced by Anton Mussert and his Dutch Nazi Party. Yet despite these programmatic similarities with the much-despised Dutch Nazi Party, the public response to

²² Arend Lijphart's *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1968) remains the formative work on Dutch accommodationist traditions and the development of the "pillar system." More recent analyses of this phenomenon include, for instance, Henk te Velde, "Politics and the People: Perceptions of the Masses in Dutch Politics," 17–29, pages 20–22 especially; and Joop M. Roebroek, "The Arrival of the Welfare State in Twentieth-Century Mass Society: The Dutch Case," 47–66, both in *Twentieth-century Mass Society in Britain and the Netherlands*, eds. Bob Moore and Henk van Nierop (New York: Berg, 2006).

the Unie was overwhelming. Two weeks into its public existence, the Unie counted 250,000 members; by February 1941, it had 800,000 members (out of a population of approximately nine million).²³ Certainly, these followers may have supported the Unie's larger goals of forging national unity and preserving a modicum of autonomy under German rule. However, as German authorities soon realized, the majority of those who joined did so because they viewed membership as a way to express their opposition to both the German occupiers and the Dutch Nazi Party.²⁴

The Unie remained in existence for a year and a half, during which time it did indeed unite thousands of Dutch men and women under one banner. It accomplished little else, however. Internal conflicts, largely concerning the limits and benefits of Dutch accommodation toward the Germans and Nazism, plagued the organization's ruling triumvirate, with one Unie leader even working toward rapprochement with the Dutch Nazi Party. Meanwhile, the German authorities soon tired of the Unie's presence. As German rule steadily became more intrusive and aggressive during the first two years of the occupation, Seyss-Inquart and his Generalkommissare sensed little need to prop up the Unie. The Dutch would not be able to negotiate their own fate within the Nazi New Order; if a new political, social, and economic system was to emerge in the Netherlands, it would bear the stamp of the Third Reich, not the Unie. A series of conflicts between Unie leadership and the

²³ These membership figures are contained in the Andreae Report, which articulated the findings of the postwar committee charged with investigating the wartime work of the *Nederlandse Unie: De Nederlandsche Unie en haar Driemanschap. Rapport: Uitgebracht door de daartoe op verzoek van het Driemanschap door Prof. Ir. W. Schermerhorn benoemde Commissie* (Schiedam: Roelants, 1946), 24, 29. These figures are also cited in Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940-1945* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 72, and Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch under German Occupation 1940-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 134.

²⁴ At the time, this anti-NSB motivation was acknowledged by the office of the *Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD für die besetzten Niederländischen Gebiete* (Wilhelm Harster) in the weekly *Meldungen aus den Niederlanden*, 8 October 1940: "Nederlandsche Unie," page 10: Map 73 DI, Collection 61-76, Generalkommissar zur besonderen Verwaltung, NIOD, Amsterdam. Shortly after the war, J. G. Suurhoff, a former social democratic leader and an ardent activist for the *Unie*, confirmed this view in his "De Nederlandsche Unie en haar betekenis voor de bevrijdingsstrijd," in *Onderdrukking en Verzet: Nederland in Oorlogstijd*, ed. J. J. van Bolhuis et al, Volume 2 (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1950-1954), 98-108: 100.

Although I accept that the Dutch population may have seen the Unie as an anti-German and anti-Nazi organization above all else, I do not characterize the Unie as a resistance movement, nor do I consider the organization's actions as resistance against the German occupation. At the same time, I also do not adhere to the arguments put forth by M. L. Smith, who downplays this perception of the Unie as anti-Nazi. Smith implies that the Unie's promises to overcome pillarization and confessional differences, and not the Unie's purported anti-Nazi stance, attracted the vast majority of Unie supporters: "Neither resistance nor collaboration: Historians and the problem of the Nederlandse Unie," *History LXXII* (1987): 259.

German authorities ensued until, in December 1941, the German authorities formally dissolved the organization.

Such was not the end of the Unie's influence, however. In May 1942, German authorities arrested three former members of the organization's ruling triumvirate, along with scores of other Unie leaders and members, and sent them to a detainment center in one of the country's southern provinces. This was part of the occupiers' attempts to deter resistance and ensure public compliance with a seemingly endless array of restrictive measures. Some of these Unie hostages would remain in custody until liberation, whereas others, such as the group's three leaders, were either released or able to escape German custody. Once "free," the three men kept their distance from the anti-German resistance, but other high-ranking Unie leaders would reemerge in the country's major underground organizations. Dutch historian Louis de Jong has argued that no straight line led from the Unie to any national resistance group, but all the same, the Dutch resistance – particularly in the final years of the war, when its leaders set their sights on the most pressing topic of postwar political restoration – clearly drew on the work and personnel of this mass movement.²⁵ The *Nederlands Unie*, therefore, cannot be considered a purely opportunistic movement of marginal significance, despite its rather limited success in achieving its stated objectives. During the initial period of the occupation, the Unie's accommodationist stance simply seemed to offer the best prospects for preserving local autonomy and protecting Dutch interests, both at home and overseas.

OF COLONIAL RICHES AND REFORMS

At the time of the German invasion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands included the European Netherlands, the archipelago of the East Indies, the South American territory of Surinam (or Dutch Guiana), and the Caribbean islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, and Saba. In common parlance, the name "West Indies" referred to all those territories located in or around South America, whereas "East Indies" was usually shorted simply to "Indies," or, in Dutch, "*Indië*." The population of the European Netherlands totaled approximately 9 million, the East Indies had 50 million inhabitants, and the West Indies claimed 244,000. Of the three "realms" of the kingdom, the East Indies was the largest by far, occupying 730,000 square miles in comparison to the 13,514 of the European Netherlands and the 54,436 of the West Indies.²⁶ The Netherlands had laid

²⁵ L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 5, Eerste Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1974), 207.

²⁶ Population figures and total square mileage, as assessed for the year 1945, are contained in Muriel E. Chamberlain, *European Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Longman, 1998), 10. Prewar population figures are slightly lower than those provided by Chamberlain. For instance, in an unpublished but publicly available statistical summary

claim to these territories for centuries, drawing on the foundations established in the early seventeenth century by the trading companies of the Dutch East and West Indies. For more than 150 years, these two publicly traded companies had made the Netherlands into an economic powerhouse: The East Indies Company commanded trade between the Dutch colonial territories in Asia and the rest of Europe, whereas the West Indies Company obtained a monopoly of the booming slave trade between Africa and the Americas. This sprawling mercantilist empire then came to an end in the late eighteenth century, which saw the bankruptcy and dissolution of both companies as well as the British occupation of the East Indies. However, by 1824, the British had returned the East Indies to the Dutch, whose colonial policy makers were determined to ensure the cohesiveness of the empire. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when other European nations scrambled for pieces of the imperial pie in Africa, the Dutch instead aimed to consolidate and expand their rule over the East Indies. By using a combination of military and diplomatic measures, they were able to acquire a number of nearby islands and thus “round off” the contours of their East Asian colony.²⁷

With its hold on the East Indies secure, the Netherlands accepted its new twentieth-century standing. Spanish and Dutch vessels no longer ruled the seas, but as Dutch political and military leaders now rushed to proclaim, the monumental importance of the East Indies accorded the Netherlands an international position inversely proportional to its small continental stature. As a result, the Dutch came to define themselves by virtue of their relationship with the East Indies, paying particular attention to the financial ties binding the metropole and colony. Indeed, colonial profits at this time were hardly inconsequential. During the 1920s and 1930s, the income derived from the East Indies totaled between 14 and 20 percent of the national income of the Netherlands.²⁸ Or, put slight differently by an American observer in 1940,

prepared for the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, Jeroen Kemperman cites the accepted wartime total of 50 million Indonesian inhabitants: “Cijfers Japanse bezetting, Pacific-oorlog en Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsstrijd” statistical summary, NIOD, Amsterdam.

²⁷ The term “rounding off” appears in the title of J. van Goor’s edited volume, *Imperialisme in de marge: De afronding van Nederlands-Indië* (Utrecht: Hes, 1986). Elsbeth Locher-Scholten provides an excellent English-language analysis of this process as it occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: “Dutch Expansion in the Indonesian Archipelago Around 1900 and the Imperialism Debate,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, issue 1 (March 1994): 91–111.

²⁸ According to the comprehensive analysis provided by J. B. D. Derksen and J. Tinbergen, 13.7 percent of the Netherlands’ national income in 1938 derived from the colony. By contrast, during the period of 1925–1934, such income amounted to 14.7 percent of the national economy. “Berekeningen over de economische betekenis van Nederlandsch-Indië voor Nederland,” *Maandschrift van het Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* 40 (1945): 210–216. This data also appears, in an adapted English-language chart in Theodore Friend, *The*

“between one fifth to one tenth of the entire population of the Netherlands is either directly dependent on, or indirectly interested financially in, the commerce or industries of Netherlands India.”²⁹ Even more importantly, the Dutch tended to overestimate the economic significance of the Indies: Even government and business tended to assume that the proportion of income from the Indies was as high as 40 to 50 percent.³⁰ For this reason, the East Indies came to be seen as the Netherlands’ economic lifeline, the country’s key to survival in a world dominated by the French and British empires.

Such palpable anxiety was both encapsulated and popularized by the well-tread expression, “Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren” – “Indies lost, disaster born,” or, alternately, “Indies lost, disastrous cost.”³¹ Written in 1914 by C. G. S. Sandberg, the pamphlet giving rise to this phrase warned that the loss of the Indies would be catastrophic for the Dutch economy and for the international position of the Netherlands. Without her Asian colony, he argued, the Netherlands would be reduced to the lowly ranking of Denmark. To avoid this tragedy of unspeakable magnitude, the Dutch should defend the archipelago with whatever forces were necessary.³² When they first appeared, Sandberg’s warnings found an immediately receptive audience among those personally invested in the colonial situation. In the politically charged and economically uncertain atmosphere of the 1930s, his work assumed an ever-more urgent tone. The Netherlands’ traditional position in the East Indies, so it seemed to Dutch observers in the colony and metropole, was under attack from not one, but two, fronts. On a domestic level, the Dutch faced the rising popularity and proliferation of Indonesian nationalist organizations. On an international level, the Dutch confronted the Japanese, who sought to increase their profile in the greater Asia-Pacific region. Beginning in the 1920s, Japan tried to exact one economic

Blue-Eyed Enemy: Japan against the West in Java and Luzon, 1942–1945 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), Table 1.1, “Dutch Income, Indies-Derived, in Millions of Gulden,” 18. Friend also comments that this ratio (approximately one-seventh) was “probably the highest ratio in any country in the world” (17). The higher figure of 20 percent is noted by Audrey R. and George McT. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 29.

²⁹ Arthur S. Keller, “Netherlands India as a Paying Proposition,” *Far Eastern Survey* 9, no. 2 (Jan. 17, 1940): 11–18, with this statement on page 11.

³⁰ Theodore Friend, *The Blue-Eyed Enemy: Japan against the West in Java and Luzon, 1942–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 19–20. See also Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 48.

³¹ The latter translation is employed by Theodore Friend in his *The Blue-Eyed Enemy: Japan against the West in Java and Luzon, 1942–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 20. The former translation is more commonly seen, whereas Friend’s version preserves the rhyming structure of the Dutch. Still, his phrase “disastrous costs” suggests financial loss above all else, whereas the original Dutch expression implies a more far-reaching type of catastrophe.

³² C. G. S. Sandberg, *Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren* (’s-Gravenhage: D. A. Daamen, 1914).

concession after another from the Dutch, with mixed results. In the 1930s, when the Japanese embarked on a policy of overt military aggression against its neighbors, the Dutch began to fear – although, in retrospect, not nearly enough – Japanese designs on the colony itself. Faced with this perceived two-front attack, Dutch policy makers in The Hague and Batavia – such as on-and-off-again Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn – dug in their heels. There was to be no talk of implementing colonial reform, as per the demands of the Indonesian nationalists, or any other measures that might undermine the essential relationship between the Netherlands and the East Indies.

If the Dutch were convinced that their nation's very survival depended on the riches and accompanying status generated by their Asian colony, so too were they confident that their type of colonial rule remained firmly rooted in moral principles and was therefore truly exceptional. In 1901, for instance, Queen Wilhelmina proclaimed that, as a Christian nation, the Netherlands had a "moral duty" toward the Indies, specifically, to improve education, public health, and agriculture in the island colony.³³ The Dutch, of course, were hardly the only imperial nation to proclaim an explicit civilizing mission. A contemporary observer, whether in Amsterdam, Paris, London, Lisbon, Brussels, or Berlin, would have heard the same language of uplift, enlightened and benevolent rule, and religious duty. Still, the Netherlands believed itself on a markedly different course than that of its larger imperial neighbors. To retain their hold over their colonial possessions, the Dutch would need to compete on the grounds they knew best. As Elsbeth Locher-Scholten has argued, "the Dutch, belonging to a small nation with a strong Calvinist tradition, felt more at ease with ethics and ethical motives than with the international discourse of power and economics."³⁴ For this reason, they aimed to be and soon crowned themselves the most ethically driven, morally scrupulous colonial power.

This moralizing stance most clearly revealed itself in the country's "ethical policy" toward the East Indies, which was based on an 1899 article by Liberal politician and lawyer Conrad van Deventer. In his "Een eerschuld" ("A Debt of Honor"), van Deventer drew on his nearly twenty years of work in the Indies and a bevy of statistics to demonstrate how the Netherlands had economically exploited the Indies for centuries. The Dutch, he argued, had a moral obligation to repay this "debt of honor," and they should do so by according the highest priority to Indonesian interests. In essence, the Dutch were to play the role of wise, benevolent guardians overseeing the

³³ This speech is cited in H. L. Wesseling, "The Giant That Was a Dwarf or: The Strange Case of Dutch Imperialism," *Imperialism and Colonialism: Essays on the History of European Expansion* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997).

³⁴ Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Dutch Expansion in the Indonesian Archipelago Around 1900 and the Imperialism Debate," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, issue 1 (March 1994): 106–107.

process of development and modernization and preparing the Indonesians for eventual (but hardly imminent) self-rule.³⁵ However, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the political reforms implicit in van Deventer's ethical policy were given short shrift, as Batavia instead pursued a program of economic development. Dutch colonial administrators devoted particular energy to the creation of modern irrigation systems, roadways, and industrialization, all projects aimed at increasing the prosperity of both colony and motherland.³⁶

Under this "ethical policy," the colonial government built an array of new schools and vastly improved the literacy rate of the colony's native inhabitants.³⁷ Seen on the whole, however, the Dutch were far less concerned with secondary and higher education than were the British, for instance, who created and employed a vast Indian educational system as a means of training qualified Indian civil servants. In contrast to British India, however, the Dutch East Indies maintained a dual administrative system with two separate civil services, one consisting of Europeans and select Indo-Europeans, the other consisting of Indonesians and "foreign Orientals," such as the Chinese. Skilled European professionals, usually arriving in the Indies from rigorous Indies programs at Leiden and Utrecht Universities, staffed the upper ranks of the administration, whereas Indonesians trained in their own schools, in their own languages, and according to their own laws, worked in their own administrations. Only after the turn of the century, and with Indonesians allowed access to positions and domains once held only by Europeans, would successive Dutch governments in The Hague and Batavia urge the expansion of secondary education, both native and European.³⁸ Nor did the Netherlands employ ambitious religious-cultural

³⁵ Conrad van Deventer, "Een eereschuld," *De Gids* 17 (1899): 205–257.

³⁶ Discussions of this "ethical policy" in theory and practice can be found in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten's *Ethiek in fragmenten; Vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische archipel* (Utrecht: HES, 1981); Berteke Waaldijk and Susan Legêne, "Ethische politiek in Nederland: Cultureel burgerschap tussen overheersing, opvoeding en afscheid," in *Het Koloniale Beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië 1890–1950*, eds. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2009), 187–216; Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, "The Never-Ending Debt of Honor: The Dutch in the Post-Colonial World," *Itinerario* 20, no. 2 (1996): 20–42, pages 20–21 especially; and J. J. P. de Jong, "In het kielzog van Multatuli: Van koloniaal welvaartsproject naar ontwikkelingssamenwerking," in eds. Bob de Graaf, Dulco Hellema, and Bert van der Zwan, *De Nederlandse Buitenlandse Politiek in de Twintigste Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2003), 37–68.

³⁷ For Dutch educational policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 40–42; W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition* (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1959), 136–153; George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 29–35.

³⁸ Chr. L. M. Penders's discussion of educational policy and the Indonesian civil service is accompanied by relevant documents dated 1904–1932: *Indonesia: Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism 1830–1942*, ed. and trans. Chr. L. M. Penders (St. Lucia,

programs that aimed to turn colonial subjects into loyal citizens, as seen in territories held by the French Republic. For the duration of Dutch colonial rule, the native inhabitants of the East Indies were considered neither citizens nor nationals of the Netherlands but members of a distinct racial and legal category subject to their own laws, customs, and institutions. To be sure, certain colonial officials, legal scholars, and parliamentarians had repeatedly sought to clarify or revise this classification system, but to little effect: As “non-Dutch subjects,” these “*Inlander*” remained foreigners in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.³⁹

Indeed, race-based thinking and racial stratification were hardly limited to the Netherlands and its empire, but in this domain, too, Dutch colonial officials considered their approach uniquely rooted in local history and culture. Twentieth-century colonial administrators prided themselves on their tremendous store of knowledge concerning *adat*, or the body of traditions and laws maintained and practiced by Indonesian cultures, sometimes over the course of centuries. Under the guidance of such experts as Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and Cornelis van Vollenhoven of the University of Leiden, would-be colonial officials learned both *adat* law and the art of ethnography. Once in the East Indies, these “Indologists” would employ these skills to uncover local norms and behaviors, always with an eye toward shaping colonial policy on various levels.⁴⁰ This “cultural synthesis,” as it came to be known, resembled the French policy of association aiming to preserve native traditions, but, again, on this count, the Dutch considered themselves to be path-breaking and unique, as best explained by historian Frances Gouda. The British, although interested in the pursuit of anthropological knowledge, did not necessarily use such knowledge to inform their

Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977), 149–176. Harry J. Benda’s detailed account of administrative reforms reveals the contradictory position of Indonesian civil servants, alternately mandated to assume greater authority in the manner taught to them by their European mentors and then made to retreat into more acceptable domains, as was encouraged under the experimental “de-tutelization” program. Harry J. Benda, “The Pattern of Administrative Reforms in the Closing Years of Dutch Rule in Indonesia,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 25 no. 4 (August 1966), 589–605.

³⁹ Cees Fasseur, “Cornerstone and Stumbling Block: Racial Classification and the Late Colonial State in Indonesia,” in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 31–56, and the more extensive Dutch version of this piece, Cees Fasseur, “Hoeksteen en struikelblok. Rasonderscheid en overheidsbelied in Nederlands-Indië,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 105 (1992) 218–242; Bertheke Waaldijk, “Subjects and Citizens: Gender and Racial Discrimination in Dutch Colonialism at the End of the 19th Century,” in *Racial Discrimination and Ethnicity in European History*, ed. Guðmundur Hálfdanarson (Pisa: PLUS, Università di Pisa, 2003), 101–118; and W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition* (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1959), 136–141.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, C. Snouck Hurgronje, “The ideal of association, 1911,” in *Indonesia: Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism 1830–1942*, ed. and trans. Chr. L. M. Penders (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977), 157–165.

colonial practices, and French colonial scholarship was most interested in testing universal laws of social progress. The Dutch, by contrast, studied and carefully documented native cultures to better prepare their colonial officials for the business of governing the Indonesian territory. As a result, the Dutch came to see their colonial rule as supported by scientific knowledge, not brute force, because according to Gouda, this “knowledge was the handmaiden of power, whereas a display of authority without knowledge would quickly degenerate into the mindless saber-rattling of imperial Goliaths.”⁴¹ For this reason, the Dutch alone deserved to rule the East Indies. Neither the British, long suspected by certain segments of Dutch society to harbor secret designs on their crown jewel, nor the up-start Japanese nor the Indonesian nationalists were capable of this monumental task.

With this task came great responsibilities. If, as leading voices in both The Hague and Batavia implied, the East Indies constituted a model colony, it was not guaranteed this position. Colonial policy needed to take stock of local conditions and particularities, but it also needed to evolve with the times; it needed to grant colonial administrators greater flexibility in adjusting programs and laws that did not appear to be working. Accordingly, policy makers throughout the empire demonstrated their willingness to consider the implementation of economic and political reforms in the East Indies. Perhaps most obviously, contemporary observers could cite the aforementioned “ethical policy” of the early twentieth century, which had replaced the previous “cultivation system” (*cultuurstelsel*). Under the cultivation system – first implemented in 1830 by the Governor General of the East Indies, Johannes van den Bosch – the colonial government assumed ownership of all land on Java and charged each village a land tax to be paid to the government in the form of agricultural goods for export. Each village was to designate a maximum of one-fifth of its viable farmland for the cultivation of export crops such as coffee, tea, and sugar. Local village leaders were to recruit Javanese laborers to work this land, and these workers, compelled into service for as many as sixty-six days a year, would receive – at least in theory – payment for their services at a rate determined by the government. As expected, the culture system reinforced the coffers of the government in The Hague. Before 1850, remittances sent from the Indies to the national treasury totaled less than one-fifth of national revenues, whereas only ten years later, such remittances amounted to nearly one-third of such revenue. Nearly all of these profits were then reinvested in the Dutch domestic market.⁴² When the export crops became more profitable

⁴¹ Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 43–45.

⁴² These figures are cited in both Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong, *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 8, and M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 148–149.

on the world market, colonial officials and Indonesian village officials raised the village taxes. As the colonial government amassed still larger supplies of export crops, Indonesian laborers received ever-dwindling shares of the profits, if they even received them at all.

From its inception, this cultivation system had engendered significant opposition from a number of corners. Speaking from their own experiences in the colony, Dutch “Indologists” cited rampant nepotism and systemic corruption on all levels of government and village life, whereas Liberal politicians, looking to ensure that private companies could obtain a share of the colonial market, lobbied to end the government’s continuing monopoly over the Indonesian economy. The constitutional revision of 1848, which strengthened the authority of the Dutch parliament in relation to colonial affairs, provided a legal foundation for parliamentary opposition. However, the final blow to the cultivation was meted out by the novel *Max Havelaar, or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company*, first published in 1860 and written by former colonial official Eduard Douwes Dekker, who was best known by his pen name, Multatuli. Both Multatuli and his title character would become household names, synonymous with anti-imperialism and progressive reform. Yet it is important to note that *Max Havelaar*, although certainly critical of the cultivation system and those entrusted with its implementation, did not constitute a radical demand for decolonization. Rather, as literary critics and historians have repeatedly maintained, Douwes Dekker’s work challenged Dutch lawmakers and colonial officials to institute a more enlightened form of colonial rule.⁴³

The ethical policy of the early twentieth century still held out the possibility for change, as did a number of other reforms instituted during the first few decades of the new century. In December 1916, the Dutch parliament approved the creation of the *Volksraad*, or “People’s Council,” which was to advise the Governor General of the Indies on legislative and financial matters. Members of the *Volksraad* were either appointed by the Governor General or elected to their position by local councils, typically dominated by Dutch officials and members of the Indonesian elite, or *priyayi*. When the first *Volksraad* convened in 1918, the majority of its members, both elected and appointed, were Dutchmen. By contrast, the last *Volksraad* convened before the Japanese occupation of 1942 was dominated by Indonesian and “foreign” – in the main, Chinese – representatives.⁴⁴ Still, because the

⁴³ Dutch social historian Han van der Horst, for example, explains that the novel should not be confused with “a plea for emancipation of the native people from the colonial yoke,” when, in fact, it actually made the case for a “more paternalistic government on the part of the Netherlands”: *The Low Sky: Understanding the Dutch: The Book that Makes the Netherlands Familiar* (Den Haag: Scriptum/Nuffic, 2001), 282.

⁴⁴ Of the original nineteen appointed members, there were fourteen Dutchmen and five Indonesians, whereas of the nineteen elected members there were ten Indonesians and nine Dutchmen, for a total of twenty-three Europeans and fifteen Indonesians. By the late 1930s,

group was purely advisory in nature, little chance existed that even the moderate reforms suggested by its Indonesian members would become practice. After all, the Governor General was not duty bound to heed the Volksraad's suggestions. This same period also saw a new constitutional position for the Dutch colonies: According to Article I of the 1922 revision of the constitution of the Netherlands, the Dutch colonies were reclassified as "overseas territories" of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. With this revision, the European Netherlands (or "Holland"), the Dutch East Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao now constituted four constitutionally equal parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This measure did not imply the creation of a federation or commonwealth of sorts whereby representatives of the various realms of the kingdom would be involved in the decision-making process; however, should this have been an option that the Dutch wished to pursue, they would have found the constitutional premise to do so. More significantly, this revised constitution provided Dutch administrators in the overseas territories with increased authority over internal affairs in their respective domains, with the Dutch crown reserving the right to intervene as necessary.⁴⁵ Just as the Kingdom of the Netherlands appeared to be moving away from centralized control in The Hague, so too did Batavia divest itself of some of its own authority. Various reforms instituted during the first decades of the twentieth century created scores of local councils and organizations and, by extension, greater Indonesian participation in provincial government at least.⁴⁶

Such reforms, no matter how moderate or incremental, were not universally received with open arms and, in fact, lent ammunition to those already proclaiming the now well-tread mantra of "Indies lost, disaster born." In the years preceding the onset of World War II, concern for the fate of the East Indies, and specifically the strength of the ties uniting the Dutch and their prized colony, reached a fever pitch in both metropole and colony. Such anxiety was largely the result of the Great Depression, which had brought record levels of unemployment, union unrest, and inflation to the Netherlands. With conditions worsening at home, various segments of

the body consisted of thirty-eight elected and twenty-two appointed members, with twenty-five Europeans (fifteen elected, ten appointed), thirty Indonesians (twenty elected, ten appointed), and five "foreigners" (three elected, two appointed): M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 194, and Franz Ansprenger, *The Dissolution of the Colonial Empires* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 108.

⁴⁵ A complete copy of this 1922 constitution, along with an English-language translation and accompanying commentary produced by the United States Legation in The Hague over the period of 1923–1927, can be found as 856.011/2, 856.011/8, 856.011/4, 856.011/5, 856.014/3, 856d.00/2, 856.d00/19 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M682, roll 10), Records of the Legation of the United States of America; National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁶ Harry J. Benda, "The Pattern of Administrative Reforms in the Closing Years of Dutch Rule in Indonesia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 25 no. 4 (August 1966), 589–605.

Dutch society touted the East Indies as the nation's saving grace, the critical provider of both essential raw materials and a ready market for Dutch goods. The East Indies, so these voices proclaimed, constituted an essential lifeline, without which the Netherlands confronted certain doom. In the colony itself, this colonial anxiety found expression in European organizations such as the Fatherlands Club (*Vaderlandsche Club* (or VC), which opposed any and all colonial reforms, and the Dutch Nazi Party of the East Indies, the *Indische NSB*. Both called for a strong military presence to defend the colony from foreign threats and a powerful colonial government vested with the task of rooting out and destroying the true scourge threatening Dutch rule in the East Indies – namely, Indonesian nationalism and, more specifically, communist agitation on behalf of a united, independent Indonesia.

Indeed, the first few decades of the twentieth century had witnessed the birth of Indonesian nationalism. However, contrary to those who saw all Indonesian political activity as a sign of impending revolt, the early nationalist movement primarily set its sight on intellectual, economic, and religious uplift. Further, according to William H. Frederick, the term “nationalist movement” implies “a uniform level of activism and politicization, and even a general political unity”; in reality, the anticolonial movement in the Indies encompassed a complex and ever-changing array of leaders, ideas, and organizations.⁴⁷ The first of the major nationalist organizations was the Islamic League (*Sarekat Islam* or SI), founded in 1912 as an anti-Chinese commercial association of Muslim textile traders. It soon expanded into larger social, political, and religious arenas. Its leaders promoted personal discipline, Islamic education, workers' rights, and, perhaps most radically, the creation of a militia force composed of Indonesians. With its broad appeal, the all-encompassing SI quickly grew into a mass movement of nearly unimaginable proportions: By 1918, it had amassed approximately half a million members, and by the following year, two and a half million members.⁴⁸ If at first the SI appeared to espouse a moderate political stance vis-à-vis the Dutch colonial administration, it became noticeably less cooperative as the movement admitted more radical groups to its ranks,

⁴⁷ William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 39–40.

⁴⁸ Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong's *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 17–18; Henri Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian Empires 1919–1963*, transl. Stephan de Vos (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 86–87; Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 73–79; Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 166–168; M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 200–201. Now nearly sixty years old, George McT. Kahin's *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952) remains one of the standard works examining the origins and development of Indonesian nationalism.

such as the Indies Party. Founded in 1912, this *Indische Partij* constituted the “first clearly anti-government political party” and sought an independent East Indies encompassing the entire archipelago.⁴⁹ Two years later, a young Dutch labor leader by the name of Hendrik Sneevliet founded the Indies Social Democratic Association, the *Indisch Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging* (ISDV). Confronted with these competing – and secular – ideologies, and now forced to operate under the watchful eyes of the colonial government’s new Political Intelligence Service, the SI lost its once dominant position among the Indonesian masses. The party remained in existence, and with a new name, the Indonesian Islamic Union Party (*Partei Sarekat Islam Indonesia* or PSII), which was adopted in 1929. By this point, however, the party constituted a mere shadow of its former self.⁵⁰ Having ceded the political spotlight to its more radical and flashy former coalition partners, the PSII retreated to the more narrow milieu of Islamic affairs.

If the SI/PSI organization had mobilized the masses behind its all-inclusive emphasis on social progress, other organizations sought popular support for political reform, to be achieved by revolution if necessary. In May 1920, Marxist members of the ISDV – operating independently of their Dutch founder Sneevliet, who had been banned from the Indies two years earlier – founded the Communist Association of Indonesia (*Perserikatan Komunis di India* or PKI). Later that year, the PKI’s executive elected to join the Comintern, thereby aligning the young Indonesian party with the strength and resources of the international Communist movement. As did their colleagues elsewhere, the Indonesian communists worked toward global revolution, albeit on a local scale: They concentrated their organizational efforts on trade unions, cultivated their own leadership corps, and, at least initially, forged connections with other parties deemed sufficiently revolutionary.⁵¹ Predictably, these activities brought the PKI into the crosshairs of Dutch colonial authorities, who in turn heightened their surveillance and apprehension of communist agitators. By 1925, leading Indonesian communists – or at least those caught in this police net – were presented with two

⁴⁹ This particular description of the *Indische Partij* appears in Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong’s *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 17–18.

⁵⁰ Susan Abeyasekere, “The Soetardjo Petition,” *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973), 81–108, with the description of the PSII as “a shadow of the old Sarekat Islam” appearing on page 81; William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 52; Henri Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian Empires 1919–1963*, transl. Stephan de Vos (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 87.

⁵¹ Later, this became the *Partai Komunis Indonesia*, still known by its initials of PKI. The following works examine the early years of the PKI in detail: Justus M. van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia* (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1965), 4–16; Ruth McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965).

choices: be sentenced to forced exile to one of the archipelago's outer islands, home to a number of new penal colonies and prison camps, or else leave the country.⁵² All the same, in November 1926, the PKI embarked on a solitary path of insurrection against the colonial government, ignoring both the counsel of exiled former party chairman Tan Malaka and the Comintern directive of 1925, which specified that international communists cooperate with the various noncommunist organizations as they worked to overthrow imperialism. For the next two years, the communists launched one disastrous small-scale revolt after another. With each failed attempt, colonial authorities stepped up their surveillance and repressive measures, and although such measures were primarily directed at the Indonesian communists, they nonetheless affected the entire spectrum of Indonesian national movements and leaders. When the smoke finally cleared in 1927, over 13,000 people had been arrested, some of whom were shot; 4,500 remained in custody; and another 1,308 were sent to Boven Digul, a remote prison camp in the far eastern island of Papua constructed specifically to intern these rebels.⁵³ It would take nearly two generations for the Indonesian communists to recover from this blow, especially because from this point onward the colonial government would not hesitate to arrest and exile Indonesian nationalists of all political varieties on mere suspicions of fomenting agitation.

Yet in this same year of 1927, another major nationalist movement made its debut. Founded by a group of Indonesian students and soon led by a charismatic rising nationalist leader named Sukarno,⁵⁴ the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* or PNI) sought to galvanize the Indonesian masses, just as Sarekat Islam aimed to do in the previous decade. Like Sarekat Islam, the PNI achieved a measure of success. On a national level, the organization was able to assemble the various movements under one umbrella organization; on a local level, it helped establish schools, adult education centers, and youth organizations. However, if Sarekat Islam had not originally set out to antagonize the colony's Dutch rulers, the leaders of

⁵² Harry Benda, "The Communist Rebellions of 1926–1927 in Indonesia," *Pacific Historical Review* 24 no. 2 (May 1955), 139–152, page 141 for these comments concerning the choice between domestic and foreign exile. For further discussion of Dutch intelligence-gathering efforts, see Harry A. Poeze, "Political Intelligence in the Netherlands Indies," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 229–245, and Takashi Shiraishi, "A New Regime of Order: The Origin of Modern Surveillance Politics in Indonesia," in *Southeast Asia over Three Generations: Essays Presented to Benedict R. O'G. Anderson*. James T. Siegel and Audrey Kahin, eds. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2003), 47–74.

⁵³ These are the figures provided by M.C. Ricklefs in his *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 214. Ricklefs, however, does not explain whether those killed were summarily executed or whether they were tried first.

⁵⁴ Sukarno's first name was said to have been "Achmed," but like most Indonesians was known solely by one name.

PNI adopted a far more confrontational approach from the outset. Sukarno and his fellow PNI leaders maintained focus on their overarching goals – the creation of one nation (Indonesia), one citizenship (Indonesian), one language (Malay), and, ultimately, Indonesian independence, none of which were to be obtained by cooperating with the Dutch. Not surprisingly, the Dutch colonial government perceived the PNI and the person of Sukarno as a threat to their rule, and in 1929 he and other PNI leaders were arrested. The remaining leaders decided to disband the party in April 1931, and a number of former members then reconstituted themselves into various and often competing successor organizations. Among them was the Indonesian Party (*Partai Indonesia* or simply *Partindo*), which, like the former PNI, sought to politicize the Indonesian masses as a prelude to independence. Within a year of his early release from prison in December 1931, Sukarno had allied himself with Partindo. Meanwhile, Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, both rising nationalist leaders recently returned from university study in the Netherlands, worked within the auspices of the New PNI (*PNI-Baru*). Unlike Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir placed little stock in the prospects of mass mobilization, particularly in this climate of heightened Dutch suspicions and surveillance activities. Instead, their PNI-Baru sought to identify and train a cadre of potential political leaders expected to serve as necessary reserves should the present corps of nationalist leaders be arrested and detained. Further, Hatta, Sjahrir, and their PNI-Baru colleagues envisioned an independent but socialist Indonesia, liberated from foreign masters and indigenous bourgeoisie alike.⁵⁵

Soon thereafter, however, such philosophical differences, so important at the time, ceased to matter, and the work of these and other nationalist organizations came to a grinding halt. In February 1933, the European and Indonesian members of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) staged a mutiny onboard the cruiser *Zeven Provinciën* in response to an imminent pay cut due to affect all Dutch and Indonesian government employees. The KNIL mutineers surrendered only after a bomb was dropped on the ship. Suspecting that the protest was the work of Indonesian nationalists at least in part, Governor General B. C. de Jonge mounted a full-scale offensive against all perceived subversive activity in the colony. Not only did colonial officials purge the KNIL and the navy, but they seized on Indonesian schools, teachers, and political organizations with a vengeance, a policy warmly welcomed by the VC and Indies NSB. Indonesian nationalists of all political persuasions

⁵⁵ M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 218–220, and 225 for the phrase “indigenous bourgeoisie”; Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong’s *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 21–23; Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 80–83.

and affiliations would be swept up in this all-inclusive net.⁵⁶ Among them were Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir, who were charged with public agitation and exiled – this time, without formal public trials – to remote islands and detainment centers.⁵⁷ They would remain in prison until early 1942, when they were released by the colony's new rulers, the Japanese. Meanwhile, Partindo and PNI-Baru struggled to stay afloat in this hostile environment, and without their most prominent leaders. In November 1936, the remaining leaders of Partindo decided to disband the organization, and PNI-Baru simply faded from the political scene.

Whether or not they were intended to do so, Batavia's repressive efforts pushed the Indonesian nationalist movement in a distinctly cooperative direction during the mid- to late 1930s: Most noncooperative nationalists were imprisoned, and those remaining stood to gain nothing other than imprisonment if they continued along the path of intransigence and uprising. Into the void left by these organizations stepped the Indonesian moderates of the Volksraad, who had been allowed to remain in their positions both during and after this tumultuous period. From their seats on this advisory "People's Council," these Indonesian representatives continued to press the Dutch colonial government for political reforms, albeit limited, moderate ones. They found support in the form of new cooperative nationalist organizations such as the moderate Party of Greater Indonesia (*Parindra*) and the social democratic Indonesian People's Movement (*Gerindo*). As in the previous decade, differences in opinion concerning the correct path to independence threatened to fragment the nationalist movement, that is, until 1938, when Mohammed Hoesni Thamrin, the leader of the Parindra delegation in the Volksraad, united nearly all nationalist organizations into one organization. This Indonesian Political Federation, or GAPI, set its sights on the formation of a democratically elected Indies parliament, to which the Dutch colonial government would be responsible. The creation of an authentic legislative body, so argued these nationalists, constituted a pivotal first step on the road to autonomy, and then to independence for Indonesia. Yet such proposals were bound to fall on deaf ears. In this final decade before the

⁵⁶ For details concerning the *Zeven Provinciën* mutiny and the government's response, see John Ingleson, *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927-1934* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, Asia, Ltd., 1979), 207-211.

⁵⁷ The most notorious prison camps were located in Boven Digul, on Papua (Irian Jaya) the eastern-most Dutch territory in the East Indies. Constructed in 1927 to hold thousands of Indonesian communists, the camps later held Hatta, Sjahrir, and other more well-known Indonesian nationalists; Sukarno, by contrast, was exiled to the island of Flores. By late 1939, a total of 627 prisoners and their family members were interned in the two camps of Boven Digul. Although a significant number, this represented less than half of the number of prisoners held in 1931: Dutch East Indies, Centraal Kantoor voor de Statistiek, *Pocket Edition of the Statistical Abstract of the Netherlands Indies, 1940; with Comparative Data for 1939 or Earlier* (Batavia, Java, Netherlands Indies: G. Kolff, 1940), Table 220, appearing on page 150.

onset of World War II, both the colonial government of the Indies and the central government of The Hague rejected the possibility of political reform, no matter how mild the proposals.⁵⁸

Particularly egregious was the treatment accorded the so-called Soetardjo Petition of 1936. In July 1936, a Javanese civil servant and Volksraad representative called on the Netherlands to convene a conference that would arrange the granting of Indonesian autonomy. Soetardjo Kartohadikoesoemo envisioned that such autonomy would occur within the next ten years and within the boundaries of a Dutch-Indonesian union, a commonwealth of sorts. Initially, his petition to these ends received only lukewarm support from Indonesian nationalists, many of whom saw it as too moderate and tentative; independence, not incremental autonomy, remained their ultimate goal. By contrast, Indo-Europeans welcomed these proposals, as they assumed that autonomy – as opposed to immediate, unequivocal independence – would best grant them privileged governmental and administrative positions. Still, in September 1936, the Volksraad's Christian, Arab, Chinese, and Indo-European representatives helped pass this "Soetardjo Petition," albeit an amended version lacking a specific timetable for autonomy. The petition was then forwarded to The Hague for consideration and approval by the cabinet and parliament. However, in the second chamber of parliament, only the Social Democratic and Communist parties openly supported the petition and the Dutch government tabled it until November 1938, at which point a royal decree definitively put an end to Soetardjo's proposal. Apparently, the cabinet had heeded the advice of the new Governor General of the Indies, who opposed the Soetardjo Petition on both political and legal grounds. As Governor General Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer argued in a letter to Minister of Colonies Charles Welter, the granting of the terms expressed in the Soetardjo Petition would have necessitated the revision of the Netherlands' constitution, which, for reasons he did not fully explain, was not advisable at that time. Moreover, he explained, the Indies had not yet reached an appropriate stage of political development, and so the granting of "dominion status," as requested by the crafters of the petition, was impossible at the present time. Accordingly, there could be no talk of an imperial conference to address what were essentially nonissues. In his opinion, the Netherlands should proceed with those reforms already

⁵⁸ Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong's *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 21–23; Susan Abeyasekere's *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch 1939–1942*, Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 5 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1976); and the account penned by a former colonial administrator involved in these developments, P. J. A. Idenburg, "Het Nederlandse Antwoord op het Indonesisch Nationalisme," in *Balans van Beleid: Terugblik op de laatste halve eeuw van Nederlandsch-Indië*, eds. H. Baudet and I. J. Brugmans (Assen: Van Gorcum and Comp. N.V., 1961), 121–151.

under way in the Indies: The colonial government should continue to work toward enhanced regional and local authority, while encouraging the “Indies community” to take full advantage of those participatory powers granted in the form of the Volksraad.⁵⁹

For Indonesian nationalists such as Soetardjo, convinced that their patient cooperation with the Dutch would eventually sow rewards for the Indonesian cause, this rejection served up a stinging defeat that could not easily be forgotten. The GAPI organization, for one, shifted gears. Throughout 1939 and 1940, GAPI continued to press for a fully fledged parliament but now coupled its demands with professions of support and loyalty. Leading nationalists – or, rather, those leading nationalists not imprisoned at this time – promised to stand and fight with the Dutch, should the colony come under attack by foreign powers. Yet neither Batavia nor The Hague would grant such political concessions, and they paid little mind to such gestures of support and solidarity from the Indonesians; the time was not ripe for reform, nor were the external threats to the Indies so severe as to merit a change in policy. Although obviously intended to bolster Dutch authority in a time of increasing global tensions, these policies demonstrated a fatally flawed understanding of colonial realities. Seen in retrospect, they not only inflicted irreparable damage on an already fragile Dutch-Indonesian relationship, but also helped undermine the Dutch empire on the eve of World War II.

THE DUTCH EMPIRE BETWEEN NEUTRALITY, WAR, AND PEACE

The German invasion of May 1940 may have come as a surprise to those Dutch living in the European metropole, but the Dutch governments in The Hague and Batavia had prepared for this eventuality. One month before German forces streamed into the country, Foreign Minister E. N. van Kleffens instructed his consular and other overseas officials to publicize necessary preventive measures specifying that, should the metropole be occupied by a foreign power, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, or the Dutch empire, was to be split into three discrete, nearly autonomous territories – the European Netherlands, the archipelago of the East Indies, and the territories of the West Indies. Under this arrangement, Dutch officials in the overseas colonies

⁵⁹ Susan Abeyasekere, “The Soetardjo Petition,” *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973), 81–108; Susan Abeyasekere, *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch 1939–1942*. Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 5 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1976), 3–4; and M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 228–229; documents concerning the Soetardjo Petition, dated October 1, 1936 and September 14, 1938, contained in *Indonesia: Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism 1830–1942*, ed. and trans. Chr. L. M. Penders (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977), 141–147.

were to maintain only limited contact with the metropolitan government.⁶⁰ As explained by the Dutch ambassador to the United States, the legal foundation for this transfer of authority was sound, because according to Dutch constitutional law, all territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands constituted separate units, and each could continue to function regardless of the particular status of any one such territory. When the Germans invaded on May 10, Dutch officials around the world publicly declared that, come what may in Europe, the overseas territories would retain their independent status under the leadership of colonial authorities already in place. Meanwhile, government authorities remaining in The Hague instructed overseas colonial administrators to cease all commercial and financial transactions with the metropole. This decree – which also froze the assets of Dutch citizens living outside of the empire – was intended to prevent any hostile power from exploiting the financial and material resources of either the East or West Indies.⁶¹

The average Dutch citizen, still reeling from shock and the human and material costs borne during the German invasion, would have had little reason to be concerned with the colonial situation. In one fell swoop, this formerly neutral nation saw itself overrun by a foreign power and, with the departure of the queen and her government, lacking a lawful government to weather this new state of affairs. Queen Wilhelmina used the occasion of her first public speech from her new home in London to justify her departure, which she framed as an imperial necessity. On May 13, she announced both her presence in London and the government's refusal to capitulate to the Germans. She explained that, from this point onward, the Dutch colonies in the East and West Indies would remain sovereign states under Dutch control, and as a result the Netherlands would remain a fully recognized member of "the community of nations." In a second pronouncement, issued on

⁶⁰ During the period of May 1940–March 1942, the London government-in-exile professed the severance of official ties but continued to remain in contact with the East Indies, as circumstances allowed. Most notably, Minister of Foreign Affairs van Kleffens and Minister of Colonies Welter visited the East Indies in April 1941, where they were able to meet with the Governor General and observe for themselves the state of affairs in the Dutch colony. See the extensive coverage of this ministerial visit as provided by London's *Vrij Nederland* newspaper, issued by the Information Service of the government-in-exile (and not to be confused with the clandestine paper of the same name), March–May 1941. After March 1942, Dutch officials in London and Australia – the latter serving as the new home base for a rump East Indies colonial administration – sent numerous intelligence missions to the occupied East Indies, but most failed to obtain their intended targets: Bob de Graaf, "Hot Intelligence in the Tropics: Dutch Intelligence Operations in the Netherlands East Indies during the Second World War," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 22 no. 4 (October 1987), 563–584.

⁶¹ See, for instance, Document 740.0011 European War 1939/2928, contained in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, Volume II, General and Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1957), 731.

paper a few days later, the queen reaffirmed that she could best ensure from England that the vast Dutch empire, “scattered over the surface of the globe and counting sixty-five million inhabitants,” would remain free, “part and parcel of that nation of free men that will not and cannot perish from the earth.”⁶² Again, it is doubtful whether, at this moment in time, those Dutch subjects confronting the prospects of German rule would have found solace in the queen’s imperial commitment. The next few years would certainly bring a greater popular appreciation for both the history of Dutch colonialism and Holland’s role as an imperial power, but in May 1940 the Dutch were rightfully more preoccupied with the arrival of *Wehrmacht* troops in their cities and villages.

Such reassuring proclamations to the occupied metropole aside, the government-in-exile had its hands full with another foreign power, namely Japan. During the course of 1939, as tensions mounted on the European continent, Japanese officials repeatedly pointed to the purported failings of Dutch rule in the East Indies, noting, for instance, the rampant oppression of the colonial natives, while simultaneously pressing Batavia to grant them economic and other concessions.⁶³ Then, during the German invasion of the European Netherlands, the Japanese reiterated these claims to colonial administrators in the East Indies and those officials still remaining in The Hague. After the Dutch surrender of May 15, Japanese representatives continued to emphasize their nation’s commitment to preserving the geopolitical status quo in the Pacific Rim region. Japan’s interest in the Dutch East Indies, they explained, stemmed purely from economic concerns: They

⁶² “Proclamatie van 13 Mei 1940 gegeven te Londen,” in M. G. Schenk and J. B. Th. Spaan, Eds. *De Koningin Sprak. Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940–1945* (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 5–6. English-language versions of both the first radio broadcast and the subsequent written statement are contained, in full, in E. N. van Kleffens, *The Rape of the Netherlands* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1941), 213–214 and 215–221.

⁶³ For instance, on August 23, 1939, General J. C. Pabst, the Dutch ambassador to Japan, wrote the editors of the English-language *Japan Times* in response to a previous lead article claiming that the promised independence of the Philippines would have a powerful moral effect on the colonial natives of territories such as British India, French Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies. The *Japan Times* claimed that these peoples had long been ruthlessly exploited by European colonial administrations, and that as a result, these territories were now teeming with revolutionary discontent. Pabst called on the editors to correct “the obnoxious words written by your correspondent and thereby efface the deplorable impression which the said article must have left with those good readers who take to heart the good relations existing between Japan and the Netherlands.” Rather than retract the statements, however, the editors of the *Japan Times* issued a lengthy rebuttal to Pabst’s letter, explicitly charging the Dutch with systematic exploitation of the labor and resources of the East Indies. Clippings of both letters (but not the original article about the Philippines that prompted this exchange) are contained in the collection entitled “Politische Beziehungen zwischen Japan und Nied. Indies, 1938–1940,” Signatur R 104887, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt (Berlin), where they are attached to pages 22–23 of this bound volume.

sought increased and even preferential access to petroleum, scrap iron, ore, and rubber, all raw materials that the Indies possessed in abundance and Japan so desperately needed. At the same time, these same officials declared that should any other power – whether the Netherlands, England, or the United States – attempt to alter the status of the East Indies, Japan would interpret such moves to be hostile acts, which, they implied, would necessitate Japanese intervention.

Meanwhile, in the East Indies, the Dutch colonial officials in whom ultimate power now rested had begun steering their own course vis-à-vis the occupied metropole. With news of the German assault in Europe, these authorities began to round up and intern German nationals living in the East Indies as well as members of the Indies branch of the Dutch Nazi Party. This decision, too, had been prepared in anticipation of a continental German invasion and was informed by the fear that should Germany attack the metropole, a fifth column would rise up against the Dutch colonial government in the East Indies. Should these traitors succeed in sowing unrest, Japan would seize the moment to intervene, or so worried those colonial officials in the East Indies who aimed to fend off this threat.⁶⁴ All told, approximately 500 Dutch Nazis and nearly 2,800 Germans – including businessmen, missionaries, consular staff, the crew of German ships docked in the colony's ports, and most women and children – would be interned. These detainees were held in hastily improvised centers, often in poor conditions.⁶⁵ (German nationals were interned in the West Indies as well, but they were rumored to have been held in better conditions. As such, their plight received little public attention.⁶⁶)

On learning of this course of events, Berlin ordered *Reichskommissar* Seyss-Inquart to respond in kind by arresting and detaining approximately five hundred Dutch citizens. The seizure of these “Indies hostages” was intended to force the hand of colonial authorities in Batavia, who, the Germans expected, would then release their own detainees. In late June, German administrators in the Netherlands began to round up prominent members of the country's political, social, and economic elite, many of whom claimed personal and professional connections to the colonies. The ranks of “Indies hostages” included directors of large businesses; family members of government officials who had fled to London; the former head of the Dutch Railways, recently removed from his position by the German

⁶⁴ Telegram 756.94/28, dated April 16, 1940: *Foreign Relations of the United States*. 1940. Volume IV, The Far East (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1956), 8–9.

⁶⁵ For this total number of those arrested in the Indies and the government's fear of a fifth column, see Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong, *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 27.

⁶⁶ L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 4, Eerste Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1972), 313.

occupiers; members of parliament representing various political parties; and university professors and lawyers. A former Governor General of the East Indies was also taken hostage, as were colonial officials who had been on leave in the European Netherlands at the time of the German invasion. Detainees, however, also included far less prominent middle-class and working-class citizens targeted because they had been born in either the East or West Indies.⁶⁷ Regardless of their respective titles or class origins, all Indies hostages were interned in a requisitioned Catholic seminary located in one of the Netherlands' southern provinces. From here, they were sent to the Buchenwald camp in Germany, where they would remain until November 1941. At this point, they were transferred back to their original detainment center in the Netherlands, where many of them would remain for the next few years. However, contrary to German expectations, Batavia refused to change course, even after receiving word that these Dutch hostages had been deported. Both German nationals and Dutch Nazis would remain in custody.

Admittedly, in 1940 and 1941 the colonial government was hardly pre-occupied with the detainee situation, for it had its hands full with Japan. Throughout this period, the colonial government continued to engage in frequently tense negotiations with the Japanese. Developments during the fall of 1940 and the following spring appeared to point the way toward a tentative agreement allowing increased oil and rubber provisions to Japan, but in June 1941 disagreements concerning the precise export quotas brought negotiations to a halt. Those colonial authorities involved in these talks could hardly be satisfied with the difficult position in which they found themselves, and they were incensed by the rhetoric employed by Japanese officials openly calling for the East Indies' incorporation into the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. In actuality, however, as these Dutch officials well knew, the East Indies remained in a rather precarious position, and colonial authorities in Batavia looked to other countries for military assistance in protecting the territorial integrity of the Indies. Although both Britain and the United States acknowledged the strategic and economic importance of the Dutch East Indies, neither seemed willing to commit forces to its defense, at least not at this time.⁶⁸ Talks between representatives

⁶⁷ "Repressalien gegen Reichsdeutsche vom 1940," in "Akten betreffende: Niederländische Indien vom 1937 bis 1940," Burö des Chefs der Auslandsorganisation, Signatur R 27211 and R 27212, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt (Berlin); L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Deel 4, Eerste Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1972), 314–318, Madelon de Keizer, *De Gijzelaars van Sint Michielsgestel: Een elite-beraad in oorlogstijd* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A.W. Sijthoff, 1979), 14–17.

⁶⁸ For further discussion of American involvement and foreign policy objectives in the Indonesian archipelago during the early years of the war, see Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920–1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 100–107.

of the Dutch government and British military began in November 1940, and in late February 1941, British, Dutch, and Australian officers reached the “Anglo-Dutch-Australian Agreement,” which simply called for joint military action against Japanese aggression. Only on the eve of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 did the Allies actually commit to defend the Indies from external – that is, Japanese – forces.

The situation in the West Indies presented a markedly different picture. Here, the queen and the government-in-exile retained closer connections with both colonial administrators on the ground and Allied powers in the region. Despite professions that the West Indian territories should adhere to the same strict policy of neutrality seen in the East Indies, the Dutch government solicited the military support of the French and British as early as May 11, 1940. Because they feared that Germans living in the West Indies or German agents specifically imported for these purposes would attempt to sabotage the oil refineries of Aruba and Curaçao, Dutch diplomats stationed outside of occupied Europe immediately petitioned their new allies for help protecting these installations. The British agreed to send military forces. Taking care to emphasize to the international community that this did not constitute the Allied “occupation” of the West Indies, the Dutch accepted this military support on the conditions that the British forces would remain subordinate to Dutch authorities and that the British would leave once sufficient Dutch forces were available to secure the refineries.⁶⁹ In September 1941, Queen Wilhelmina accepted President Roosevelt’s offer of American troops to guard the bauxite mines of Surinam.⁷⁰ For the duration of the war, these West Indian territories would remain nominally independent under Dutch administration, although they fell solidly within the Allied sphere of interest.

Finally, a brief discussion of Nazi plans for the Dutch empire seems in order. Neither of Seyss-Inquart’s first public statements as Reichskommissar addressed the status of the Dutch colonies under his new administration. In private, however, the Reichskommissar expressed his desire to exploit the East Indies, which he considered to be the economic backbone of the

⁶⁹ Letter from the Dutch ambassador in Washington to the Secretary of State, dated May 11, 1940, Document 856B.01/23; Memorandum of conversation, by the American Advisor on Political Relations, dated May 11, 1940, Document 856B.01 / 27; and Letter from the British Ambassador in Washington, to the Secretary of State, dated May 12, 1940, Document F756.94 / 108; contained in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, Volume II, General and Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1957), 734–737.

⁷⁰ Telegram 856A.20/121A, from the American Secretary of State to the American Ambassador in the United Kingdom, dated September 1, 1941; Telegrams 856A.20/31 and 856A.20/33, from the Ambassador of the government-in-exile, sent to the American Secretary of State, dated September 3, 1941 and September 5, 1941, respectively; Telegram 856A.20/33, from the Secretary of State to the Ambassador of the government-in-exile, dated September 20, 1941; contained in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941, Volume II, Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 811–816.

Dutch empire. Writing to Hitler in late July 1940, Seyss-Inquart proposed a simple solution for obtaining maximum colonial profits: By granting the Dutch metropole a measure of independence, the German Reich would be able to access the vast colonial riches of the East Indies. The Germans need not take other drastic measures, because according to the constitutional and political framework governing the Dutch empire, lawmakers in The Hague already appointed and oversaw the colonial administration.⁷¹ The Reichskommissar envisioned continuity of rule and coexistence between Hitler's continental project on the one hand and the imperialist ventures of other European nations on the other. However, Seyss-Inquart's plan failed to take into account the fact that connections between metropole and colonies had been severed as of May 1940; colonial administrators in the West and East Indies did not presently answer to The Hague, nor even to London. Not surprisingly, then, German authorities proved unable to exploit the Indies as they had anticipated, and by year's end, they had essentially withdrawn any such claims to the territory.

Importantly, and despite his administration's failure to tap into these vast colonial riches, Seyss-Inquart also noted the first palpable signs of public anxiety concerning the East Indies. Arguing that the ripening of Dutch "political will" hinged on popular sentiment toward the monarchy and its future role within the Netherlands, he explained why his new Dutch subjects continued to support the House of Orange: Quite simply, they associated the crown with imperial defense, and they expected the queen to protect the overseas territories. Yet this connection between queen and colony was also a dangerous one, according to Seyss-Inquart. With their avowed support for the queen as imperial protector, members of the "Dutch-Indonesian circle" – that is, metropolitan Dutch with military, economic, intellectual, and/or familial connections to the Indies – "actually ran the very real risk of driving a wedge between the Netherlands and the Indies." By associating herself with Churchill and his policies of bombing the Netherlands, the queen had isolated herself from her subjects, and as a result, popular distaste for the British threatened to overtake Dutch support for the government's colonial policy. In fact, so speculated Seyss-Inquart, the Dutch would actually abandon their affinity toward the monarchy entirely if only the German Reich could protect the East Indies from either American or Japanese designs.⁷² Concerning their empire, the Dutch were a fickle crowd,

⁷¹ Seyss-Inquart to Hitler, "Erster Bericht über die Lage und Entwicklung in den besetzten niederländischen Gebieten, 29 May–19 July 1940," reprinted in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, Official Text, English Edition, Volume XXVI (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), Document 997-PF: 413, 427–428.

⁷² "Erster Bericht über die Lage und Entwicklung in den besetzten niederländischen Gebieten, 29 May–19 July 1940," *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, Official Text, English Edition, Volume XXVI (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), Document 997-PF: 413, 427–428.

according to Seyss-Inquart, since they were willing to support anyone and anything that promised to protect their dear Indies.

Regardless of any political, economic, or strategic significance potentially to be gained by the establishment of closer German-Dutch-Indonesian relations, German authorities were either unable or unwilling to pursue this path during the first few years of the war. In early 1942, the possibility of strengthening the ties between the occupied metropole and its most precious of overseas territories became a moot point. While those in the metropole looked on from afar, powerless to do anything about it, the East Indies would be incorporated into Japan's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere. This series of events could only come as a tremendous shock to a population still confronting its own status as an occupied nation. Despite Seyss-Inquart's public claims to the contrary, metropolitan Holland had become a colony in Hitler's massive continental empire. In this situation, the first groups to seek political power and popular legitimacy – namely, Anton Mussert's Dutch Nazi Party and the *Nederlandse Unie* – availed themselves of the only opportunities available to them. They reveled in the Netherlands' glorious imperial past, pored over previous failings, and longed for the day when the Dutch would again be masters of their own fate, both at home and overseas. Preoccupied as they were with external threats, they paid little attention to the history or even potential dangers of Indonesian nationalism; and unlike even the most politically conservative of resisters, they failed to consider the prospects of Indonesian autonomy, no matter how distant in the future. The following chapters examine these various and competing imperial worldviews.

The Landscape of Resistance and the Clandestine Press

Over the course of the five-year occupation, Dutch resisters engaged in a dizzying array of organized activities, with some clandestine groups claiming numerous and simultaneous specializations. Unlike their counterparts in France, for instance, the majority of clandestine organizations operating in the occupied Netherlands neither offered direct assistance to the Allied war effort nor engaged in armed conflict with the occupier as an end unto itself. Rather, they specialized in what Jacques Semelin has termed “civilian resistance.” Defined as “the spontaneous process of resistance by civilian society using unarmed means, and mobilizing either its principal institutions or its people – or both at the same time,” civilian resistance aimed to “preserve the collective identity of the attacked societies; that is to say, their fundamental values.” Further, it defended specifically civilian goals, such as the integrity of society.¹ The two principal forms of clandestine activity in wartime Holland can be located squarely within these parameters. The first revolved around rescue: the creation and maintenance of extensive networks dedicated to sheltering and providing for the hundreds of thousands of Dutch men, women, and children who sought to evade their German occupiers, whether for religious, political, or other reasons.² The second

¹ Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939–1945*, trans. Suzan Husserl-Kapit (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1992), 2–3, 29–30.

² The first to go into hiding during the years 1940 to 1942 included resisters, political enemies, and Jews, most of whom initially relied on personal and professional contacts or small networks of resisters as they went “underground” for either short or indefinite periods of time. Beginning in mid-1943, tens of thousands more went into hiding – university students who had refused to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Germans, young men evading mandatory labor service in Germany, former soldiers who refused General Christiansen’s order to report for reinternment as POWs, and striking railway workers. Most of them would remain in hiding until the end of the war.

Because the placement and assistance provided to each person in hiding necessitated the help of many individuals, these rescue operations were obviously a massive undertaking. Beginning in the fall of 1942, the *Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers* (the

major form of resistance was the creation and dissemination of clandestine publications. All resisters operated in a challenging historical context, and their actions were punishable by death. Yet if members of the first group charged themselves with protecting the most needy and vulnerable fellow citizens among them, members of the second group fulfilled other functions too – functions concerned as much with the nation’s future as with prevailing circumstances in the occupied country. The resisters of the clandestine press exercised the role of opinion leaders in a time of repression, and they expected that their wartime activities would help forge a new postwar world. In other words, they considered themselves underground political activists, fulfilling a vital function in occupied society.

Phrased in Semelin’s terms, the resisters involved with clandestine press work were most immediately concerned with protecting the nation’s highly developed free press from foreign control. Seen more broadly, however, these men and women aimed to preserve the institutions, traditions, and relationships that had long characterized Dutch national life. In rejecting the foreign, odious ideology of National Socialism, they simultaneously affirmed the values and ideas that, in their view, constituted the soul of the nation. As Henk van Randwijk, the former editor of *Vrij Nederland*, explained after the war, “Our people wanted to know who they were, and about Holland, and how our particular traditions and values, our thoughts about God and man, freedom and justice differed from those of National Socialism.”³ These

“National Organization for Help to Those in Hiding,” or simply LO) worked to coordinate and expand localized efforts already under way, such as those dedicated to the rescue of Jewish infants and children. The organization’s armed branch, the *Landelijke Knokploegen* (roughly translated as “National Action Groups,” and known primarily as the LKP), helped procure safe hiding addresses, identity cards, ration coupons, food, and other supplies. With the creation of the LO/LKP, specialized groups would continue their work targeting certain populations or regions but could now draw on the resources provided by this national organization. In addition to its extensive work on behalf of those who had gone underground, the LO/LKP also charged itself with providing financial and other forms of support for the families of those resisters who had either been deported or executed by the Germans.

Various estimates have placed the total number of those in hiding during the war, whether in conjunction with the LO/LKP organization or via other means, at approximately 300,000 to 350,000, which included 20,000 to 30,000 Jews, of whom 16,000 to 17,000 survived. Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch under German Occupation 1940–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 188, refers to a total of 200,000 to 300,000 people in hiding. Bob Moore, *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940–1945* (London: Arnold, 1997), 146–147, provides estimates for the number of Jews who went in hiding; those Jews who survived; and the total number of those in hiding (300,000), both Jewish and non-Jewish. Dick van Galen Last, “The Netherlands,” in Bob Moore, Ed. *Resistance in Western Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 214, cites the figure of 350,000 in hiding, with LO/LKP resisters numbering 15,000 alone.

³ H. M. van Randwijk, “Iets over de geestelijke achtergronden van het verzet,” in *Onderdrukking en Verzet: Nederland in oorlogstijd*, ed. J. J. van Bolhuis et al., Volume 3 (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1952), 506–519, with this commentary appearing on page 509.

clandestine writers and editors emphasized such themes as the Netherlands' history of religious and political tolerance, which stood in stark contrast to Nazi racism and repression, and Dutch respect for the rule of law as opposed to German lawlessness. By maintaining steady focus on these values and eloquently explaining why they were worth fighting for, the clandestine press styled itself as "the 'conscience' of the nation," according to Werner Warmbrunn.⁴ Put slightly differently, the resistance press allowed the Dutch to preserve their self-respect, self-confidence, and national character in this time of suffering and confusion.⁵

This is not to say, however, that the landscape of resistance activity in the occupied Netherlands was oriented solely toward civilian goals or techniques. Despite their nation's relative unfamiliarity with paramilitary organizations, guerrilla warfare, and land-based military operations, Dutch resisters proved themselves willing (if not always the most skillful) saboteurs, spies, and armed combatants. Their learning curve was steep. Individuals and organizations destroyed railroads and telephone connections; compiled and transmitted information concerning German troop movements; and engaged in a wide array of activities intended to destroy German military capabilities and further the Allied war effort. For instance, the Order Service (*Ordedienst* or OD), consisting largely of former soldiers, collected weapons with the goal of maintaining order at the moment of German defeat. "National Action Groups" (*Landelijke Knokploegen* or LKP) used small firearms and other weapons in order to obtain official documents such as blank identity cards and ration coupons from government offices and warehouses. Those organizations specializing in civilian forms of resistance also typically maintained armed divisions or sectors, which were used to obtain necessary supplies, such as printing paper, and to protect production staff and equipment.⁶ Particularly during the final stages of the war, when Allied forces closed in on the Netherlands and the Germans tightened their reins

⁴ Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch under German Occupation 1940–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 221.

⁵ See, for example, the postwar statements offered by Jan Romein, famed Dutch historian and former prisoner of the Germans, in his "The Spirit of the Dutch People during the Occupation," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 245, *The Netherlands during German Occupation* (May, 1946), 169–180. For a more recent discussion of this topic, see Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 7–9.

⁶ The massive paper supplies necessary for clandestine publishing were not solely obtained by force, however. Resistance organizations relied on donations of paper stock as offered by individuals or groups, and "above-ground" publishing houses regularly cooperated with their clandestine peers, providing not only paper supplies but printing equipment and labor. Lastly, and particularly during the final year of the war, when the German authorities instituted a system of tighter control, resisters formally registered their "businesses" – under assumed or even their actual names – in order to obtain the paper they needed to continue their work until liberation: Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 52–54.

over the occupied population, the targets and methods of civilian and military resistance tended to converge.

However, this blurring of boundaries was a long time in the making. The first few months of the occupation were characterized by a general wait-and-see attitude on the part of the Dutch, and resisters' early warnings and appeals for noncooperation found only a limited audience in the newly occupied country. Indeed, for much of the war, the resisters of the clandestine press faced an uphill battle as they sought both to discredit their German occupiers and establish their own legitimacy as the country's *de facto* – if necessarily underground – leaders. With each passing year, however, developments occurring at home and within the larger context of the war prompted critical shifts in Dutch public sentiment and behavior, and this in turn allowed the resistance to gain a more solid foothold within occupied society. The first such major event was the implementation of the "Aryan Declaration" in October 1940, which forced all Dutch civil servants to testify to their Aryan background. One month later, all Jewish civil servants, including university faculty members, were dismissed from their positions, albeit only "temporarily," or so they were told. Protest actions at a number of Dutch universities followed, as did the closure of these rebellious universities; one remained shuttered for the entire duration of the war. The next few months saw frequent skirmishes erupt in Amsterdam between members of the Dutch Nazi Party's paramilitary wing and groups of Jews, during the course of which a Dutch Nazi sustained fatal injuries. In response, Seyss-Inquart's police authorities staged what would become the first of many large-scale raids directed against the country's Jewish citizens. On February 22, 1941, they seized more than four hundred men from a predominantly Jewish area of Amsterdam, detaining them and beating them in a public square. All but one of these men were later sent to Mauthausen concentration camp. In response to the Germans' visible shows of force against these defenseless civilians, municipal workers and communists called a general strike, which quickly spread from Amsterdam to nearby areas. German repression of the strike resulted in the deaths of strikers and bystanders, as well as the arrest of the strike's leaders, nearly all of whom were later executed. In a decree dated March 20, 1941, the general population was put on alert that future disturbances of the kind seen in the previous month would result in the declaration of summary law, which would subject to the death penalty all those who attempted to disturb or endanger public order and security.⁷

The events of late 1940 and early 1941 certainly tempered the earlier sense of complacency and acceptance felt by much of the population.

⁷ "Verordnung des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete über die Anordnung des Verwaltungsstandrechts/Verordening van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied betreffende het afkondigen van het civiele standrecht" (5/1941), dated March 19, 1941, *Verordnungsblatt* of March 20, 1941.

However, at the same time, the Dutch drive toward cooperation and accommodation plowed on, as demonstrated by the continued popularity of the *Nederlandse Unie*, which was only formally prohibited on December 13, 1941. With few exceptions, Dutch civil servants from the highest to the lowest ranks remained in their positions and continued to work with the occupiers, some in a manner that went far beyond mere tacit cooperation. A more pronounced shift in public opinion and behavior could be seen beginning in late 1942 and early 1943. This new attitude stemmed not only from German military defeats in Stalingrad and North Africa, which inspired confidence in Allied victory, but also from mounting privations at home. Rations of basic foodstuffs became scarce; the deportation of the Dutch Jews continued apace; Allied bombings became more frequent occurrences; and the Germans instituted both a comprehensive labor draft and a harsh reprisal policy meant to deter resistance activity. Correspondingly, during the second half of the occupation, the clandestine publications found a larger and more receptive audience, although this hard-won authority did not necessarily translate into overt acts of resistance directed against the occupier.⁸

Like other forms of resistance activity, clandestine press work was prohibited and punishable according to a number of broadly conceived decrees issued by Seyss-Inquart and other German authorities. In mid-May 1941, the Reichskommissar forbade the creation, distribution, passing on, and storage of written materials deemed to be anti-German; those found guilty of such offenses could be sentenced to a maximum jail sentence of fifteen years and a fine. The following spring, Seyss-Inquart's Decree 55/1942 prescribed the death penalty for those who created a resistance organization, and those who participated in or supported such an organization could be sentenced to a maximum of five years in prison. In accordance with decrees designed to "protect against inaccurate news," clandestine press workers could also be tried and punished with heavy prison terms and the death penalty. Further, as many of the clandestine publications were also loosely affiliated with one or another of the prewar political parties, these resisters were also subject to prosecution under the various laws prohibiting the activities of political parties.⁹ Lastly, during periods of summary justice or

⁸ John H. Woodruff maintains that "in a very real sense the clandestine press, at least in the earlier period of the war, had to teach the public to resist. A population generally accustomed to obeying government regulations had to learn disobedience": *Relations between the Netherlands Government-in-exile and Occupied Holland during World War II*, Boston University Studies in Political Science (Boston: Boston University Press, 1964), 51.

⁹ "Verordnung der Generalsekretäre der Ministerien für Justiz und für Inneres zur Sicherung der öffentlichen Ordnung in den Niederlanden/Verordnung van de Secretarissen van de Departementen van Justitie en van Binnenlandsche Zaken ter verzekering van de openbare orde in Nederland" (Vo. 24/1940), dated June 22, 1940, *Verordnungsblatt* June 22, 1940; "Verordnung des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete über Massnahmen zur Sicherung der öffentlichen Ordnung/Verordening van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied, houdende maatregelen tot handhaving van de openbare

martial law, a person committing any of these offenses was likely to receive the death penalty.

Clandestine press work was not for the faint of heart, nor was it a logical fit for those who wished to minimize their chances of detection and punishment. Printing equipment and the reams of paper required by the largest publications tended to attract unwanted attention, and distribution methods were continuously evaluated and adjusted, lest mass mailings and drop-offs attract the attention of postal or police authorities. Because of frequent arrests and targeted raids – all too often set in motion by Dutch informants – publications were frequently forced to change editorial boards, print shops, machines, and even cities, sometimes over the course of the night. Then, beginning in 1942, German police authorities directed “hostage actions” in which numerous staff members from a particular paper, with functions ranging from editor to courier, would be seized and held until the publication in question ceased production. These tactics did not achieve their desired ends; none of the major papers agreed to German terms, although scores of resisters did lose their lives in these hostage actions. In general, losses among the clandestine press were extremely high. By recent estimates, *Trouw* lost 112 of its workers, *Vrij Nederland* lost 78, and *Het Parool* lost 60. Precise losses for the communist paper *De Waarheid* remain unknown, but losses for the larger communist resistance movement in the Netherlands have been estimated at 3,000.¹⁰

DE WAARHEID: THE DUTCH COMMUNIST PARTY AND “THE TRUTH”

Of the five major clandestine papers in the occupied Netherlands, only communist *De Waarheid* – “The Truth” – constituted an official publication of a prewar political party.¹¹ By the time of the German occupation, the

orde” (Vo. 95/1941), dated May 19, 1941, *Verordnungsblatt* May 20, 1941; “Verordnung des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete über den Ordnungsschutz/Verordening van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied betreffende de handhaving van de openbare orde” (Vo. 138/1941), dated July 25, 1941, *Verordnungsblatt* July 28, 1941; “Verordnung des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete zur Abwehr von Sabotagehandlungen/Verordening van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied tot bestrijding van sabotagehandelingen” (Vo. 195/1941), dated October 16, 1941, *Verordnungsblatt* October 17, 1941; “Verordnung des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete über Massnahmen zum Schutz der öffentlichen Ordnung und der Sicherheit des öffentlichen Lebens/Verordening van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied betreffende maatregelen tot bescherming van de openbare orde en van de veiligheid van het openbare leven” (Vo. 55/192), dated May 21, 1942, *Verordnungsblatt* May 23, 1942.

¹⁰ Figured contained in Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 84–85.

¹¹ A nearly complete collection of *De Waarheid* can be found in *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication number 1071, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Amsterdam.

Dutch Communist Party, or CPN, was a decades-old fixture of the country's political scene. In 1909, a group of radicals split with the existing Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP) to create the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Nine years later, the SDP, since reconstituted as the Dutch Communist Party, obtained 2.3 percent of the vote in national elections, thus securing representation in the second chamber of the Dutch parliament.¹² In March 1919, the party became a recognized member of the Comintern and, in 1935, adopted the name by which it would be known until its dissolution in 1991, the Communist Party of the Netherlands, or CPN.¹³ Although quick to engender the skepticism and overt hostility of the country's more established parties, the CPN was never formally banned by the Dutch government. Still, the communists remained under police surveillance,¹⁴ and because The Hague did not maintain diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union during the interwar period, CPN leaders could maintain connections with Moscow only via clandestine channels.¹⁵ In this hostile environment, the Dutch communists closed ranks around themselves. Acting in accordance with Stalin's directives issued at the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, the CPN refused to cooperate with even the most radical Dutch socialists; for the next seven years, communist leaders and parties around the world scorned social democrats as "social fascists," the true enemies of the working class. From their isolated position on the far left of the interwar political spectrum, the Dutch communists focused their efforts on the creation of a loyal, well-trained corps of supporters. What the CPN lacked in membership numbers

Selected articles and editions of *De Waarheid* also appear in *De Waarheid in de oorlog: een bundeling van illegale nummers uit de jaren '40-'45*, eds. Hansje Galesloot et al. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus, 1980).

¹² G. Voerman and J. Wormer, "De CPN in cijfers, 1909–1991," in *De communistische erfenis: bibliografie en bronnen betreffende de CPN*, eds. Margreet Schrevel and Gerrit Voerman (Amsterdam: Stichting Beheer IISG / DNPP, 1997), 164.

¹³ For brevity's sake, I alternately refer to this party as the Dutch Communist Party.

¹⁴ Joop Morriën, *De leiding van de illegale CPN 1940–1943: Het driemanschap Paul de Groot, Lou Jansen and Jan Dieters in de IJsselstreek en Veluwezoom* (Amsterdam: Primavera, 2001), 6; Margreet Schrevel and Gerrit Voerman, eds., *De communistische erfenis: bibliografie en bronnen betreffende de CPN* (Stichting beheer IISG/DNPP, 1997).

¹⁵ Beginning in 1933, Daniël Goulooze of the CPN was able to maintain direct contact with the Comintern, first employing a complex network of couriers and then, after 1935, a radio connection. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were not established until a July 10, 1942 agreement between the Dutch government-in-exile and the ambassador of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in London. See Ger Harmsen, biographical entry for Daniël Goulooze, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 3 (1988): 56–60, accessible at (<http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/goulooze.html>), Joop Morriën, "Telegrammen uit Tweede Wereldoorlog in Cominternarchieff," *Politiek en Cultuur* 50, no. 5 (October 1990), 247–254, with this discussion appearing on 248; Wim Pelt, "De CPN in de oorlog en de bronnen van de Komintern," *Bulletin Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging* 40 (December 1995), 116–132; Ger Harmsen, *Daan Goulooze: uit het leven van een communist* (Utrecht: Amboboeken, 1967), 71–88 especially.

and parliamentary seats, it more than made up for with its visibility, zeal, and clarity – if not always consistency – of message. For the 1920s and 1930s, the Dutch Communist Party served as a predictable oppositional party, sniping at whatever coalition of bourgeois parties ruled the day.

From the moment of its inception in 1918, the CPN foregrounded the issue of colonial independence and proclaimed that Indonesia – the Dutch communists refused to refer to the colony as the Dutch East Indies – had the right to self-determination, as did all overseas territories. Indonesian independence, as envisioned by the Dutch communists for much of the inter-war period, was to be both immediate and unconditional: Regardless of the consequences for the European metropole, lawmakers in The Hague needed to walk away from the Indies. If they did not, they would hurt not only the Indonesian people but themselves, because people were not truly free as long as they oppressed others. Such was the position advanced by Dutch communists in their party meetings, their publications, the halls of parliament, and transnational movements such as the Comintern-supported League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression, founded in 1927.¹⁶ Of all of the political parties in the Netherlands, the CPN maintained the strongest and most sustained connections with the people and territory of the East Indies. Repeatedly, CPN leaders extended overtures to the PKI, the Communist Party of Indonesia, but at least initially they achieved little success in this domain: During the mid- and late 1920s, the PKI seemed intent on steering its own path independent of both the Comintern and its purported “sister organization” in the European Netherlands. The CPN’s cooperative efforts in the European metropole were more successful. Here, Dutch communists cultivated ties with like-minded Indonesians, such as the more Marxist-influenced members of the Association of Indonesian Students in the Netherlands (*Perhimpunan Indonesia* or PI). As of 1922, the CPN began to place Indonesian communists on its parliamentary list, a policy made possible by the residency laws for “non-Dutch subjects” of the kingdom. According to the Dutch constitutional revision of 1917, these subjects could become legal residents after eighteen months living in the Netherlands, and, as such, could both vote and stand for election in the second chamber of parliament. On July 4, 1933, Roestam Effendi was sworn in as the first Indonesian member of parliament, taking his place alongside three Dutch representatives of the CPN.¹⁷ Effendi also served in the “Foreign Bureau of

¹⁶ The first few chapters of Joop Morriën’s rather sympathetic *Indonesië los van Holland: de CPN en de PKI in hun strijd tegen het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1982), explore the CPN’s early anticolonialist position and activities.

¹⁷ Cees Fasseur’s two pieces on racial classification in the Dutch East Indies explain this residency status and note, specifically, Roestam Effendi’s election to the second chamber: C. Fasseur, “Cornerstone and Stumbling Block: Racial Classification and the Late Colonial State in Indonesia,” in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), page

the PKI,” established by the Comintern in 1934. Working from Holland, the Foreign Bureau sought to provide Indonesian communists with propaganda and other materials, all in the interests of forging an “independent ‘Soviet Indonesian state’.”¹⁸ After all, immediate, unconditional independence would be for naught if the new Indonesia resembled the oppressive colonial state created by the Dutch. Indonesia needed truly revolutionary leaders to replace the Dutch industrialists and planters, and the Indonesian proletariat would need to take the reins from the Indonesian bourgeoisie.

In the summer of 1935, the Seventh Comintern Congress announced a reversal of policy that, although seemingly unrelated to the question of colonial liberation, nonetheless forced the CPN to reconsider its Indonesian agenda. Reversing its previous declarations concerning the dangers inherent in social democracy, the Comintern now called on international communist parties to forge “Popular Front” governments with other leftist and even centrist parties to contend with the fascist threat. From this point on, the CPN began to back away from its previous emphasis on immediate colonial independence. Any change in status for Indonesia could potentially benefit Nazi Germany or Japan, and, as its steering committee explained in January 1937, the CPN did not want to give “a square centimeter of colonial territory” to the fascists. One month later, Roestam Effendi, who had represented the CPN before this pivotal Comintern meeting, presented his party’s new position before the second chamber. Indonesia, he explained, confronted multiple threats, most pressingly in the form of an increasingly militaristic, expansionist Japan. Ominously, Japan had allied itself with Nazi Germany, thereby proving fascist designs on the territories and resources of the Indonesian archipelago.

The CPN, although steadfast advocates of self-determination, now recommended an entirely different course of action: The Dutch should bolster the colony’s military defenses while granting more moderate democratic reforms, such as those proposed in the recent Soetardjo Petition. Effendi trusted that the democratic government of the Netherlands would do its utmost to guarantee the “safety and integrity of Indonesia,” just as the Dutch communists would do everything in their power to protect the oppressed

42 fn.21, and Cees Fasseur, “Hoeksteen en struikelblok. Rasonderscheid en overheidsbelied in Nederlands-Indië,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 105 (1992), 218–242, page 40. Details concerning Roestam Effendi, his election to parliament, and his political career both inside and outside of the CPN can be found in Joop Morriën, *Indonesië los van Holland: de CPN en de PKI in hun strijd tegen het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1982), 90–92, 96, 101–104; Joop Morriën, biographical entry for Roestam Effendi, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 7 (1998): 41–45, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/effendi.html>; and Parlementair Documentatie Centrum’s Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for R. Effendi, accessible via “Personen” search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

¹⁸ Justus M. van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia* (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1965), 22–23.

Indonesian people from “modern barbarism.” The other political parties greeted this sharp about-face – delivered, nonetheless by an Indonesian and vocal critic of colonial rule – with surprise and even amusement; the Dutch communists appeared to have either lost their way or finally seen the light.¹⁹ Disregarding or perhaps oblivious to such skeptical responses, the CPN continued to call for the creation of a Popular Front, even if such advocacy came at the expense of ideological consistency and Indonesian emancipation.

The outbreak of war in Europe, followed by the invasion of the Netherlands eight months later, lent additional gravitas to the communists’ claims concerning the fascist threat. Since 1938, the CPN had been led by Paul (born Saul) de Groot, a former diamond worker and journalist of Jewish descent. With the arrival of German occupying forces in May 1940, de Groot decided to reinvent the party as an underground organization, henceforth to be known as the “illegal Communist Party of the Netherlands.” It would be governed not by its traditional party executive, but by an underground “triumvirate” consisting of de Groot and two other members of the party’s national secretariat: Lou Jansen, a former party representative from Amsterdam, and Jan Dieters, a party propagandist and de Groot’s personal protégé. Seen in light of the nonaggression pact signed by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in August of the preceding year, these early preparations for an underground existence could be considered slightly premature. Yet like their colleagues elsewhere in German-occupied Europe, the Dutch communists found themselves compromised by the unexpected German-Soviet pact reconciling two diametrically opposed ideologies and leaders. The CPN also could not claim ignorance of Comintern directives, because a secret radio connection linked the occupied Netherlands and the Soviet Union until the connection was shut down in the summer of 1943.²⁰ Still, Moscow’s instructions were of limited value for an organization and people struggling to find its bearings under the new circumstances of German occupation.

Between the period of May 1940 and June 22, 1941, de Groot and the Dutch communists were forced to improvise; they sought to act within the

¹⁹ Both the steering committee’s statement of January 8, 1937, and Effendi’s speech are cited in Joop Morriën, *Indonesië los van Holland: de CPN en de PKI in hun strijd tegen het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1982), 96–97. See also Susan Abeyasekera, “The Soetardjo Petition,” *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973), 81–108, page 102 for Effendi’s February 1937 speech explaining the new policy; and Joop Morriën, biographical entry for Roestam Effendi, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 7 (1998): 41–45, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/effendi.html>.

²⁰ In the summer of 1943, the *Gestapo* apprehended the CPN’s Dutch radio operator in Berlin, thus triggering a series of arrests that would eventually shut down this Dutch-Soviet connection. At approximately this time, too, the Comintern (Third International) dissolved itself. For details on these events, see Ger Harmsen, *Daan Goulooze: uit het leven van een communist* (Utrecht: Amboboeken, 1967), 115–131 and Wim Pelt, “De CPN in de oorlog en de bronnen van de Komintern,” *Bulletin Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging* 40 (December 1995): 129–132.

parameters established by international communism while still accounting for local conditions. Translated into practice, this meant that CPN leaders simultaneously planned their new clandestine existence and negotiated with the German occupiers to ensure that the party's daily paper, *Het Volksdagblad*, would continue to appear. The Dutch communists believed themselves to be acting in accordance with Comintern directives calling on local communist organizations to employ a variety of tactics in their struggle against the fascist occupiers.²¹ The CPN's efforts to these ends came to naught, however. In late July 1940, Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart placed the Dutch Communist Party, the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP), and Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (RSAP) under the trusteeship of Rost van Tonningen, a leading Dutch Nazi.²² Rather than agree to what constituted a ban of all left-wing parties, de Groot, Jansen, and Dieters put into effect their plans for a strictly underground organization. Communists located throughout the occupied country reorganized themselves into cohesive cells of five persons apiece, with designated "go-betweens" serving as the only form of contact between the governing triumvirate and these localized groups. *Het Volksdagblad* would disappear, replaced by the illegal CPN's new party paper, *De Waarheid*.

The first edition of the illegal CPN's new paper, *De Waarheid* – its title a direct reference to Lenin's *Pravda* – appeared in late November 1940 and was offered, in part, in commemoration of the Russian Revolution twenty-three years prior.²³ From November 1940 to August 1943, *De Waarheid* would

²¹ Joop Morriën, *De leiding van de illegale CPN 1940–1943: Het driemanschap Paul de Groot, Lou Jansen and Jan Dieters in de IJsselstreek en Veluwezoom* (Amsterdam: Primavera, 2001), 7; Ger Harmsen, biographical entry for Jan Dieters, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 3 (1988): 41–43, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/dieters.html>; Joop Morriën, "Telegrammen uit Tweede Wereldoorlog in Cominternarchie," *Politiek en Cultuur* 50 no 5 (October 1990), 247–254, with discussions of the Comintern's directives appearing on pages 249–250; Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 27–28. For an English-language discussion of the attitudes, behavior, and objectives of the Dutch Communist Party during the first few weeks and months of the occupation, see Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 110–118.

²² In his first official report to Hitler, Seyss-Inquart described the measures recently instituted against these organizations: "Erster Bericht über die Lage und Entwicklung in den besetzten niederländischen Gebieten, 29 May–19 July 1940," *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, Official Text, English Edition, Volume XXVI (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), Document 997-PF, 426.

²³ There is some debate about the actual date of publication for this first issue. Speaking after the war, both De Groot and A. J. Koejemans, who succeeded de Groot as editor in November 1943, claimed that the paper appeared on November 7, which would have been twenty-three years to the day of Lenin's overthrow of the Russian Provisional Government: Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het*

appear approximately every two weeks and, after this point, it appeared weekly. Until his departure from the organization in April 1943, de Groot served as editor in chief and authored all pieces.²⁴ Production and distribution would rest with a fourth individual, Jan Janzen, a prominent communist leader in Amsterdam now commanding a small group of resisters consisting of both party faithful and nonaffiliated individuals. *De Waarheid* would function as a “cadre paper” for the illegal CPN, with its main Amsterdam edition intended mostly for the party’s central leadership core. Its contents in turn constituted the basis for other locally produced communist papers, whether regional versions of *De Waarheid* or other titles, such as *De Vonk*, *Het Signaal*, or *De Tribune*. In this manner, the central Amsterdam edition of *De Waarheid* served as a sort of chain letter, reproduced and circulated by local groups without the active involvement of the paper’s central staff. This method not only facilitated ideological consistency – an important dimension of communist party politics under any circumstances – but enabled higher circulation numbers and quick distribution.²⁵ Plus, by limiting interaction between local groups and underground party leadership, this decentralized approach placed an additional and much-needed security cordon around de Groot, Jansen, and Dieters.

At the same time, this approach made *De Waarheid* seem somewhat amateur, because for the majority of the occupation, the communist publications typically appeared in stenciled form; communist resisters preferred to keep with the tried-and-true but unsophisticated equipment they had always used to disseminate their message to the masses. Only after November 1944 did the main edition of *De Waarheid* begin to appear in the more professionally printed format. Furthermore, as a result of its unique status as a cadre paper, *De Waarheid* first appeared in runs of only a few hundred, but then increased to a total of approximately 10,000–11,000 copies during early 1941. *De Waarheid*’s circulation numbers would vary widely over the next few years, largely as a result of the Germans’ ever-relentless pursuit of the communist resistance. After each targeted raid, these circulation numbers

Onderzoek, Deel 7A (’s- Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 205. However, Lydia Winkel refers, with some degree of certainty, to an initial publication date of November 23: *De ongedrongse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 312.

²⁴ After the war, the newly reconstituted Dutch Communist Party refused to reveal the authors of *De Waarheid*’s articles, preferring instead to claim communal responsibility. However, it appears that the paper’s two editors – first Paul de Groot and then his replacement, A. J. Koejemans – penned the majority of articles themselves, in cooperation with other members of the inner circle of *De Waarheid*: postwar testimonies by de Groot and Koejemans, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C (’s- Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 657–660; 483–487.

²⁵ Chris van der Heijden employs this chain letter metaphor: *Grijs verleden: Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 8th ed. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Contact, 2003), 290–291.

would drastically drop. For instance, during the first half of 1943, a particularly lethal period for the Dutch communists, only 2,000 copies appeared in their Amsterdam stronghold. But, by the end of 1944, and with the shift to professional printing, *De Waarheid* was able to obtain a total circulation of 100,000 copies.²⁶ By contrast, in the 1930s, the Dutch Communist Party achieved a maximum of 10,500 members and 25,000 subscriptions to its daily paper, *Het Volksdagblad*.²⁷

As these wartime circulation figures would seem to indicate, the now-underground Communist Party was able to achieve a new level of acceptance and even popularity among the population at large. Although it retained its traditional supporters from among the working class, it also made new inroads into a middle class long resistant to communist ideology and organizing efforts. This is not to say that all segments of occupied society embraced the communists with open arms, for the Calvinist resisters especially led the charge against the twin evils of German National Socialism and godless Bolshevism. Devout Protestant and Catholic opposition aside, the Dutch communists found themselves occupying a far less marginal position in occupied society than in interwar Holland. For their part, too, underground communist leaders proved themselves to be enthusiastic and valuable partners in the shared struggle against National Socialism, a position that contrasted sharply with Moscow's pre-Popular Front stance. Particularly during the final stage of the war, the party even joined forces with the social democrats, those "social fascists" once declared to be the true enemies of communism.

Of the major clandestine press groups, *De Waarheid* suffered the most crippling and consistent losses over the course of the occupation. The first targeted arrests and executions followed the February Strike of 1941, in which Dutch communists had played a prominent role, and continued nearly unabated until liberation. Especially during the years of 1942 and 1943, other leading organizations such as *Trouw* and *Het Parool* saw the capture and execution of many of their founding members, yet quite a few of their replacements were able to evade detection for the remainder of the war. In contrast, the underground CPN, ever the focus of the German police's anti-resistance efforts, lost not only its original leaders but their replacements too. Jan Janzen, *De Waarheid*'s first production editor, was arrested in February 1943, followed in short order by two of his colleagues from Amsterdam; the three men were shot in August of that year. Two months later, party leaders

²⁶ Circulation figures are cited in Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrondse pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 314.

²⁷ In 1939, the CPN could claim 10,595 members and 21,398 subscribers to its daily paper, whereas in 1940, the party numbered 9,000 members and 25,000 subscriptions: G. Voerman and J. Wormer, "De CPN in cijfers, 1909-1991," in *De communistische erfenis: bibliografie en bronnen betreffende de CPN*, eds. Margreet Schrevel and Gerrit Voerman (Amsterdam: Stichting beheer IISG/DNPP, 1997), 164.

Lou Jansen and Jan Dieters were apprehended, put on trial, and sentenced to death. They were executed before a firing squad on October 9, 1942. In response to these losses, Paul de Groot, the sole surviving member of this triumvirate and the editor in chief of *De Waarheid*, retreated from illegal activity in the spring of 1943. He would remain in hiding for the remainder of the war.²⁸ In November 1943, A. J. Koejemans, a long-standing member of the party with extensive experience in the communist publication world, succeeded de Groot as editor in chief of *De Waarheid*, a position he would hold until liberation.²⁹

When not evading German detection and capture, the resisters of *De Waarheid* sought to mobilize their followers for both resistance and revolution, neither of which was possible without the other. Just as the Dutch needed to liberate themselves from German rule, they also needed to liberate themselves from the bonds imposed by capitalism, for only then could they bring about the expected communist revolution. It was within this context that *De Waarheid* broached the subject of imperialism, becoming the first major publication to do so. Until June 1941, however, the communists' language on imperialism served as more of a rhetorical device than an explanatory, historically derived concept. In keeping with Lenin's well-known schematic, communist understandings of "imperialism" referred to the final and most dangerous stage of capitalism, and the "imperialist project" connoted any

²⁸ As aptly described by Arthur Stam, de Groot experienced a double persecution that few people would survive. As a Jewish communist, de Groot suffered the loss of both his family – his wife and daughter were arrested and deported to Auschwitz, where they were gassed upon arrival – and all around him his party comrades were arrested and executed: Arthur Stam, *De CPN en haar buitenlandse kameraden: Proletarisch internationalisme in Nederland* (Soesterberg, the Netherlands: Aspekt, 2004), 17–18. De Groot was either remarkably adept or extremely lucky – and perhaps both – in evading German capture, as evident in Joop Morriën's *De leiding van de illegale CPN 1940–1943: Het driemanschap Paul de Groot, Lou Jansen and Jan Dieters in de IJselstreek en Veluwezoom* (Amsterdam: Primavera, 2001). For other biographical details on Paul de Groot, see *De Waarheid in de oorlog: een bundeling van illegale nummers uit de jaren '40-'45*, ed. Hansje Galesloot et al (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus, 1980), 7; Ger Harmsen, biographical entry for Saul de Groot, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 7 (1998): 69–76, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/groot.html>; A. A. de Jonge, "Groot, Saul de (1899–1986)," *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 3 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1989), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn3/groot>.

²⁹ Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* ('s- Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 98–99, 102; Lydia Winkel, *De ondergrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 315–316; Joop Morriën, *De leiding van de illegale CPN 1940–1943: Het driemanschap Paul de Groot, Lou Jansen and Jan Dieters in de IJselstreek en Veluwezoom* (Amsterdam: Primavera, 2001), 16–20; Ger Harmsen, biographical entry for Jan Dieters, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 3 (1988): 41–43, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/dieters.html>; Johanna M. Welcker, entry for Anthoon Johan Koejemans, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 4 (1990): 107–111.

attempt by a state, governmental actor, or corporation to exploit the working class for their own capitalistic interests. For the first year of the occupation, the underground CPN described the present war as an imperialist conflict pitting the imperialist Nazis against the equally imperialist British and their allies, such as the Dutch bourgeois, or “Orange,” imperialists. Even if the British were to win and the Dutch government-in-exile to return, the working class would still suffer under the capitalist system supported by the Allies. Only the Soviet Union could bring peace and ensure freedom in the Netherlands and Europe.³⁰

Initially, de Groot and the Dutch communists were especially concerned with British imperialism and the systemic abuses it perpetrated the world over. For instance, a May 1941 appeal to Dutch workers pronounced that, even during the present conflict, British imperialists – now the allies of the Dutch government-in-exile – continued to mercilessly oppress and exploit hundreds of millions of people. For the Dutch communists, the solution was clear: Only by following the lead of the Russian workers and farmers could the Dutch liberate themselves from the political chains forged of the cooperation between the “Orange bourgeoisie” and the British imperialists.³¹ Nor were the British solely to blame for the present state of affairs, either. In January 1941, *De Waarheid* equated British and American imperialism, thus exposing the United States as a greedy, imperialist nation, despite its public claims to neutrality. For Paul de Groot and the Dutch communists, it was Anglo-American imperialism, not a desire to “save ‘democracy’ in Europe,” that motivated Allied involvement in this war. The British and Americans alike sought to dominate “the Pacific Ocean, to put an end to Japanese influence and dominance in China, and then replace it with their influence; [all this] to have at their disposal the rich resources of the colonies, among others Indonesia, that lie in the Pacific Ocean.”³²

Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 would convince the underground CPN that, indeed, a greater danger than Anglo-American imperialism confronted the European proletariat. Although certainly converted to the capitalistic system, Dutch communists now began to temper their public criticism of the Allied powers. Henceforth, *De Waarheid* cast the war not as an imperialist conflict, but one uniting all freedom-loving peoples against Hitler and National Socialism. Against this evil expansionist German fascism, other forms of imperialism – whether British, American, or “Orange” in origin – paled in comparison.³³ The Japanese, although

³⁰ “De weg naar vrede en vrijheid,” *De Waarheid*, 23 November 1940 (No. 1), 1–2; “Tien Mei, een jaar van leed en strijd,” *De Waarheid*, May 1941 (No. 13), 1.

³¹ “Arbeiders van Nederland,” *De Waarheid*, March 1941 (No. 7), 3–4.

³² “Oorlogsoverzicht,” *De Waarheid*, Late January 1941, 4–6. A note on citations: especially for the paper’s first two years of existence, the masthead of *De Waarheid* usually failed to specify volume or issue number. If the individual issue cited here was missing such information, I have not included it in my citations.

³³ See, for instance, “De wereld tegen Hitler!!!” *De Waarheid*, July 28, 1941 (No. 22), 1–2.

similarly expansionist and perhaps even fascist to boot, commanded far less attention from the Dutch communists. In fact, in late 1941 and early 1942, with the Japanese poised to take over the precious East Indies, the underground CPN was not overly preoccupied with the actual colony. The East and West Indies found mention only within larger discussions of other topics and events, and this after the other leading clandestine organizations led the way. Perhaps the Dutch communists simply assumed that after years of pro-independence advocacy their stance on this issue was well known. Regardless, these resisters had more pressing matters with which to contend than the fate of the distant colony. The illegal Dutch communist party was most concerned with forging a cohesive anti-German front and stimulating widespread resistance among the population at large, and it did so with the German *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service of the SS) hot on its trail at all times.

Still, the underground communist party did not hesitate to call on the Netherlands' colonial past if doing so could suit its wartime aims. In March 1941, for instance, *De Waarheid* implored the Dutch working class to continue their protests, such as that of the February Strike, on behalf of the persecuted Jews of Holland. But the communists coupled this imperative with a seemingly unrelated demand for the Dutch to reject European imperialism in whatever guise it presented itself – German, British, or Dutch. Indeed, the non-German varieties of imperialism posed as great a threat to the working class as did “German big capital.” The Germans might have launched a bestial attack against those who had participated in the February Strike, but the Dutch bourgeoisie had acted no less brutishly in the past. For one, there was the colonial government's violent suppression of the *Zeven Provinciën* mutiny staged by sailors of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army in February 1933, and one year later the metropolitan government's violent response to riots in working-class Amsterdam. Second, the Germans were not alone in maintaining a network of concentration camps: For the past decade, Dutch colonial authorities had imprisoned “thousands of honorable Indonesian freedom fighters” in concentration camps such as the notorious Boven Digul.³⁴ By casting Dutch and German behavior as cut from the same cloth, the underground CPN was able to advance its traditional anti-imperialist agenda, and at the same time stimulate resistance under radically different circumstances. Theirs was an abstract discussion, concerned more with the larger structural issues caused by capitalistic greed and oppression than with actual conditions on the ground in the East and West Indies.

During this early stage of the war, *De Waarheid* said little about the Indonesian nationalist movement or what the Indonesians themselves demanded or desired. Only after the Japanese occupation of the East Indies in early 1942 did the Dutch communists examine the imperial situation with any degree of specificity, and even now they could only speculate as to what

³⁴ “Arbeiders van Nederland,” *De Waarheid*, March 1941 (No. 7), 3–4.

had transpired there; revolts, repression, and ultimately war severed the ties long connecting Indonesian and Dutch communists. Despite their consistent and unambiguous support for Indonesian independence both before and after World War II, the Dutch communists never dominated the wartime colonial discourse. To be sure, they would become active participants in these underground debates, but at no point did they dictate the terms of these discussions and negotiations. That role would be left to organizations such as *Het Parool* and *Trouw*.

LEFTIST AND LOYAL: THE EARLY *HET PAROOL*

First appearing on July 25, 1940, *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter 't Hoen* was the work of Frans J. Goedhart, a professional journalist.³⁵ An avowed political leftist unattached to any one party, Goedhart had earned his living in the 1930s penning pieces for a variety of communist and socialist publications in both Belgium and the Netherlands.³⁶ His first clandestine writings in the German-occupied Netherlands, which appeared under the *nom de guerre* of

³⁵ A nearly complete collection of the *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter 't Hoen* can be found at the Illegale Pers Collectie 556, publication number 648, NIOD, Amsterdam, but the papers contained in the NIOD's *Het Illegale Parool* Collection 185c, files 74–78 are in markedly better condition. Further, the complete runs of both the *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter 't Hoen* and *Het Parool* are accessible at www.hetillegaleparool.nl, created and maintained by the Stichting Democratie en Media (the foundation established, during the war, as Stichting Het Parool).

³⁶ For a short period of time in the early 1930s, Goedhart was both a member of the Dutch Communist Party and employed by *De Tribune*, the Dutch communist daily, where he served as a member of the paper's editorial staff. However, Goedhart's tenure with the communists was a short-lived and volatile one. Most notably, he publicly criticized Moscow's inability to counter Nazi Germany and Nazi ideology, as well as the Dutch communists' blind adherence to the dictates and demands of Moscow. Not surprisingly, then, in October 1934, he was removed from his editorial position and expelled from the party. For the next six years, he traveled in left-wing circles, working with leading figures such as his close friend and radical Marxist Henk Sneevliet, who founded the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (*Revolutionair Socialistische Arbeiderspartij* or RSAP) in 1935. Although he formally joined neither this party nor the larger and more established SDAP, his political beliefs were closely aligned with those of the Dutch socialists. From 1938 to May 1940, Goedhart worked for *Vooruit*, the daily paper of the Belgian Socialist Party. In his regular column for this paper, which was entitled "Letters from the Netherlands," he repeatedly warned of the dangers posed by Nazi Germany and decried the Dutch government's utterly naive neutrality policy and its inability to handle the socio-economic crisis of the 1930s. These details concerning Goedhart's prewar political and professional life are provided by Madelon de Keizer in her formative study of this clandestine paper: *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetsblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever, 1991), 17–24, 31–32. See also the biographical information contained in de Keizer's "'Mission Impossible': The Intermediary Role of the Dutch Politicians and Journalist Frans Goedhart in the Dutch Indonesian Conflict, 1945–1947," *Indonesia* no. 55 (April 1993), 113–139, and her biographical entry for Frans Johannes Goedhart, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 8 (2001): 50–57, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/goedhart.html>.

“Pieter ‘t Hoen,” an eighteenth-century publicist famous for his criticisms of William V, reflected a tremendous sense of indignation and frustration felt toward his fellow citizens. Goedhart was incensed by their optimistic belief that the occupation would be over before Christmas, and he took umbrage at the widespread and enthusiastic support for the *Nederlandse Unie*, which, as he and other critics saw it, not only assumed ultimate German victory but sought to negotiate with an implacable enemy. He was especially angered by recent anti-Jewish measures instituted by German occupation authorities and the spate of violence against the country’s Jewish citizens perpetrated by Dutch and German Nazis.³⁷ With his *Nieuwsbrief*, Goedhart intended to awaken the nation from its delusional state and spur extensive resistance to the Nazis’ political ideology and goals. There was simply no room for accommodation with this evil ideology and its supporters, whether German or Dutch. Moreover, because the occupation had rendered legal forms of political protest impossible, only the possibility of illegal action remained.³⁸

From its inception, the *Nieuwsbrief*’s foremost goal of stimulating active resistance to German policies and officials went hand in hand with Goedhart’s unrelenting focus on both the failures of the prewar period and the possibilities held out by the postwar future. Goedhart did not reject the prewar parliamentary system as such, but rather directed his ire toward those representatives of the prewar political establishment, such as former Prime Minister and Minister of Colonies Hendrik Colijn, allegiant only to big business, the stock exchange, and a fatally flawed foreign policy.³⁹ “Pieter ‘t Hoen” mourned the decline of democracy in the 1930s, all the while emphasizing the great political tasks facing the nation once Germany had been defeated. On the prospects of Allied victory, he was unwavering: Nazi Germany may not be defeated by year’s end, but it would eventually succumb to the incredible military might of England, its overseas territories, and eventually the United States. Convinced that the Netherlands could never return to the prewar status quo, Goedhart envisioned a political system merging old parties and new principles and, in this respect, advocated political and social “renewal” long before any of the other major clandestine publications or groups earnestly discussed its prospects.

He was equally certain that the world beyond the European Netherlands would see dramatic postwar changes too. As early as December 1940,

³⁷ A lengthy treatment of early anti-Jewish measures appears in “De Duitse maatregelen tegen onze Joodsche landgenooten,” *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen*, 30 November 1940 (No. 15), 1–3.

³⁸ For further discussion of these points, see Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongde pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 197 and Madelon de Keizer, *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetstijf in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever, 1991), 39–40.

³⁹ See, for instance, “Op de grens van twee werelden,” *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen*, August 16, 1940 (No. 4), 1–3, and “Christelijke politiek en de huidige situatie,” *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen*, 30 August 1940 (No. 6), 1–3.

he explored the various problems he expected would confront Holland, Europe, and the larger international community after the war. He explained, for instance, the great need for heightened economic and military cooperation between the nations of Europe, their overseas colonies, and the United States. More specifically, he imagined that the British empire, the United States, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and perhaps other equally developed countries would choose to align themselves into one unit, which would be able to prevent further attempts by Germany, Russia, or Japan to take over the world. This Euro-American bloc would also help forge a new postwar world characterized by free but fair trade, with the Indies, South America, Africa, and Australia acting as reservoirs of natural resources and important markets.⁴⁰ At least in late 1940, Goedhart assumed that the British empire would survive the war intact, as would the relationship between the Dutch and the East Indies. In the face of those extensive political and social changes at home, these empires – accorded an equally important position in Goedhart’s worldview – would help ensure security and prosperity.

Initially, Goedhart did not elaborate on the political future of the Dutch colonies, for he was more concerned with present conditions in the East Indies, the “Indies hostage” situation in particular. In October 1940, *Nieuwsbrief* defended the colonial government’s decision to take preemptive actions against potential fifth columnist in the Indies. Until this point, these Germans had enjoyed Dutch hospitality. Now, however, they were prepared to spring into action as spies and *franc-tireurs* as soon as they were given the command by Berlin. The Dutch colonial government, therefore, had little choice but to detain these dangerous enemy nationals, whereas the hundreds of Dutch citizens recently rounded up and deported from the Netherlands as “Indies hostages” had posed no immediate danger to the German occupiers.⁴¹ Throughout 1940 and 1941, Goedhart – whether in the pages of his *Nieuwsbrief* or its successor paper, *Het Parool* – would maintain focus on these “Indies hostages,” publishing the names of those who had been arrested and tracing their fates.⁴²

⁴⁰ “En na de vrede?” *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen*, 26 December 1940 (No. 18), 1–4. The second page of this article describes this potential bloc and the role to be played by these overseas areas.

⁴¹ “Op een hellend vlak,” *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen*, October 8, 1940 (No. 10), 1–2.

⁴² On June 9, 1941, *Het Parool*, the successor publication to Goedhart’s *Nieuwsbrief*, announced that a number of these hostages had arrived in Buchenwald the previous week. It denounced the unconstitutional and unjustified arrest of these citizens, men “in the prime of their lives” who had committed no crimes but were now being subjected to all sorts of depravities at the hands of the German barbarians: “Dodenkampen,” *Het Parool*, June 9, 1941 (No. 12), 6. Five months later, the paper reported that those Indies hostages sent to Buchenwald would soon return to the Netherlands, where they would be interned in a camp located in North Brabant: “Van het binnenlandse Front” (section entitled “Waar zijn onze geïnterneerden?”), *Het Parool*, November 15, 1941 (No 28), 7.

Lurking behind these early discussions were Goedhart's fears that the Axis powers were conspiring to seize the East Indies from the Dutch. In January 1941, he reported that Seyss-Inquart had recently sent a Dutch delegation – led by a Dutch general, no less – to Tokyo and then, presumably, to the colonial capital of Batavia with the mission of securing German interests there. Fortunately, Goedhart explained, the mission went no further than this, because the Governor General of the Indies refused to meet with them, even threatening to arrest the Dutch men as German spies if they entered the colony.⁴³ Like Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert, Goedhart worried about the continued sovereignty of the East Indies; but unlike Mussert, who saw enemies lurking around every corner, Goedhart anticipated that the Axis powers posed the greatest threat to the kingdom's territories. Still, the *Nieuwsbrief* did not accord the colonies a prominent position during this first stage of the German occupation. Goedhart, the one-man show behind this early clandestine publication, busied himself with more immediate matters, such as the cowardice and complacency evidenced by his fellow citizens. He had never lived or worked in the East Indies, and so he lacked the personal connections that would have diverted his attention from metropolitan society. For Goedhart and his *Nieuwsbrief*, the colonies were simply part of the normal political landscape, whereas the German occupiers – foreign, oppressive, barbaric – were anything but.

Each issue of the *Nieuwsbrief* – first appearing on a weekly basis and then seen more irregularly – totaled four to six pages of typed and stenciled copy. Goedhart himself remained responsible for the paper's content, but for production and distribution he relied on the support of a small group of friends and contacts in Amsterdam, a number of whom were connected to the Organization for the Defense of Jewish Cultural and Social Rights.⁴⁴ With such assistance, his *Nieuwsbrief* reached an initial circulation of about five hundred copies. This number soon increased to seven thousand once other groups located elsewhere began to re-stencil and circulate the paper on their own initiative, a common practice during the first half of the occupation.⁴⁵ Goedhart published *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter 't Hoen* until April

⁴³ "Feiten en commentaren: De Gestapo regeert," *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter 't Hoen*, January 14, 1941 (No. 21), 3. However, as *Het Parool* noted in May 1941, this mission was apparently charged with seeking a solution to the hostage situation, not obtaining German control of the Dutch colony: "Een zonderlinge missie," *Het Parool*, May 19, 1941 (No. 9), 10.

⁴⁴ Before the war, Goedhart had delivered lectures for this *Stichting tot Verdediging van de Culturele en Maatschappelijke Rechten der Joden*. His personal relationships with members of the Jewish community might help explain his paper's protracted focus on the persecution of the Dutch Jews, particularly at a time when such measures received little serious attention among the population at large or the mainstream (i.e., German-censored) press.

⁴⁵ For initial circulation figures, see Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 20. The later figures are contained in both the English summary of Madelon de Keizer's *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetsblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever,

of 1941, but in the summer of 1940 he began to cultivate a broader circle of personal contacts, with the goal of creating a more professional version of the *Nieuwsbrief* that would reach a national audience. Over the course of the next few months, he assembled five other editors, nearly all of whom came with impressive prewar journalistic and/or political credentials. The first new editor was Lex Althoff, who had served on the editorial staff of the SDAP daily paper, *Het Volk*, until tendering his resignation in protest of recent Nazification efforts. He was soon joined by Koos Vorrink, who from 1934 to 1940 had served as the chairman of the SDAP and represented the party in the second chamber of parliament. The third editor was Maurits Kann, a lawyer by training, who in the 1930s had both owned and edited *De Groene Amsterdammer*, an independent leftist and strongly antifascist weekly paper. Kann introduced to the group his friend J. C. S. Warendorf, another lawyer by training who in recent years had provided financial backing for *Das Neue Tagebuch*, a German-language anti-Nazi paper published by a German émigré in Paris. The fifth new editor was Jaap Nunes Vaz, who at the time of the German invasion was a young “star reporter” at the ANP, the Press Bureau of the Netherlands. With the “Aryan Declaration” of fall 1940, this young Jewish civil servant suddenly found himself unemployed.⁴⁶

As suggested by Kann and Goedhart, this new paper would be known as *Het Parool: vrij onverveerd* (“The Watchword: free and fearless”).⁴⁷ Much like its *Nieuwsbrief* predecessor, *Het Parool* was to be a resistance paper first and foremost, aiming to foster opposition to Nazi ideology, the German occupiers, and all forms of Dutch collaboration. Yet its editors also took seriously their self-assigned mandate of enlightening their fellow citizens about current affairs and historical developments alike. As experienced journalists, Althoff and Nunes Vaz employed a variety of legal and illegal sources to gather information, which in turn helped Goedhart, Vorrink, and Warendorf write the paper’s lead articles and opinion pieces. Goedhart also oversaw the typing and stencil process, and Vorrink used his extensive contacts to recruit

1991), 648, and M. Gruythuysen, M. de Keizer, and R. Kramer, *Het Parool, Vrij Onverveerd, 1940–1945: Inventaris van archief en documentatie* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 1993), 9.

⁴⁶ Biographical details for these men can be found in Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 25–26; Madelon de Keizer, *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetsblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever, 1991), 63–99; M. Gruythuysen, M. de Keizer, and R. Kramer, *Het Parool, Vrij Onverveerd, 1940–1945: Inventaris van archief en documentatie* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 1993), 9–10, and Lydia Winkel, *De ondegrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 197.

⁴⁷ Dutch readers would have immediately recognized the phrase “Vrij onverveerd” from the first stanza of the Dutch national anthem, the *Wilhelmus*, which was now banned by the Germans. This first stanza includes the lines “een Prince van Oranje/ben ik, vrij onverveerd/den Koning van Hispanje/heb ik altijd geëerd.”

news sources, couriers, and financial support. Kann surveyed radio broadcasts and compiled a regular “foreign overview” column combining news, interpretation, and other commentaries, as was typical for foreign affairs sections of regular Dutch daily and weekly papers.⁴⁸

The first issue of *Het Parool* was dated February 10, 1941, with subsequent issues appearing in intervals ranging from four days to three weeks. In this inaugural issue, Goedhart and his fellow editors concentrated on recently introduced German measures and the increasingly anti-Semitic and confrontational behavior evidenced by the Dutch Nazis. While providing detailed coverage of these and other developments occurring throughout the country, the editors urged their readers to resist such shows of violence and otherwise show solidarity with their Jewish fellow citizens. They also directed their readers to look beyond the Netherlands, to the Middle East, Asia, and India, where local political and religious leaders, industries, and armies offered vital contributions to the Allied war effort. “Pieter ‘t Hoen” himself also evaluated developments in nearby France, where Vichy leader Philippe Pétain attempted to preserve French colonial authority overseas, apparently with some success. Goedhart, writing as Pieter ‘t Hoen, did not defend Vichy’s collaborationist behavior, but explained that whereas Vichyite Pierre Laval was driven by his loyalty to Hitler, Pétain was rightfully concerned with German designs on the French empire.⁴⁹ Neither Goedhart nor his fellow editors extended these analyses to the Kingdom of the Netherlands or the individual Dutch colonies, perhaps because no Dutch equivalent to Pétain or the Vichy government existed.

Throughout the spring and early summer of 1941, the resisters of *Het Parool* continued to focus on events at home, highlighting, for instance, the Germans’ massive repressive efforts launched in the wake of the February Strike of 1941 and the mounting number of anti-Jewish measures. Beginning in late summer of that year, the organization also accorded a more prominent place to the precarious position of the East Indies as discussed by Queen Wilhelmina in her broadcast speeches from London. Typically, *Het Parool* transcribed and reproduced these speeches delivered by the queen and her ministers as part of the BBC’s “Radio Orange” program.⁵⁰ For instance, on August 11, 1941, *Het Parool* reprinted the queen’s July 30 address declaring

⁴⁸ Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 31.

⁴⁹ “Britisch-Indië en de oorlog” and “Wat doet Pétain?” *Het Parool*, February 10, 1941 (No. 1), 3 and 6–7, respectively.

⁵⁰ The queen’s speeches of July 30, September 1, and November 28, 1941, have been reprinted in *De Koningin Sprak. Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940–1945*, eds. M.G. Schenk and J.B. Th. Spaan (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 25–34. In *Het Parool*, see, for instance, “The jongste rede van de Koningin,” *Het Parool*, August 11, 1941 (No. 19), 1–2 and “De rede van de Koningin van 1. September j.l.,” *Het Parool*, September 4, 1941 (No. 21), 1.

that the Dutch government would resist with all means necessary any act of aggression directed against the East Indies. Now more than ever, so said the queen, she completely trusted in the policies and person of the Indies' Governor General; "the brave and resolute spirit" possessed by all segments of Indies society; and the "manliness and readiness" of the army, navy, and air forces there. She had also not forgotten her countrymen living in the Western realm of the kingdom (i.e., in Surinam and Curaçao), for she knew that the "flames of war" could reach them too. Equally important, the queen used this occasion to discuss future relations between metropole and colony. She explained that with liberation and the government's return to the European Netherlands, a new peacetime cabinet would be charged with a number of pressing tasks, such as the revision of the constitution "so as to reflect and adjust, as quickly as possible, the changed circumstances within the Netherlands, as well as between the Netherlands and the different parts of the Kingdom." Now prepared to consider substantial changes to the constitutional and administrative structure of the Dutch empire, she would convene an imperial commission consisting of representatives from the various parts of the kingdom who would help her implement such changes. In this manner, so she concluded, "the foundation will be laid for a good and more blessed future for the entire Kingdom."⁵¹ Essentially, the queen suggested a round-table conference of the sort proposed by Indonesian Volksraad member Soetardjo in 1936, but she neither mentioned Soetardjo nor the fact that her government had ultimately rejected his plans. Seen in retrospect, this July 1941 speech constituted the foundation for later proclamations – most notably, the famous speech of December 7, 1942 – reaffirming the queen's commitment to this imperial conference and the prospects of far-reaching political reforms. Yet at the time, her public statements to this effect went largely unnoticed in the occupied Netherlands. *Het Parool* simply reprinted this speech without any further commentary or discussion.

As tensions between the East Indies and Japan continued to mount throughout the course of the year, Goedhart and his fellow editors offered their own analyses of the situation, albeit in the same galvanizing tone employed by the queen. For instance, in late November 1941, *Het Parool* reported the recent arrest of the son of Raden Mas Noto Soeroto, a prominent Indonesian poet living in the Netherlands who had been seized by the Germans at his home in The Hague and held on unspecified charges. First sentenced to three years' house arrest, he was then sent to the infamous Scheveningen prison on the Dutch coast. In commenting on this series of events, *Het Parool* noted that "the Netherlands and the Indies fight together, shoulder to shoulder, in the ranks of the Allies, against the German conquerors. The sons of both parts of the Kingdom are equally affected by the German terror and persecution. The arrest and sentencing of Soeroto poignantly demonstrates the solidarity

⁵¹ "The jongste rede van de Koningin," *Het Parool*, August 11, 1941 (No. 19), 1–2.

between the motherland and the Indies.”⁵² Only one month later, *Het Parool* would replace this kind of unbridled unqualified optimism with a more critical appraisal of the Dutch colonial past, present, and future. At this point, the organization initiated a self-reflective colonial discourse that aimed to analyze, as objectively as possible, the country’s imperial history with an eye toward improving future relations between the Dutch metropole and its overseas territories.

Before this would happen, however, the leaders of *Het Parool* had significant ground to cover at home. On August 11, 1941, *Het Parool* became the first clandestine publication to appear in printed form. It now bore the appearance of a professional-quality “above-ground” paper, its distinct, angular masthead a staple of the clandestine press scene until liberation. Until 1942, circulation numbers reached roughly 6,000 an issue, but with the procurement of reliable production and distribution staff in The Hague and Utrecht, each issue of *Het Parool* began to appear in runs of 25,000 copies.⁵³ In this manner, *Het Parool* became a massive enterprise, and not surprisingly this expansion brought heightened risk. The editorial staff experienced its first major loss in late May 1941 with the arrest of Maurits Kann, who, so it was later revealed, had been betrayed by a notorious Dutch informant. Kann would later die in Sachsenhausen. His position on *Het Parool* was quickly filled by Herman Bernard Wiardi Beckman, a prominent figure and rising star within the SDAP. Wiardi Beckman, like Vorrink, had represented the SDAP in the second chamber of parliament, but he also came to *Het Parool* with extensive journalistic experience. From 1932 to 1937, he served as the assistant editor in chief of the SDAP’s daily paper, *Het Volk*, and then from 1937 to 1939 as the paper’s editor in chief. Like Goedhart, Wiardi Beckman was committed to widespread social, political, and economic change, but as a leader within the Social Democratic party, he also aimed to end the prewar isolation of his party, a goal requiring active cooperation with other political parties. Whereas Goedhart considered himself a free-thinking leftist, Wiardi Beckman remained a party man, even if his party had effectively ceased to exist by this point.

In early 1942, Wiardi Beckman received word via a Dutch agent – air-dropped into the occupied Netherlands from London – that he was to

⁵² “Van het binnenlandsche front,” *Het Parool*, November 30, 1941 (No. 29), 8.

⁵³ During the final year of the war, the paper was able to reach a circulation of 60,000, whereas the daily news bulletins printed and distributed by local *Het Parool* groups numbered about 100,000 copies. In total, ninety-nine issues of *Het Parool* were published during the war, with the hundredth, appearing on May 7, 1945, as Allied troops marched through Amsterdam, doubling as the first legal edition of the paper. These circulation figures are contained in M. Gruythuysen, M. de Keizer, and R. Kramer, *Het Parool, Vrij Onverveerd, 1940–1945: Inventaris van archief en documentatie* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 1993), 10–11 and Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongde pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 204–205.

travel to London, where he would assume a position within the Dutch government-in-exile. Because Goedhart personally wished to inform the queen about Dutch public sentiment, he also procured himself an invitation to London. Unlike his colleague, however, Goedhart planned to return to the occupied Netherlands upon the completion of his self-assigned mission. But the German *Abwehr* obtained advanced warning of their planned departure on January 16, 1942, and raided the beach at Scheveningen where the two men were waiting for the submarine that would transport them across the channel. Goedhart, apprehended with no small amount of incriminating materials, was tried and sentenced to death in December 1942. Amazingly, with the help of a few well-placed friends, he was able to have his execution postponed, although he would remain in police custody. Then, in August of 1943, during his transfer from the Vught camp in the southern part of the county to his scheduled execution in Amsterdam, he escaped with the help of two Dutch policemen. By September of 1943, he had returned to the editorial board of *Het Parool*. Wiardi Beckman was considerably less fortunate. In the spring of 1943, he was tried as a defendant in another court case against the armed OD resistance group, and although not convicted, he was detained in the notorious Scheveningen prison and the Amersfoort camp. On October 25, 1943, he was transported to Germany as a “*Nacht und Nebel*” prisoner. After a period of time in the Natzweiler camp, he was moved to Dachau in July 1944, where he would die of illness shortly before liberation.

Meanwhile, in March 1942, after months of conflict with Goedhart (still in police custody at this point), Koos Vorrink and Lex Althoff left *Het Parool*. At this point, the organization’s remaining leaders, Jaap de Nunes Vaz and J. C. S. Warendorf, promoted three paper distributors to editorial positions: young economists Jan Meijer and Wim van Norden and their friend Cees de Groot, a lawyer and the executive secretary of Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM). All of these resisters considered themselves independent political leftists. In October 1942, Meijer and van Norden were arrested by the *Abwehr* on suspicions of espionage. Lacking concrete evidence against the two men, the *Sicherheitspolizei* or *Sipo* (German Security Police) released Meijer and Van Norden in the spring of 1943, whereupon they quickly resumed their editorial work with *Het Parool*. Original coeditor Nunes Vaz, who had been in hiding as both a resister and as a Jew, was betrayed and arrested in October 1942. He was sent to Westerbork and then to the Jewish extermination camp of Sobibor in March 1943, where he was killed. Yet another original coeditor, Warendorf, who was also Jewish and knew of the *Sipo*’s ongoing efforts to locate him, escaped from Holland in October 1942, arriving in England via Spain a few months later.

From October 1942 until December 1942, Cees de Groot would function as the sole editor of *Het Parool*, responsible for all facets of production; he gathered news sources, wrote all articles, and personally delivered

copies of the paper by bicycle. At year's end, he found relief in the person of Gerrit-Jan van Heuven Goedhart, a progressive liberal, who before the war had served as editor in chief for two of the country's leading daily newspapers. Van Heuven Goedhart – who bore no relationship to original editor Frans Goedhart – would remain on the editorial board until April 1944. At this point, the editorial board decided to send him to London, as they were aware that the Sipo was hot on his trail. In England, he was to apprise the queen and the government of conditions in the occupied country. On April 25, 1944, he left the Netherlands, and less than three months later was appointed Minister of Justice in London, a position he held until February 1945. His place on the paper's editorial board was taken by Simon Carmiggelt, one of the paper's distributors and another journalist by training. Before the war, Carmiggelt had written for *Vooruit*, the same socialist daily for which Goedhart worked. On March 1, 1945, only two months before liberation, Cees de Groot was arrested and shot one week later in reprisal for the recent attack on the life of Hanns Rauter, the *Generalkommissar* for Security and Police in the Netherlands. At liberation, then, the final editorial board of the *Het Parool* consisted of Simon Carmiggelt, Frans Goedhart, Jan Meijer, and Wim van Norden, with Goedhart as the only original member of the editorial board.⁵⁴

VRIJ NEDERLAND AND THE CONFLICTS OF RESISTANCE

Making its debut three months into the German occupation, *Vrij Nederland* (“The Free Netherlands”) appeared continuously for the duration of the war, its very name intended to serve as a beacon of freedom and inspiration to an oppressed nation. Yet beneath the surface of its patriotic posturing lay a profound identity crisis, set in motion by a series of devastating arrests occurring during the first two years of the war and forcing a rapid turnover of personnel. Further, political and religious differences between editors, and between editors and technical staff, ultimately proved to be irreconcilable, and a result *Vrij Nederland* was the only major publication to experience a significant defection of its own resisters. The wartime story of *Vrij Nederland* reveals the tumultuous nature of clandestine work – the constant danger, the devastating effects of detection and interrogation, the heady disputes concerning matters great and small. Further, the tensions evident in this particular organization presaged the later conflicts between the political

⁵⁴ Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 197–200; Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 39–43, 87, 101, 142–143; testimonies by Goedhart and Vorrink, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 40–46, 177, 180–181.

left and the Protestant right, as seen in the postwar debates concerning the political status of the East Indies/Indonesia.

The original incarnation of *Vrij Nederland* was the work of Frans Hofker, a young employee of Amsterdam's telephone exchange. Within weeks of the Germans' arrival, Hofker took it upon himself to circulate forbidden materials, such as a satirical poem about the Germans' bombing of Rotterdam. Having decided to assemble these materials into one newspaper, he turned to his friends, all seventeen- to twenty-year-old recent graduates from his Protestant high school. With the financial support provided by the wealthiest among them, the group obtained a used stencil machine, which they used to produce a mere 130 copies of this first edition. However, in order to both confuse and annoy the German authorities, the paper proclaimed an initial print run of 1,001 copies.⁵⁵ The first issue of *Vrij Nederland* was dated August 31, 1940, which, hardly coincidentally, was Queen Wilhelmina's birthday and thus traditionally a national holiday.⁵⁶ In its lead article, Hofker explained that the paper sought to counter the country's heavily censored "legal" or "above-ground" papers, riddled with German propaganda and instilling the Dutch people with a sense of defeatism and an aversion to Britain. This first edition of *Vrij Nederland* reprinted new photographs of the royal family, which would set the tone for the paper's evident promonarchy position. Its prominent masthead, consisting of chain links labeled "*Nederlandse-Oranje*" and topped with a large crown, similarly symbolized the strong bonds existing between the Dutch people and its now-exiled House of Orange.⁵⁷ Although the paper's later editors expressed sharp criticism of the prewar political system, this emphasis on the queen and monarchy would remain a constant feature of *Vrij Nederland*.

With the initial issue of the paper seemingly well received by the public, these resisters soon embarked on plans for subsequent editions. By November of 1940, Hofker and company had produced a total of four editions, each with a circulation of approximately 700 to 800 copies.⁵⁸ However, after

⁵⁵ Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940-1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 24.

⁵⁶ Speaking after the war, Frans Hofker explained that this first issue of *Vrij Nederland* actually appeared in early September 1940, but was backdated to the queen's birthday in late August: Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940-1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 337.

⁵⁷ Lead (untitled) article, *Vrij Nederland*, August 31, 1940 (No. 1), 1. A complete collection of *Vrij Nederland* is contained in *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication number 965, NIOD, Amsterdam. Selected articles and editions of *Vrij Nederland* are also reproduced in *Het ondergrondse Vrij Nederland: De belangrijkste nummers en bladzijden van het illegale verzetsblad uit de jaren 1940-1945* (Baarn: Het Wereldvenster, 1970).

⁵⁸ Circulation figures cited in the testimony of Frans Hofker, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940-1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 337. See also Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongde pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 278.

producing the first edition, this group of friends decided that, although their paper was a noble and necessary endeavor, they would rather engage in other types of resistance work, such as espionage. After seeking out amenable successors, Hofker turned over the reins to teacher Cees Troost and accountant Jan Kassies. Troost in turn solicited his friends, who, like the original *Vrij Nederland* group, originated from young Protestant and, more specifically, Calvinist circles. Within this newly constituted group, Troost served as editor in chief and authored all articles, whereas Kassies and a young lawyer named Arie van Namen – who would remain a fixture of the *Vrij Nederland* organization for the duration of the war – oversaw production. The only trained journalist among them was Ger Lammers, who before the war had belonged to the editorial board of the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party's official paper, *De Standaard*. Lammers wrote the domestic overview section of *Vrij Nederland*, and Cees van Rij, another lawyer brought into the group, wrote the foreign affairs section. This division of labor was not hermetic, however. For example, Arie van Namen, originally involved with the paper's technical production and distribution, regularly contributed valuable "inside information" he had gleaned from his Dutch National Socialist neighbor.⁵⁹

Testifying after the war, Troost and Kassies explained that their version of *Vrij Nederland*, like that of their predecessors, was offered in protest against what they saw to be the pro-German attitude of the Dutch people. The paper sought to expose the folly of such attitudes by revealing the true intentions of the Germans, as evident, for instance, in their treatment of the country's Jewish population. Correspondingly, the two resisters aimed to make the paper's reportage as objective as possible, as a well-informed people would be more likely to distance themselves from their new occupiers and thus engage in acts of "spiritual resistance."⁶⁰ Like their colleagues at the other major clandestine press organizations, Kassies and Troost would have reason to be disappointed in the behavior of their fellow citizens, and they would find that general calls for resistance were much less effective than pointed, strongly worded appeals for people to engage in specific forms of behavior, such as refusing to register for new German-issued identity cards or to respond to labor summonses. Such disappointment aside, this *Vrij Nederland* group was able to produce a nationally recognized paper of considerable importance. The domestic and foreign news sections composed by Lammers and van Rij soon came to

⁵⁹ Testimony by Jan Kassies, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 276–277; Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 57.

⁶⁰ Testimonies by Jan Kassies and Cees Troost, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 276, 339–340. Troost specifically referred to this "spiritual resistance."

include nearly half of each edition, thus allowing *Vrij Nederland* to become a major source of information for the general population. Increasing attention accorded the paper by various German military and civilian authorities testified to its immense popularity and easy name recognition among the general population.⁶¹

Predictably, with this new-found prominence came heightened risk for this young group of resisters. By early 1941, German authorities had uncovered the original founders of *Vrij Nederland*, thus setting into motion a series of arrests that devastated the paper's second generation of leaders. In March, Troost was arrested by German authorities, and within months Kassies, Lammers, van Rij, and the paper's founder, Frans Hofker, were also apprehended. This wave of arrests would continue throughout the spring and summer of 1941, with the first German court proceedings against *Vrij Nederland* commencing shortly thereafter. Kassies and Troost were both deported to concentration camps but survived; the others died in German prisons and camps. By a stroke of luck, Arie van Namen survived this series of arrests and was left alone to continue the paper's work. For assistance, he primarily turned to Jean Lengler, a well-known writer and already-proven resister. By June of 1941, van Namen and Lengler had resurrected *Vrij Nederland*, and in a stroke of bravado announced their triumphant return by sending to the Amsterdam headquarters of the *Sicherheitspolizei* a copy of the June edition.⁶² The two men then assembled yet another core of dedicated resisters, including van Namen's second cousin, Wim Speelman, an economics student turned resister, and Henk Kooistra, an Amsterdam teacher. Speelman and Kooistra were vested with overseeing the technical aspects of the paper's production, such as securing the assistance of printers and print shops, and establishing a country-wide distribution network that would allow the paper to enhance its national profile.

In the summer of 1941, Kooistra brought into this group a fellow teacher by the name of Henk van Randwijk, who was also a well-read author in the country's Protestant circles and, since May of 1940, the author of a number of clandestine brochures. A former member of the left-wing and pacifist Christian Democratic Union (*Christen-Democratische Unie*, or CDU), he considered himself progressive, anticapitalist, and anticolonialist.⁶³ However, in the course of the 1930s, he became convinced that

⁶¹ Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongde pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 279-280.

⁶² Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940-1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 37.

⁶³ In their 1990 biography of Van Randwijk, Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk cite an incident relayed by Van Randwijk's widow, Ada van Randwijk-Henstra, during an interview they conducted. She explained that after she and her husband moved to Amsterdam in

the Netherlands needed a strong defense against the dangers of German fascism. The CDU, by contrast, was avowedly antimilitaristic. Shortly before the beginning of the war, in September 1939, van Randwijk formally ended his affiliation with the party, although he did not sever his many ties with the larger Protestant community. Upon becoming involved with *Vrij Nederland* in the summer of 1941, he immediately tapped into this extensive network, which included Gesina van der Molen, a journalist, professor of law, and devout Calvinist. Through this extended circle of Protestant laymen and clergy, van Randwijk also made contact with the burgeoning “Swiss Connection” (*Zwitserse Weg*), a clandestine intelligence network that, beginning in mid-1942, relayed vital information from the occupied Netherlands to London via Switzerland. No less important, van Randwijk brought to *Vrij Nederland* a new dynamic, one that, according to his detractors, was neither positive nor especially helpful to the cause of anti-German resistance. Notoriously stubborn and opinionated to the point of overbearing, van Randwijk had initially scorned the paper as amateurish and not worth risking his life for. He would later temper this attitude, but not before isolating himself from many of the rank-and-file resisters involved with the *Vrij Nederland* organization.⁶⁴ Moreover, unlike many of his fellow Protestants now involved with the paper, he remained critical of the traditional Christian political parties, and he especially kept his distance from the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party.⁶⁵

1937, Henk had gestured toward the rows of grand canal houses and proclaimed, “All of this exists only because of the capital that we have sucked from the East Indies!” In past centuries, the East and West Indies trading companies had been housed in these ornate canal-front buildings; in more recent years, they housed countless financial, banking, and legal firms. Neither Ada van Randwijk nor the biographers commented further on this story. Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk, *H.M. van Randwijk: Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 113. For other biographical details, see also Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 141; M. W. M. M. Gruythuysen, *Vrij Nederland: Inventaris van het archief 1942–1952* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie and B. V. Weekbladpers, 1995), 45–47, and I. Schöffner, “Randwijk, Hendrik Mattheus van (1909–1966),” *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 4* (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1994), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/randwij>.

⁶⁴ Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk, *H.M. van Randwijk: Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 160, 163; Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 37–38.

⁶⁵ Generally speaking, these Protestant resisters, including van Randwijk himself, were followers and supporters of the Swiss-German theologian Karl Barth. However, whereas a substantial number of these resisters also belonged to the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party, van Randwijk, like Barth, assumed a more critical approach toward Christian politics and parties.

Such fissures, however, lay in the future. During the summer of 1941, this newly reconstituted group was able to issue two editions of *Vrij Nederland*, rife with strongly worded appeals to their fellow Christians, imploring them to engage in various forms of oppositional behavior. Shortly thereafter, the group was yet again forced to reorganize when Kooistra, who had been engaged in a wide array of other resistance activities, was arrested on charges of espionage on September 1; he would later die in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. At a pivotal meeting held in October 1941, van Randwijk assumed the leadership position he would retain for the duration of the war. He clearly laid out what he saw to be the direction of *Vrij Nederland*: While contributing to the struggle against the Germans, the organization and its paper were to support the restoration of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the Netherlands. At the same time, and because the current war had demonstrated the problems plaguing Dutch society, the paper would also call for great changes and “renewal” to occur after the war. Above all else, the paper was to acknowledge the formative influence of both Christianity and secular humanism upon Dutch society and, as such, was to profess no particular political or religious affiliation.⁶⁶

In early January 1942, *Vrij Nederland* appeared once again, this time in a more professional printed format, its production and distribution entrusted to various networks located throughout the country. By all appearances, *Vrij Nederland* was on the path to becoming the nation’s preeminent clandestine paper, but still the organization was beset by problems. In the winter and spring of 1942, German authorities, acting on the work of Dutch infiltrators, initiated yet another devastating series of arrests. In June of 1942, they apprehended van Randwijk, van der Molen, and other leading figures; Arie van Namen evaded capture once more. Apparently unaware that they had captured the entire governing board of *Vrij Nederland*, the Germans released these detainees after four weeks. Yet these arrests, which would continue throughout the following months, had set in motion a complex series of events. Citing an array of political, philosophical, and religious differences with van Randwijk, a core group of resisters – including not only Speelman and his production partner Henk Hos, but also coeditor Gesina van der Molen – left *Vrij Nederland* and founded their own clandestine publication, the Calvinist, politically conservative *Trouw*.

⁶⁶ Testimonies by Arie van Namen and Gesina van der Molen, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 290–291, 300. See also Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk, *H.M. van Randwijk: Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 170–172; Lydia Winkel, *De ondegondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 280; Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 37–38.

The defection of so many experienced and highly skilled resisters dealt an immediate blow to those remaining within the *Vrij Nederland* organization, but their departure also allowed van Randwijk and van Namen to institute the type of far-reaching administrative changes they believed to be in the best interests of the paper and its mission. Correspondingly, the two men soon reconstituted themselves as the heads of *Vrij Nederland*'s new "Central Leadership" core. Henceforth, van Randwijk would continue to serve as the paper's editor in chief, responsible for the paper's leading opinion pieces; van Namen would be his right-hand man and assume control of the organization if something were to happen to van Randwijk. The various printing and distribution networks were also brought under their centralized command.⁶⁷ As a result of these organizational changes, circulation numbers sharply rose, so that by spring of 1944 approximately 40,000 copies of *Vrij Nederland* were in national circulation each month.⁶⁸ This final reincarnation of the *Vrij Nederland* organization was able to weather the rest of the occupation with relatively few losses, even after the summer of 1943, when the German authorities used hostages to try to force the clandestine publications to cease work. Compared to *Het Parool* and *Trouw*, both of whom lost dozens of loyal workers during these hostage actions, *Vrij Nederland* experienced relatively few losses. This was due, in part, to sheer luck on the part of the organization, because for a time van Randwijk's wife, Ada, was held as a hostage but then inexplicably released. *Vrij Nederland*'s tightly organized command structure also helped minimize risk. As a result, *Vrij Nederland* would be able to maintain editorial and ideological continuity for the remainder of the war.⁶⁹ The *Vrij Nederland* organization also possessed one distinct advantage over its clandestine competitors. In addition to the standard channels of information available to astute Dutch resisters, such as international radio broadcasts, illicit telegrams, and "inside" information gleaned from German authorities, *Vrij Nederland* maintained preferential access to the materials gathered by the "Swiss Connection," the resistance group that relayed valuable written and visual material between the occupied Netherlands and London. If all of the

⁶⁷ M. W. M. M. Gruythuysen, *Vrij Nederland: Inventaris van het archief 1942-1952* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie and B. V. Weekbladpers, 1995), 50-51.

⁶⁸ Circulation numbers appear in Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrondse pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 284.

⁶⁹ During the course of the five-year occupation, *Vrij Nederland* would lose a total of eighty-six workers, who were either executed directly by the Germans or died in German concentration camps and prisons. This was out of a total of nearly 1,500 people who worked for *Vrij Nederland* in one capacity or another: M. W. M. M. Gruythuysen's introduction to *Vrij Nederland: Inventaris van het archief 1942-1952* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie and B. V. Weekbladpers, 1995), 56.

leading clandestine press organizations sought to mold public opinion, *Vrij Nederland*, with this privileged but contested avenue of information, aimed for preeminence in a crowded field of competitors.⁷⁰

Of the three major publications that appeared during the first two years of the occupation, *Vrij Nederland* not surprisingly devoted the least attention to the colonial situation. Most obviously, the ongoing arrests and various conflicts characterizing its early years necessitated a constant inward focus, and van Randwijk and van Namen needed to clean house before they could turn to larger concerns. Neither did overseas matters fit neatly within the paper's original agenda of providing reliable, detailed information concerning domestic matters and stimulating popular resistance. From the beginning, the *Vrij Nederland* organization prioritized accurate reportage over analysis, and with the colonies seemingly safe out of harm's way, these resisters had no reason to dwell on them in great length. The social and political commentary offered by van Randwijk was especially unwelcome during *Vrij Nederland's* early existence as a more politically conservative and overtly Protestant paper that tended to focus on items of interest to the larger Protestant community. For instance, the paper reported extensively on the protest actions launched by the Protestant and Catholic churches in response to the persecution of the Dutch Jews. Consequently, and in stark contrast with its later prominence, *Vrij Nederland* was relatively removed from the first clandestine discussions concerning the Dutch empire.

The only serious discussion of the colonies issued by *Vrij Nederland* during the first two years of the occupation appeared at the hand of Gesina van der Molen. Published in early December 1941, shortly before all eyes would turn to the events of Pearl Harbor, van der Molen focused on the situation in the Dutch West Indies. Specifically, she took issue with the claims of Anton Mussert and his Dutch Nazi Party, who for months had argued that the presence of American and British troops in Surinam and Curaçao constituted an Allied occupation of Dutch colonies. She explained that the Dutch government, seeking to ensure its continued access to the valuable natural resources in its West Indian territories during this time of war, had requested Allied protection. This was not a hostile takeover on the part of the Allies, but rather, for the first time ever, American troops stationed in Surinam were placed under Allied – in this case, Dutch – command. Furthermore, she proclaimed, Mussert's ravings about America's imperialist designs on the Dutch colonies were patently untrue. Here, she repeated the well-tread theme of American anti-imperialism: The United States did not desire the

⁷⁰ *Vrij Nederland's* affiliation with the Swiss Connection was the source of much controversy within the organized Dutch resistance. Various paramilitary organizations – the *Orde Dienst* (OD), in particular – accused van Randwijk and *Vrij Nederland* of censoring the material they received, and in turn the leaders of *Vrij Nederland* learned that one such paramilitary organization was spying on them.

Dutch colonies, for it did not desire any colonies at all. As evidence, she cited recent American policy toward the Philippines, intended to pave the way to independence. If the Americans posed little threat to the Dutch colonies, the same could not be said of the Germans, alleged van der Molen. After all, the Third Reich had recently acquired for itself French colonies in North Africa. Thankfully, however, Dutch leaders in London refused to surrender their territories, as did the “German marionettes” of Vichy France. Rather, the Netherlands’ “legitimate government” in London was simply trying to shield the valuable Surinamese mines from German and Japanese sabotage and, as such, should be applauded for its protective actions.⁷¹

She, and by extension *Vrij Nederland*, offered no new analyses of either the colonial present or future. Rather, they simply refuted the wrong-headed ideas shrilly circulated by Mussert and his corps of Dutch Nazis. Other groups evidenced the same limited response. During the first two years of the war, *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid* were similarly more concerned with providing reliable information to their fellow citizens and stimulating popular resistance – all the while trying to evade detection and capture – than with dwelling on the distant colonial situation. From its earliest existence as Frans Goedhart’s *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen*, the leftist *Het Parool* maintained a keen focus on domestic affairs above all else. The persecution of the Dutch Jews, for instance, commanded a front-and-center position, as did the behavior of Mussert and his NSB; in comparison to such present matters, the colonies appeared far less compelling. The newly underground Dutch Communist Party, by contrast, employed the colonies as a rhetorical tool in their larger struggle against both fascism and the forces of global capitalism: Indonesia not only deserved the right to self-determination, but it deserved to be free of the corrupting influences of bourgeois American-British-“Orange” imperialism. In the interwar period, the Dutch communists might have cultivated close ties with their Indonesian sister organizations and colleagues, but by May 1940 little remained of this once-cooperative past. Leading Indonesian communists were dead, in prison, or in exile, and those Dutch communists now living under German occupation took up the Indonesian cause only as it suited their larger agenda. Still, at least the communists and *De Waarheid* had an agenda, unlike *Vrij Nederland*, which was wracked with a profound identity crisis pitting a leftist and largely secular worldview against a more conservative and overtly Protestant one. After

⁷¹ This particular issue is dated only December 1941, but its contents appear to have been written in late November–early December, in any case before Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into the war: “De ‘Bezetting’ van Suriname,” *Vrij Nederland* (Vol. 2. No. 7), December 1941, 3.

A handwritten note indicating van der Molen’s authorship appears on the reprint of this article appearing in *Het ondergrondse Vrij Nederland: De belangrijkste nummers en bladzijden van het illegale verzetsblad uit de jaren 1940–1945* (Baarn: Het Wereldvenster, 1970), 65 in this volume.

these two sides went their separate ways, the empire emerged as a paramount concern for both sets of resisters, and for radically different reasons.

If the first year and a half of the German occupation witnessed the resistance's complacency toward the empire, the Japanese invasion and occupation of the East Indies served as a piercing wake-up call. At this point, the clandestine press emerged as the leaders of a new and far-reaching national discourse concerning the country's colonies. These resisters had significant ground to make up, because, as intimated by Gesina van der Molen's December 1941 analysis in *Vrij Nederland*, clandestine editors, writers, and politicians had not set the parameters of this colonial discourse. Rather, during the first two years of the occupation, the archenemies of the burgeoning resistance movement designated themselves the nation's colonial guardians and made it their mission to keep the empire in the forefront of public opinion. For the early resisters caught up in their own ideological and personal conflicts and on the run from German authorities, the empire was simply a given: distant and potentially vulnerable, but undoubtedly Dutch and expected to remain so, at least for the foreseeable future. By contrast, Dutch collaborators – or those deemed collaborators – were especially quick to proclaim the enduring nature of these imperial ties, although they too worried that the colonial relationship might not survive the present conflict.

“Look to the East!”*Collaboration, Colonialism, and
Compensatory Schemes*

During the first few years of the occupation, as a newly fashioned corps of resisters struggled to find a place for itself and its ideals, two new mass movements aimed to reshape Dutch society. The Nationaal Socialistische Beweging (the Dutch Nazi Party, or NSB) had existed for years before the Germans arrived in the Low Countries, whereas the Nederlandse Unie owed its existence to the Dutch defeat and German presence. Each political movement claimed to best represent the nation, and each operated from the assumption that the German occupiers sought local cooperation and collaboration. Further, and unlike the clandestine writers and editors pursued because of their illegal activities, the leaders of these two organizations earnestly believed that they would be able to influence occupation policy and German behavior. Anton Mussert of the Dutch Nazi Party anticipated his imminent appointment to the occupation regime and, with it, the ability to craft domestic and foreign policy, whereas Unie leaders believed that their movement's tremendous popularity left the Germans no choice but to act on their recommendations. In their quest for public support and political legitimacy, these two movements looked to the Dutch empire, and they urged their followers to do the same, albeit for widely different ends. Although neither group would obtain the position of authority they felt they deserved, their wartime work inadvertently paved the way for subsequent underground discussions concerning the colonies. Further, their preoccupation with the Netherlands' overseas territories and the continued sovereignty of the Dutch empire helped drive a wedge between the NSB, the Unie, and their German occupiers. This was a risk these groups were apparently willing to take: They could accept the Netherlands under German rule, but they simply could not consider the prospects of a Dutch kingdom devoid of its rightful colonies.

PROPHESYING DISASTER: THE DUTCH NAZI PARTY
AND THE LOSS OF EMPIRE

For nearly a decade before the war, Anton Mussert and his Dutch Nazi Party had claimed to best represent the interests, values, and future of the Dutch people. Whether in the pages of their weekly paper, *Volk en Vaderland*,¹ or from the second chamber of parliament, the Dutch Nazis spent the 1930s loudly denouncing the government's inability to protect the Dutch people from economic ruin, social disorder and decay, and the expanding reach of Marxism-Bolshevism. As an alternative to this rotten system of parliamentary democracy, the Dutch Nazis held out to their fellow citizens a set of nationalist, authoritarian, and corporatist ideas, similar to those professed by Mussolini. Mussert and his party sought "a powerful state, self-respect of the nation, discipline, order, solidarity of all segments of the population and the precedence of general (i.e. national) interests above group interests and group interests above personal interests." Nor was this newly revitalized and strengthened national community to consist of the European Netherlands alone, for according to "the Leader" the parts of the empire located in Europe, Asia, and America were to support each other as much as possible "under all circumstances, and, to the outside world, constitute one unit."² Yet as Mussert later clarified, this imperial cohesiveness should not be taken to imply that all parts of the empire were to be considered equal. The East Indies may have been the most populous region of the three territories, but the European Netherlands occupied a clearly preeminent position: It served as the empire's protector, employing both military and diplomatic means to safeguard against internal and external threats.³ If Japan's behavior toward

¹ In addition to a variety of topical books, essays, and reprints of speeches delivered by "The Leader," the organization's own Dutch National Socialist Press (usually referred to as "Nenasu") published a weekly and daily paper, *Volk en Vaderland* ("People and Fatherland") and *Het Nationale Dagblad*, respectively. As explained by Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Volk en Vaderland* reflected those views held by the party's central leadership under Mussert, whereas the daily paper, *Het Nationale Dagblad*, became the mouthpiece for editor M. M. Rost van Tonningen's more radical "völkisch-annexationist" wing: Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940-1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 258. Mussert entrusted other prominent party ideologues to edit and serve as regular contributors to *Volk en Vaderland*, but leading articles usually bore his own signature. With the onset of the German occupation and a newfound interest in the Dutch Nazi Party, the circulation of *Volk en Vaderland* jumped from the tens of thousands to about 70,000 in 1940, remaining at this level for both 1941 and 1942. These circulation figures are contained in L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 6, Tweede Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1975), 367.

² Both statements appear in the *Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederland's Programma met Toelichting* (Utrecht: NSB Headquarters, 1931), 3, 4-5, 19-24.

³ Correspondence among party leaders indicate that this document, entitled "Bestuurschema voor het Nederlandsche Imperium" was published in brochure form, but I have found no record of any such published document. It seems likely, then, that this unusually detailed "Bestuurschema" served as more of an internally circulated point of record than a public statement of purpose: "Bestuurschema voor het Nederlandsche Imperium,"

China was any indication of its intentions in the region, the Netherlands needed to act quickly and decisively, lest this or any other force take action against the prized colony.⁴ The Dutch, in other words, had every reason to heed Mussert’s demands for stronger, more technologically advanced imperial defenses, and the sooner the better.

Training his sights on the precarious position of the Indies, Mussert drew on long-standing imperial mantras. Speaking to party members in September 1932, the Dutch Nazi leader explained that because the European Netherlands lacked essential natural resources, it relied on the nearly unlimited “possibilities” provided by the East and West Indies. Only by virtue of this relationship could the Dutch “stand strong in this battle of nations”; without their overseas territories, they would be “reduced to abject poverty, and the nation, ultimately, will collapse.” For centuries an imperial powerhouse, the Netherlands could ill afford to become complacent now. Rather, it needed to pursue an aggressive settlement policy in underdeveloped areas, such as the West Indian colony of Surinam and the East Indian island of Borneo, both mineral-rich territories yet to be fully explored and exploited by the Dutch. Should a new generation of Dutchmen prove too lazy, weak, or otherwise unwilling to devote ample attention to the work begun by their ancestors, then they should hand over their colonial territories to more powerful nations, such as Japan, Germany, and the United States.⁵ Empire was a privilege accorded only to the strong and wise, but the Dutch had little reason to fear: A National Socialist Netherlands, under Mussert’s far-sighted leadership, would retain its position among the imperial elite.

As he formulated these ambitious plans for a more secure and even expanded empire, Mussert and his inner circle relied on the counsel provided by the party’s resident colonial experts. J. W. Harloff, a former member of the Council of the East Indies, the advisory body for the Governor General in Batavia, functioned as Mussert’s personal colonial advisor, and J. Hogewind, a former lieutenant colonel in the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, served for a time as the director of the (metropolitan) party’s Division of “Indies Affairs.” The Dutch Nazi Party in Europe also prided itself on its personal and political connections with the East Indies. In November 1933, Mussert authorized the creation of an Indies branch of the party to operate in the colonies under his authority.⁶ Centralized metropolitan

Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 8A, NIOD, Amsterdam. This particular document is undated but appears with other materials generated during the period of 1936–1937.

⁴ See, for instance, *Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederland, Programma met Toelichting* (Utrecht: NSB Headquarters, 1931), 23–24.

⁵ Mussert, speech labeled “Rede, gehouden op Woensdag 7 September 1932, Oude Gracht 35, Utrecht,” with these comments appearing on pages 17–18 of the printed text, *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 1G, 7D, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁶ For the history of the Indies NSB, see Robin te Slaa and Edwin Klijn, *De NSB: ontstaan en opkomst van de Nationaal Socialistische Beweging, 1931–1935* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom, 2009), 677–696; Tessel Pollman, “‘Men in fascist of men is het niet’: De Indische NSB

control of this type was rare at the time. The first few decades of the twentieth century saw numerous communist and socialist parties crop up in the Indies, but even if these parties had a majority of European leaders and members, they retained distinct identities as “Indies” parties; they acted independently of their metropolitan counterparts and maintained few formal affiliations. With this “Indies NSB,” Mussert and the Dutch Nazis had created a truly pan-imperial party consisting of two separate but formally equal units. Between 1933 and 1938, both the European and Indies NSB envisioned fascist yet still-inclusive societies where nationalist feeling and loyalty toward the Dutch nation superseded race and religion. Accordingly, Jews and mixed-race Indo-Europeans were allowed to join and even hold leadership positions in both branches of the NSB. In fact, according to historian J. Zwaan, Indo-Europeans may have accounted for as much as 70 percent of the Indies NSB at the peak of its success.⁷

Two years into the existence of this Indies NSB, Mussert honored his overseas followers with a personal visit intended to reinforce the ideological bonds uniting Dutch fascists throughout the empire. During the course of his month-long tour through Java and Sumatra, he found a receptive audience not only with loyal party leaders and sympathetic journalists, but with Governor General B. C. de Jonge, who twice received the Dutch Nazi leader.⁸ As Mussert would explain after the war, he had spoken to men at the airport and had seen for himself the types of ships employed

als imperiale droom en koloniale melkkoe,” in *Het colonial beschavingsoffensief: wegen naar het nieuwe Indie, 1890-1950*, eds. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2009), 169–186; J. Zwaan, “De NSB in Indië,” in *De Zwarte Kameraden: Een geïllustreerde geschiedenis van de NSB*, ed. J. Zwaan (Weesp: Van Holkema and Warendorf, 1984), 151–174; S.L. van der Wal, “De Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indië,” *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 82 (1968): 35–56, and J. Lauw-Steures, “De Nationaal Socialistische Beweging en Indië” (Doctoraal Scriptie/Master’s Thesis, University unknown, 1971).

⁷ J. Zwaan notes that “some sources” claim this exceptionally high number but does not cite these sources: Zwaan, “De NSB in Indië,” in *De Zwarte Kameraden: Een geïllustreerde geschiedenis van de NSB*, ed. J. Zwaan (Weesp: Van Holkema and Warendorf, 1984), 152.

⁸ At the time, the Governor General’s behavior engendered considerable controversy, especially among Dutch lawmakers and ministers in The Hague, who forced de Jonge to account for this perceived demonstration of ideological sympathy with the Dutch Nazi movement. Historians, too, have tended to interpret de Jonge’s behavior as evidence that he supported Mussert and the NSB. See, for instance, J. Zwaan, “De NSB in Indië,” in *De Zwarte Kameraden: Een geïllustreerde geschiedenis van de NSB*, ed. J. Zwaan (Weesp: Van Holkema and Warendorf, 1984), 157–159, and Tessel Pollman, “‘Men in fascist of men is het niet’: De Indische NSB als imperiale droom en koloniale melkkoe,” in *Het colonial beschavingsoffensief: wegen naar het nieuwe Indie, 1890-1950*, eds. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2009), 129. By contrast, S. L. van der Wal demonstrates that de Jonge acted out of more expedient if not entirely noble motives, because he sought to preserve his own hold on power at all costs: S. L. van der Wal, “De Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indië,” *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 82 (1968), 46–47 especially.

by the colonial military, which he knew to be far inferior to those of the Japanese fleet. These experiences only confirmed what he already knew to be true: The East Indies remained highly vulnerable to attack.⁹ Upon his return to the metropole, Mussert continued to warn the Dutch public of the grave threats facing the East Indies. Like many of his contemporaries in The Hague and Batavia, he was increasingly alarmed by Japan’s desires to extract exclusive trading rights and other economic concessions from the East Indies and other European-held territories in the Pacific Rim region. Furthermore, if Japan menaced the East Indies from outside, communist extremism in the Indies threatened to undermine Dutch rule from within. Again, like so many of his peers, whether politicians, journalists, or colonial officials, Mussert professed the dangers inherent in Indonesian nationalism, specifically the communist variety. By this point in time, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) remained but a small shell of its former self, as the misguided uprisings of the late 1920s had resulted in the near-decimation of the party. Still, a decade later, the PKI continued to function as a bogeyman of sorts, a stand-in for all Indonesian nationalists, no matter how moderate or disconnected from these bloody events or revolutionary ideologies. For Mussert, the Indonesian nationalist movement remained synonymous with communism. Moscow shouldered the blame for importing these dangerous extremists, but a weak, indecisive colonial government had allowed this radical movement to fester. Correspondingly, the Dutch Nazi leader called on colonial authorities to use all necessary forces to eliminate these dangerous extremists agitating on Moscow’s behalf, whether Indonesian, Dutch, or foreign nationals.¹⁰ The Indies was under attack, and the Netherlands needed to proactively confront these manifold threats.

With his support for a strong military defense and a more aggressive colonial policy, Mussert did not profess to forge a new path, and that was at least partially his point: His fellow citizens, and the nation’s leaders in particular, simply did not heed previous warnings. However, while emphasizing such well-tread themes as “Indies lost, disaster born,” the Dutch Nazi leader also placed his own stamp on the colonial discussions then transpiring in the metropolitan Netherlands. This came in the form of Mussert’s *dietse* worldview, which envisioned historically, culturally, linguistically, and racially Dutch “tribes” scattered around the world.¹¹ Since the party’s

⁹ Mussert’s commentary to this effect – delivered during the appeals portion of his postwar trial – appears in Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Het proces Mussert* (Amsterdam: Sijthoff, 1987), 216.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Mussert’s undated speech of 1936, where such remarks appear under the heading “Indische buitenlandsche beleid m/b tot Moskou” and his speech entitled “Buitenlandsche Beleid,” dated December 1936: Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 7D, NIOD, Amsterdam.

¹¹ In his two works exploring the language and rhetoric employed by the Dutch Nazi Party, M. C. van den Toorn attempts to extricate the meaning of *dietse* (or *dietsche*, as it is alternatively

inception in 1931, Mussert had called for the creation of a *Groot Nederland*, or “Greater Netherlands,” that assembled the various offshoots of the so-called dietse tribe into a single cohesive unit.¹² Here too, however, the Dutch Nazis drew on existing concepts. Dietse and “Greater Dutch” thinking originated with late-nineteenth-century Flemish nationalists in Belgium and was then imported to the Netherlands via a number of activists who had fled repression by the Belgian government in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹³ Like his dietse-minded forefathers, Mussert originally focused on Flanders but increasingly set his sights on Africa.¹⁴ South Africa, most obviously, had long served as an outpost of Dutch settlement, that is, until the British unlawfully seized the territory from its dietse inhabitants, Mussert proclaimed. Consistently throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, the Dutch Nazi leader urged his followers to avenge this loss, even after wartime developments made this mission patently impossible. For instance, in October 1940, he declared that just as their fathers and grandfathers had refused to surrender their territory, a new generation of Dutchmen would fight to reclaim South Africa for the Netherlands.¹⁵ More tenuous were Mussert’s claims to other African territories, such as the Belgian Congo. As he argued in late August 1940, the Congo was held by Flemish, not Walloon, rulers, and because Flanders constituted part of this Greater Dutch empire, the Congo, by extension, belonged to the Dutch. Further, the larger African continent constituted the next pale of settlement for the Dutch and, indeed, all other Germanic peoples.¹⁶ In essence, then, the Dutch Nazi Party aimed not

spelled), although, as he points out, Mussert typically used the term as it were self-evident: M. C. van den Toorn, *Dietsch en volksch: Een verkenning van het taalgebruik der nationaal-socialisten in Nederland*, *De Nieuwe Taalgids Cahiers* 5 (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink bv, 1975), 70–72, and M.C. van den Toorn, *Wij Meldten U Den Nieuwen Tijd: Een beschouwing van het woordgebruik van de Nederlandse nationaal-socialisten* (’s-Gravenhage: SDU Uitgeverij, 1991), 3–4, 143–148.

¹² Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederland, *Programma met Toelichting* (Utrecht: NSB Headquarters, 1931), 4, 21–22.

¹³ For a succinct English-language description of dietse ideas, as advocated by pan-Flemish activists, see Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Berg: Oxford, 1988), 244.

¹⁴ In the interwar period, the Dutch Nazis were not the only voices professing this dietse or “Greater Dutch worldview” and heralding the strengths of the Dutch–South African connection. For one, famed Dutch historian Pieter Geyl (1877–1966) considered himself a dietse activist, and although originally focused on Flemish rights in Belgium, he increasingly turned his attention to South Africa: Noel Garson, “Pieter Geyl, the Diets Idea and Afrikaner Nationalism,” *South African Historical Journal* 46 (May 2002), 106–140.

¹⁵ Mussert, “Zuid-Afrika wordt vrij,” October 4, 1940, reprinted in A. Mussert, *Neerlands toekomst* (Utrecht: Hoofdkwartier N.S.B, 1940), 15.

¹⁶ Mussert, detailed note sent to Hitler, entitled “Nota over den Bond der Germaansche Volkeren” and dated August 27, 1940, reprinted in Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Vijf nota’s van Mussert aan Hitler over de samenwerking van Duitschland en Nederland in*

only to preserve the country’s traditional empire, but to create a new one. Of course, standing at the helm of this dietse ship would be Mussert and his party, for only they could unite these various Dutch tribes scattered over the world (but centered in Europe). None of this should imply that this inclusive rhetoric translated into practice, for Mussert did little to cultivate and maintain contacts with his dietse brethren even in neighboring Flanders.¹⁷

The arrival of the German occupiers in May 1940 forced Mussert to adjust his carefully crafted schemes, but, confident that Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart would grant the NSB a much-deserved position of power, the Dutch Nazi leader did not jettison these plans entirely. Instead, he promoted his dietse-influenced nationalism to be compatible with German aims and intentions for the Netherlands, even as Hitler himself seemed unsure of his own intentions in Western Europe.¹⁸ Mussert now envisioned a “League of Germanic Peoples” under Hitler’s supreme rule, but granting the Greater Netherlands a more or less autonomous position. Under this arrangement, Mussert and his party would be free to govern the dietse people and territories as they saw fit. Or, as stated by Mussert’s deputy Cornelius van Geelkerken in June 1941, “The Leader” had proposed a Dutch politics appropriate for both the larger Dutch empire and the newer goals of “European solidarity.”¹⁹ Throughout the first half of the occupation, Mussert – whether in public speeches, party publications, or meetings with German officials – continued to press his plans for an autonomous, imperial Greater Netherlands, although he acknowledged that its creation might have to wait until after the final German victory.²⁰ Not surprisingly, Mussert’s promotion of these ideas typically placed him in direct conflict with his German superiors, who rightfully viewed his dietse lobbying as a feeble and naïve attempt to preserve some measure of autonomy for the occupied Netherlands. Even if the various civilian, military, diplomatic, and

een bond van Germaansche volkeren, 1940–1944 (’s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1947), 22–23. During the course of his defense statement offered at his postwar trial, Mussert reiterated this belief that the Congo was a Flemish territory: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Het proces Mussert* (Amsterdam: Sijthoff, 1987), 139.

¹⁷ M. C. van den Toorn, *Wij Melden U Den Nieuwen Tijd: Een beschouwing van het woordgebruik van de Nederlandse nationaal-socialisten* (’s-Gravenhage: SDU Uitgeverij, 1991), 3–4. See also L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 1 (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1969), 280.

¹⁸ See, for instance, Mark Mazower’s discussion of competing ideologies and practices, as well as Hitler’s dogged refusal to acknowledge the political aspirations of non-German subject peoples in Western and Eastern Europe alike: *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 5–6, 202–203, 245–248, 559–566.

¹⁹ “Opbouw en Vernieuwing: Het Nederlandse volk will leven. De historische taak van de N.S.B.,” *Volk en Vaderland*, June 20, 1941 (Vol. 9 No. 25), 7.

²⁰ As seen, for instance, in Mussert’s statement entitled “Ons geloof in den opbouw,” dated 28 May 1940, appearing in *Volk en Vaderland*, May 31, 1940 (Vol. 8 No. 21).

Nazi Party authorities in the occupied Netherlands clashed over such matters as the Wehrmacht's reprisal actions against civilians or the effectiveness of the NSB as a political and military force, the German occupiers patiently dismissed Mussert's brand of Dutch nationalism. Further, Mussert was relentless in pressuring Seyss-Inquart, HSSpF Rauter, and other leading officials for their assurances that Hitler did not intend to seize the East Indies.²¹ Apparently, their responses – or, more likely, their unwillingness to entertain Mussert and his demand for answers – convinced the Dutch Nazi leader that the Third Reich harbored no such designs on the Netherlands' most precious colony. In any case, German assurances to this effect soon ceased to matter, as Japan remained solidly in control of the East Indies after March 1942 and Berlin refused to intervene in its ally's imperial project in Asia.

For the first few years of the German occupation, Mussert doggedly followed events transpiring in the overseas colonies, and with each new development, he perceived the signs of imminent disaster and imperial decline, a truly calamitous situation that only he could prevent. The first ominous incident accompanied the Germans' arrival: During the invasion of May 1940, the colonial government in Batavia arrested and interned all German residents out of fear that these enemy nationals would launch a concurrent uprising in the East Indies. In total, Dutch colonial authorities detained nearly three thousand German nationals and approximately five hundred members of the Indies NSB. Neither group posed a serious threat to the colonial regime, especially because the Indies NSB was but a fraction of its former self by this point in time. Like its metropolitan counterpart, it peaked in 1937 with a total of five thousand members. After this point, the Indies NSB imploded, torn apart by serious internal divisions and major philosophical differences between party leaders in Indies and Europe.²² Whereas Mussert and the European Dutch Nazi Party openly criticized the Dutch parliamentary system and looked toward alliance with Germany, the leaders of Indies NSB cared little to debate the merits of parliamentary democracy; they blatantly refused to consider alliance with Nazi Germany because of Hitler's perceived overtures toward Japan. Second, members of the Indies NSB may have believed themselves to be culturally, religiously, and racially

²¹ Mussert's report of a meeting between Mussert and Heer Janke, the press secretary for *Generalkommissar* Fritz Schmidt, dated July 27, 1940, and a subsequent letter from Mussert to Schmidt, dated November 25, 1940: Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 15D, NIOD, Amsterdam. See also the entry for June 5, 1940, in Mussert's diary. A type-written copy of this diary – which is more of a daily agenda than a personal diary and includes entries only for May 17–June 29, 1940 – constitutes part of Collection 285, "Het Proces Mussert," Box 3, NIOD, Amsterdam.

²² For these membership figures, see Zwaan, "De NSB in Indië," in *De Zwarte Kameraden: Een geïllustreerde geschiedenis van de NSB*, ed. J. Zwaan (Weesp: Van Holkema and Warendorf, 1984), 151–152; S. L. van der Wal "De Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indië," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 82 (1968): 48, 51.

superior to Indonesian natives, but they were hardly preoccupied with the racial status of Jews or Indo-Europeans. Party leaders – no small number of whom were themselves Indo-European or married to Indo-European women – saw little need to purge their party in accordance with metropolitan directives. Last, and particularly infuriating, party leaders in the Indies suspected that financial contributions generated in the colony were being used to support the NSB’s pro-German agenda in Europe. Resentful of their position as a “cash cow” for the European party, the leaders of the Indies NSB demanded financial autonomy and the ability to steer their own political course as dictated by local conditions and concerns.²³ Still, in the summer of 1940, Mussert did not hesitate to make the cause of these persecuted Dutch Nazis his own. He implored his readers to remember in both word and deed the terrible injustices visited on Dutch Nazis in both metropole and colony. He reminded them that during the German invasion, party faithful had been beaten, imprisoned, even killed by their countrymen.²⁴ Fortunately, those terrible “May Days” were behind them, and the NSB could anticipate brighter days ahead. In the East Indies, however, Dutch Nazis continued to endure far worse treatment at the hands of the misguided “London emigrants,” and although confident that order would be restored in the Indies, Mussert vowed that neither these persecuted colonial comrades nor the metropolitan martyrs of the movement would be forgotten.²⁵

During the first few months of the German occupation, the Dutch Nazi leader urged occupation officials to intervene on the behalf of these Indies internees, but Seyss-Inquart refused to negotiate with either the government-in-exile or the colonial government in Batavia. Instead, the Reichskommissar reciprocated by arresting and detaining hundreds of prominent Dutch citizens, henceforth known in the German-occupied Netherlands as the “Indies hostages.” This tit-for-tat detainment was hardly the outcome Mussert had expected, but lacking any concrete authority vis-à-vis the Reichskommissar, he could do little other than highlight the conditions of party comrades now suffering in the Indies. In this he was more successful. All connections,

²³ Indeed, during his postwar trial, Mussert admitted that financial contributions from supporters in the Indies helped keep the NSB afloat: “Verdediging van Mussert,” in Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Het proces Mussert* (Amsterdam: Sijthoff, 1987), 121–122.

²⁴ Weeks before the German invasion, the Dutch government declared a state of emergency, which allowed the preventive detainment of those deemed politically untrustworthy. A small group of prominent Dutch Nazis and other perceived traitors were thus arrested and detained during April 1940. During the invasion itself, the number of those taken into custody swelled beyond 10,000, although these detainees were released shortly after the Dutch surrender. For details of these events, see Louis de Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 66–77, and Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 265–266.

²⁵ “Uit de beweging: gedenk onze dooden – denk aan onze Indische kameraden,” *Volk en Vaderland*, June 7, 1940 (Vol. 8 No. 22), 4.

including the postal service, had been severed between metropole and colony, but the Dutch Nazis were nonetheless able to obtain relatively accurate information concerning the colonial internees. Presumably, they obtained such information from various German officials and agencies in the Netherlands, which were able to receive via Switzerland detailed reports concerning German nationals interned in the East Indies.²⁶ In late June, *Volk en Vaderland* announced that many of the party's interned comrades had been sent by colonial officials to the "quarantine island" of Onrust, about which little was known. Further information would come to light in passing months. Speaking in front of a February 1941 gathering of the National Socialist Women's Organization (NSVO) in The Hague, a "comrade Duiser" surveyed the history of the NSB in the Indies and described the conditions confronting these wrongfully detained party members: Interned men burned in the tropical sun and lived in unhygienic and substandard conditions, and their women, left outside the camps, were scorned by both Europeans and natives alike.²⁷ Still, there was little either this speaker or his audience could do to rectify this situation, which was soon to take a turn for the worse.

Before surrendering to the Japanese invaders in March 1942, colonial authorities in the East Indies relocated many of the interned Dutch Nazis to other Allied-controlled territories, such as Surinam and British India, where they would remain for the duration of the war. Throughout 1942 and into the following year, Mussert and the NSB continued to publicize the fate of these internees, noting the names of those detained and deported; tracing their reported relocation to other domains; and urging family members to send letters to the Red Cross for potential forwarding.²⁸ After the summer of 1943, however, the internee situation faded from view. Undoubtedly, Mussert and his party leaders had been forced to reconsider their priorities, because after Stalingrad German victory began to appear less certain. Dutch Nazis and other known collaborators in the Netherlands also found themselves physically menaced by newly emboldened resistance groups. In all likelihood too, Dutch Nazis simply may have been unable to obtain reliable information about their internees once they arrived in Allied territories.

²⁶ See, for instance, "Eigentum des Deutschen Nachrichtenbüros (DNB)," September 23, 1940, *Reichskanzlei* R43, File 1463-II, Folio pages 38-39 (alternative numbers of 475783-475784), *Deutsches Reich Archiv* (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde).

²⁷ "De N.S.B. in Indië: Vele onzer kameraden geïnterneerd op het quarantaine-eiland Onrust," *Volk en Vaderland*, June 21, 1940 (Vol. 8 No. 24), 4, and "Werknieuws," *Volk en Vaderland*, February 7, 1941 (Vol. 9 No. 6), 4.

²⁸ "De eerlijst: De geïnterneerden in Indië," *Volk en Vaderland*, March 13, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 11), 7-8; "Niet all Indische geïnterneerden naar British-Indië," *Volk en Vaderland*, February 12, 1943 (Vol. 11 No. 6), 6, "In Nederlandsche-Indië geïnterneerde kameraden," *Volk en Vaderland*, July 16, 1943 (Vol. 11 No. 28) 6, as well as a radio speech delivered by Mussert on May 11, 1942: Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 21G, NIOD, Amsterdam.

Regardless, the damage had been done, for Batavia’s internment policy had only confirmed Mussert’s suspicions of a government-in-exile fully subservient to a nefarious, colony-hungry Great Britain, that great enemy of the Dutch empire.

Such anti-British posturing represented a point of departure for the Dutch Nazi leader, who, like Hitler, had long admired the British for their colonial conquests and ability to administer a vast overseas empire.²⁹ Throughout the 1930s, Mussert and the NSB lauded Great Britain and the British as another branch of the larger Germanic family and a seafaring, imperial power worthy of Dutch respect. As relations between Nazi Germany and Great Britain began to deteriorate in the latter part of the decade, the Dutch Nazi leader publicly urged a rapprochement between the two nations, as a conflict between two “large peoples” of the white race stood at odds with National Socialist principles. Mussert even volunteered himself and his party to help broker an agreement between the two countries.³⁰ However, during the first year of the German occupation, Mussert shifted course, now proclaiming the evil intentions of “perfidious Albion.” In June 1940, he declared England’s three-hundred-year role as the true enemy of the Netherlands. She had fought five wars against the Netherlands; stolen Ceylon, South Africa, and many other colonies from the Dutch; and, most recently, waged a violent campaign against the Boer Republic, imprisoning tens of thousands of women and children in concentration camps.³¹

At first glance, Mussert’s shifting stance appears the logical result of European developments. By May 1940, Germany and Britain were at war with one another, and German bombing campaigns on British targets would commence shortly thereafter. The new Dutch government-in-exile had sided with the Allies and vowed to continue the fight against Nazi Germany, which left Mussert and the Dutch Nazis little choice in the matter: As supporters of National Socialism and active collaboration with the new German occupiers, they would naturally position themselves against Great Britain. More than anything else, however, Mussert appears to have been influenced by the turn of events in the Dutch West Indies, which in his view revealed Britain’s true nature and threatened the territorial integrity of the Dutch empire.

²⁹ Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 581–582.

³⁰ Mussert’s comments to this effect appear in a December 1936 speech entitled “Buitenlandsche Beleid,” but other speeches delivered between 1931–1939 evidence similar sentiments: Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 7D and 15F, NIOD, Amsterdam. See also the excerpted speeches appearing as “Eenige uitspraken van Mussert in de jaren inzake den Opbouw van het Nieuwe Europe,” in Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Vijf nota’s van Mussert aan Hitler over de samenwerking van Duitschland en Nederland in een bond van Germaansche volkeren, 1940–1944* (’s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1947), 33–37.

³¹ “De rede van den leider,” *Volk en Vaderland*, June 28, 1940 (Vol. 8 No. 25), 1–2.

During the German invasion of the European Netherlands, Dutch diplomats stationed abroad immediately appealed to France and Britain for help protecting Dutch oil refineries located in Aruba and Curaçao; British troops would remain in these territories until war's end. In the fall of 1941, Dutch Queen Wilhelmina accepted President Roosevelt's offer of American troops to guard the bauxite mines of Surinam, and they too would remain here for the next few years. Watching these developments from afar, Mussert and the NSB perceived an Allied land grab. With some voices in the party proclaiming that the West Indies were now as good as gone for the Dutch,³² Mussert offered a more optimistic interpretation, presumably to maintain morale among his followers. He admitted that the situation in the West Indies did not seem promising but denied that Surinam and Curaçao would be forever lost to the Netherlands. Rather, he prophesied that "a reborn, united, and strong Europe, the Europe that is now forming, will one day be able to uphold our demand that these be returned to us."³³ Put simply, Britain and the United States might have stolen the West Indies, but the Netherlands' German protectors would make things right. Mussert, needless to say, could cite no evidence for such bold claims.

At least for the time being, Mussert and the NSB could look to the East Indies, that most prized of overseas territories, which despite the government-in-exile's policies, remained an integral part of the mighty Dutch empire. Convincing his followers of the same, however, required significant effort on his part. Writing in the pages of his party's weekly paper in October 1940, the NSB leader sought to allay fears that the recently signed Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan would only encourage Japan to seize the East Indies. He reassured his readers that Japan sought only an advantageous economic arrangement, not territorial expansion and regional domination. Contrary to popular claims, he explained, the pact neither created distinct spheres of interest nor allocated the East Indies and other European colonies in Asia to the Japanese. On the contrary, this arrangement would benefit the Netherlands and its empire, because if Japan overstepped its boundaries and employed violence against the East Indies, Berlin would surely rein in its new ally. In any case, the Dutch needed to trust their German rulers, if only because they could do nothing else: The time for decisive Dutch action was long gone. For years, Mussert had urged the metropolitan government to bolster military defenses in the East Indies, but to no avail. Now, only the Third Reich could save the empire – if it could be saved at all. While continuing to believe that the Dutch would eventually return to the East Indies to continue their great work there, Mussert

³² See, for instance, "Curaçao verkwanseld: nog erger dan op het dieptepunt van onze vernedering," *Volk en Vaderland*, October 31, 1941 (Vol. 9 No. 44), 6; "Men zegt dat..." *Volk en Vaderland*, December 5, 1941 (Vol. 9 No. 49), 8.

³³ "Na Curaçao – nu Suriname," *Volk en Vaderland*, November 28, 1941 (Vol. 9 No. 48), 1.

simultaneously presented an infinitely more dismal outcome, replete with economic ruin and psychological trauma.³⁴ Seemingly inconsistent if not entirely schizophrenic, Mussert’s reasoning nonetheless aligned with the “Indies lost, disaster born” concept, projecting both confidence that the Dutch would remain in the Indies ad infinitum and abject despair at the dismal prospects confronting a Netherlands stripped of its prized colony.

For the Dutch Nazis, the events of early December 1941 constituted the first steps on this path to imperial catastrophe. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Dutch government-in-exile signaled its support for the United States by declaring war on Japan. However, rather than blaming Japan for what could be perceived as unwarranted aggression against a non-belligerent nation, Mussert excoriated Queen Wilhelmina and her ministers for their dangerous decision making. He reminded his fellow citizens in the occupied Netherlands that when the queen and her ministers fled the country during the German invasion of May 1940, they had promised to protect the East Indies. Instead of keeping the prized colony out of the war, however, they had denied Japan access to necessary supplies from the Indies and ultimately declared war on them. In essence, the government-in-exile had forced Japan’s hand, so if the Indies were now in peril, the Dutch people could only blame their purported leaders in London. Disregarding the fact that the government’s declaration of war was already a *fait accompli*, Mussert suggested that the government-in-exile and its colonial officials henceforth follow a strict policy of neutrality. They needed to end the discriminatory trading policy directed against Japan, refuse to issue declarations of war, and deny British and American battleships entry to the colony. Should the so-called government-in-exile prove unable to steer such a course, Mussert volunteered himself to take the lead, although he failed to specify how this complicated transfer of power might occur at the present moment, especially now that metropolitan Holland had severed all ties with the overseas colonies. In the meantime, the Dutch Nazi leader refused to recognize the government-in-exile’s declaration of war against Japan, intended as it was to serve as a sacrificial offering on “the altar of Roosevelt and Churchill, the same altar upon which the British Empire would soon go up in smoke.”³⁵ Presumably, such posturing was directed as much toward his own followers as toward the German occupiers, who were thus far loathe to grant Mussert and his NSB the level of authority they felt they deserved. If Mussert could

³⁴ Mussert, “Ons Indië behouden: Het pact Duitschland-Italië-Japan,” *Volk en Vaderland*, October 11, 1940 (Vol. 8 No. 40), 1.

³⁵ “Deelgenoot in Nieuw Europa” and “De rede van de Leider,” *Volk en Vaderland*, *Tweede Herdenkingsnummer*, December 19, 1941 (Vol. 9 Nos. 51–52), 1, 3. See also the section entitled “Londen en Batavia,” in the “Zoo zien wij het” column of *Volk en Vaderland*, January 2, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 1), 2, and Mussert’s postwar explanation of his response to the events of December 1941, contained in Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Het proces Mussert* (Amsterdam: Sijthoff, 1987), 216.

convince the Germans that only he could save the prized colony, they might allow him to assume a more powerful role in the occupied Netherlands. Neither would come to pass.

Coming on the heels of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invasion of the East Indies on January 10, 1942, portended imperial ruin to the Dutch Nazis: Against their fellow citizens who continued to trust that Dutch and Allied forces could repel this Japanese attack, Mussert and company publicly wrote off the East Indies. Only one week into the battle for the Indies – which would last another two months – *Volk en Vaderland* bemoaned the great disaster looming on the horizon. Because of the purportedly misguided policies of the government-in-exile, Dutch military forces were being dealt a crushing blow in the Java Sea. The NSB seemed to take particular delight in the failings of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL), for each defeat pointed to Mussert's perceptiveness, the soundness of his policies, and the global significance of the East Indies.³⁶ Naturally, the Dutch surrender on March 9, 1942, magnified these feelings. For Mussert, this day would forever be remembered as a "black mark in our people's book of history," especially because it could have been avoided. Both the British and Dutch bore a heavy responsibility for this calamity: Evil Britain had exposed the East Indies to foreign attack, and the queen and her ministers fatally trusted their so-called allies. As with his response to Pearl Harbor, Mussert refused to blame the Japanese for this series of events. After all, they too only sought valuable "living space" for their race, and with these and other territories in hand, they could work toward their own "New Order" in Asia, an "Asia for the Asiatics," free of the yoke of international Jewish capital.³⁷ For Mussert and his party, the onset of the Japanese occupation prompted expressions of sadness and mourning, but these were coupled with an evident smugness and sense of self-righteousness. Indeed, the NSB appeared to care more about affirming their own views and foresight than about the status of their national patrimony. For years, "The Leader" had warned of this tragic series of events, but no one had listened to him, and now it was too late.

Yet another prophet of imperial disaster seized this moment to remind his fellow Dutch Nazis of both his own prescience and the nation's long-standing inability to protect its prized territory. Now seventy-six years old and a card-carrying member of the Dutch Nazi Party, C. G. S. Sandberg sent to *Volk en Vaderland* a complimentary copy of his influential 1914

³⁶ "Zo zien wij het," *Volk en Vaderland*, 16 January 1942 (Vol. 10. No. 3), 2; "Zinloos geofferd: de vernietiging van de Indische kruisers," *Volk en Vaderland*, February 13, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 7), 1; and "De Schuld der Londensche emigranten," *Volk en Vaderland*, February 20, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 8), 5.

³⁷ See, for instance, Mussert's speech dated March 10, 1942, 21G, Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), NIOD, Amsterdam, and the "Buitenlandsche overzicht" ("Foreign Overview") columns of *Volk en Vaderland*, March 20, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 12), 4, and March 27, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 13), 2.

work, *Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren* – the original “Indies lost, disaster born” pamphlet. Revisiting this work, staff writers at *Volk en Vaderland* both lauded Sandberg’s emphasis on a strong military defense and a strict policy of neutrality in the East Indies and lamented the political establishment’s failure to heed the sage warnings provided by Sandberg and other Dutch Nazis. Conveniently, *Volk en Vaderland* neglected to state the obvious: The Dutch Nazi Party did not exist in 1914, when Sandberg had penned this work. Although *Volk en Vaderland* bemoaned the “fatal delusion and incomprehension” that had resulted in the present circumstances, the NSB appeared to be most concerned with claiming Sandberg as one of the party’s “original fighters.”³⁸ In other words, the colony may have been lost, but at least the Dutch Nazis had been sound in their judgments concerning the fragility of the Dutch empire.

In actuality, Sandberg’s reemergence in the Dutch Nazi Party was hardly as coincidental or fortuitous as *Volk en Vaderland* would have liked its readers to believe. C. G. S. Sandberg had led the kind of storied imperial life typically featured in boys’ adventure stories of the time. Since 1888, he had lived and worked as a high-ranking civil servant in the Transvaal Republic in South Africa. He fought under Louis Botha’s command during the Boer War of 1899 to 1902; traveled throughout Europe, drumming up popular support for the Boers and their ongoing quest for political autonomy; studied geology in Paris; and then set off, in 1908, for a fruitful career in the Dutch East Indies. Presumably, it was during this stay in the East Indies that he penned *Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren* as well as a subsequent work exploring Dutch colonial policy. At some point during the interwar period, he returned to the European Netherlands, where he joined the Dutch Nazi Party and offered to Mussert his extensive knowledge of South African affairs. In 1936, the NSB’s own Nenasu press published Sandberg’s *Suid-Afrika en wij* (“South Africa and Us”), which, echoing Mussert’s dietse claims of a Flemish brotherhood, demanded closer ties between the Dutch and South Africans. Like Mussert, Sandberg considered Great Britain the single greatest enemy of the Netherlands, although unlike the NSB leader, he harbored this belief long before the outbreak of World War II. Sandberg also saw Jewish conspiracies at work, citing “a British-Jewish conspiracy to conquer the Boer Republics.”³⁹ Ideologically speaking, then, Sandberg and Mussert seemed a natural fit for one another, and the Dutch Nazis were only too content to exploit this relationship. Yet despite whatever *Volk en*

³⁸ “Indië verloren Rampspoed geboren,” *Volk en Vaderland*, March 13, 1942 (Vol. 10 No. 11), 3.

³⁹ C. G. S. Sandberg, *Suid-Afrika en wij* (Leiden: Nenasu, 1936, with a revised and much-expanded second edition published in 1941). These biographical details, plus Sandberg’s commentary on this “British-Jewish conspiracy,” appear in Ivo Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld van de geschiedenis der Nederlanden: Een historiografische en bibliografische studie* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Academic Archive, Amsterdam University Press, 2006 reissue; originally published in 1956 by Van Loghum Slaterus, Arnhem), 233–235.

Vaderland may have implied in March 1942, Sandberg exerted a formative influence on Mussert, not the other way around.

With the Japanese occupation of the East Indies, the much-feared disaster had come to pass. Henceforth, abridged discussions of the East Indies appeared only in the “Foreign Overview” columns of *Volk en Vaderland*, a strange placement for a territory once lauded as intrinsically, irrevocably Dutch. Mussert continued to apportion blame toward the Allied powers and the government-in-exile. In January of 1943, for instance, he proclaimed that the Dutch, although among the world’s “best” people, had come to overestimate their own riches and, consequently, refused to negotiate with the Japanese. Further, by sending Japan back empty-handed, they had set in motion the series of events now known to all. Speaking later that year, Mussert reiterated that the Netherlands had squandered its territories at the behest of its purported Allies, and he questioned whether the Dutch would ever be able to reclaim the East Indies.⁴⁰ In any case, the Dutch would need to redirect their attention elsewhere, as he would now seek to impress upon his followers. In late June 1941, five days after Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart addressed a massive public rally in Amsterdam, during which he called on the Dutch people to “Look to the East!” as both warriors and colonizers. At the time, Mussert voiced his support for the Nazis’ plans to colonize Eastern Europe, but he remained more concerned with the precarious position of the East Indies. Only after the Dutch surrender of March 1942 did the Dutch Nazi leader fully align himself behind the Nazis’ imperial project. He urged his fellow citizens to do the same, explaining that a noble mission lay before them. Just as their countrymen had established in the East Indies “the model colony of the world,” the Dutch would now replicate these successes in the “immense plains of Russia.” They would send forth their sons to settle this land of endless possibilities and, in the process, play a vital role in the *Führer*’s new continental empire.⁴¹ The normally oppositional *völkisch* wing of the NSB, which had long advocated a closer union with Germany, gladly reinforced these demands for eastern expansion and settlement. So too did the German occupation authorities, who in June of 1942 allowed Rost van Tonningen to assume leadership of the *Nederlandse Oost Compagnie NV*, a new “Dutch East Company Ltd.” intended to stimulate Dutch investment and development in German-conquered Eastern Europe and Russia. As part of

⁴⁰ Mussert, speeches dated January 16, 1943 and September 25, 1943, Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 26H, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁴¹ Mussert, speeches dated March 10, 1942 and June 19, 1942, Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 21G, NIOD, Amsterdam; also *De Toekomst van Nederland: Redevoeringen gehouden door den Leider der N.S.B. Mussert op 31 Juli 1942 en den Hauptdienstleiter der N.S.D.A.P. Schmidt* (Utrecht: publisher unknown, 1942), 13–14.

its mandate, this “East Company” would recruit, fund, and provide other forms of assistance to those intrepid Dutch volunteers prepared to forge this new imperial frontier.

Ultimately, however, the vast plains of Eastern Europe proved to be a poor substitute for the lush, tropical Indies, and not simply because the turning tides of war forced the Germans to abandon their own settlement plans in the region. For the Dutch, Eastern Europe lacked historic, cultural, and financial ties with the Netherlands and, as such, appeared a foreign territory. The Indies, by contrast, constituted an intrinsic, indelible part of the Dutch empire, an overseas extension of the European Netherlands even. The fact that Rost van Tonningen, a known proponent of the “Greater Germany” idea, served as the public face of this scheme only further emphasized the “un-Dutch” origins of this colonization project.⁴² As a result, only a few hundred civilian volunteers – not the expected hundreds of thousands or even millions – elected to move eastward, and those settlers who had hoped to build a new Dutch colony by the fruits of their agricultural labors quickly saw their dreams dashed. Once in the east, most found themselves building defenses for the German war effort, often toiling alongside forced laborers from the Netherlands and other occupied countries.⁴³

Nor was Mussert fully sold on this project either, despite his public professions on the subject. In private, he continued to press his claims to the territories he believed to be more suitable for Dutch settlement. Throughout the course of 1942, he implored German officials to intervene with their Asian allies, for only Germany could convince Japan to return the East Indies to their rightful owner. He also urged the “opening of Africa,” because, in his view, the largely uncharted territories on this continent represented the future of European colonialism, particularly for those members of the dietse tribe claiming historic connections to Africa.⁴⁴ In late May 1942, German Sicherheitspolizei in the occupied Netherlands learned that Mussert and one of his colleagues had not only devised a plan for the Dutch colonization

⁴² During the war, Rost van Tonningen’s *völkisch* group maintained its own dedicated publishing house, “Hamer,” which helped publicize this Eastern European settlement program. Joh. Theunis, *Naar Oostland: Nederlandsche Kolonisatie in Europa* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Hamer, 1942) constitutes but one example.

⁴³ Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Wilmot (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 308fn; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 6, Eerste Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1975), 457–465; David Barnouw, *Rost van Tonningen: Fout tot het bittere eind* (Zutphen, Walburg Pers, 1994), 110–111, 115; E. Frankel-Verkade, “Rost van Tonningen, Meinoud Marinus (1894–1945),” *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 1 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1979), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn1/rost>; Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941–1945: A Study of Occupation Policies*. 2nd Revised Ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 285.

⁴⁴ Mussert, speeches dated June 19, 1942 and November 21, 1942, Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 21G, NIOD, Amsterdam.

of Africa, but intended to present this plan to Mussolini, Hitler, and the Japanese occupation government in the East Indies. As perhaps the most peculiar facet of this proposal, Mussert suggested that officers from the Royal Netherlands Indies Army presently held as Japanese prisoners of war should be used to conquer African territories.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, nothing came of either this far-fetched plan or Mussert's ongoing lobbying efforts concerning the East Indies. His grand designs finally foiled, Mussert redirected his attention to matters closer to home, specifically to the purported battle for the ages now looming in Europe. The Dutch, he now proclaimed, would fight alongside the other Germanic peoples. Together, they would protect European civilization from the certain destruction at the hands of advancing Bolshevik hordes.⁴⁶

After 1940, Mussert and the Dutch Nazis should have been happy. The fascist revolution was upon them, and a new day had dawned for Europe and the world. Yet this came at a terrible price. The East and West Indies were gone, and, at least during the war, no one knew what, if anything, would replace them. Despite whatever claims of loyalty to Hitler and German National Socialism they may have professed, Mussert and his NSB still felt a degree of unease, as evidenced by their behavior concerning the country's overseas colonies. By 1942, the Dutch Nazi leader may have suspected that the Third Reich's star was fading and that the Eastern European colonization project was doomed to fail. In any case, Mussert continued to uphold the position he had first professed in 1931: the Dutch empire stood as one, and that without the East Indies, the Netherlands would surely lose its international standing, its wealth, its identity, and its historic calling in the world. A piece of Poland simply could not compensate for such catastrophic loss.

THE NEDERLANDSE UNIE AND THE SEARCH FOR A GLORIOUS PAST

Whereas Mussert and the Dutch Nazis saw disaster and doom lurking behind every corner, the *Nederlandse Unie* advanced a more optimistic interpretation of Dutch colonialism. Debuting in July 1940, the Unie summoned fellow citizens to "rise to the task" born of the new situation in Holland

⁴⁵ Memorandum addressed to the *Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei, SS-Obersturmbannführer* Knolle, Den Haag, with subject "Pläne Musserts zur Beteiligung der Niederlande an der Kolonisation Afrikas," May 21, 1942; Persönlicher Stab Reichsführer-SS collection, NS19, File 2860, Deutsches Reich Archiv (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde).

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Mussert's speech labeled "Appel van den Kring het Hilversum 'Gooiland' op Zaterdag 25 September 1943"; Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) Archive 123L (Dossiers van de Leider), 26H, NIOD, Amsterdam; and "Mussert sprak op den Goudsberg: Over den Nederladschen Staat in het nieuwe Europa," *Volk en Vaderland*, August 21, 1942 (Vol. 10 No.), 1-2, 4.

and strive for national unity. It acknowledged “the changed circumstances” present in the now-occupied motherland and professed to work toward economic development and social justice for all. These goals were to be realized alongside the Dutch traditions of spiritual freedom and tolerance, and in conjunction with both Dutch and German occupation authorities. Unlike the traditional prewar political parties, this new broad-based movement sought members from across the various “pillars” dominating Dutch politics and society. At the head of the Unie stood the ruling “triumvirate,” consisting of Johannes Linthorst Homan, the former Royal Commissioner for the province of Groningen; Louis Einthoven, the Police Commissioner of Rotterdam and a former colonial official in the Indies; and Jan Eduard de Quay, a professor at the Catholic School of Economics in Tilburg. Whether in mass meetings, small discussion groups, or the pages of *De Unie*, the organization’s weekly paper, these and other Unie leaders urged the Dutch people to ally themselves with the strength of the movement, because “whoever holds himself aloof, damages the Dutch cause.”⁴⁷ Translated into practice, this meant that over the course of its seventeenth-month existence, the Unie advocated the end of traditional liberalism, individualism, and the capitalist-driven class struggle, and proposed instead the creation of a “renewed” Netherlands based on the principles of “Dutch socialism” and national solidarity. Much like Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert, Unie leaders accepted German victory as incontrovertible fact, and believed that with the proper approach the Netherlands might secure a preferential position within this Nazi New Order. Yet surprisingly, given its wartime mandate, the Unie largely ignored current events and instead projected forward or backward in time, examining either the various failings evident in Dutch society and politics before May 1940, or imagining the world that might come to fruition if the Dutch could accept present realities. For the Unie, present realities included a unified, even strengthened Dutch empire. The Germans might occupy the European metropole, but for this new mass movement, the Kingdom of the Netherlands continued to exist.

⁴⁷ “Programma van De Nederlandsche Unie,” Doc II Collection – Nederlandsche Unie, Number 541 B, File 27, NIOD, Amsterdam; and a greatly abridged poster-size version of this program, reproduced in L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 4, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1972), 459 (for text of poster) and the insert between 508–509 (reproduction of poster). A complete collection of *De Unie*, minus the final issue, is included in the Tijdschriftscollectie (APN UNI), Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Amsterdam; this final issue of September 1941 is contained in Arch 199/D29, also in the same Tijdschriftscollectie. During the first period of the occupation, Geert Ruygers, who would later play a leading role within the *Je Maintiendrai* and *Christoffoor* clandestine press groups, served as *De Unie*’s editor in chief. Most articles appearing in *De Unie* were written by unnamed staff writers and editors, with the governing “triumvirate” contributing the occasional leading piece. With the exception of the “Waar wij staan” article of July 3, 1941, which was penned by the triumvirate, all articles cited here are the work of Unie staff writers and editors.

In its original party program of late July 1940, the Unie explicitly promised to “fight for a strong Dutch people, in close solidarity with the overseas territories.” Like Mussert, its leaders called for close cultural ties with Flanders and South Africa, albeit without employing the Dutch Nazis’ preferred *diets* label.⁴⁸ In contrast with the Dutch Nazis, however, who were obsessed with the present and future status of the overseas colonies, the Unie was almost singularly concerned with the Netherlands’ glorious past – specifically, the economic, spiritual, and cultural connections that had existed for centuries between the Netherlands and the East Indies, as well as the Netherlands’ historic position as a prosperous seafaring colonial nation.⁴⁹ Because most Dutch people lacked even a basic awareness of these facts, the Unie sought to disseminate this information to its hundreds of thousands of followers.⁵⁰ For instance, in late August 1940, a staff writer for *De Unie* explained the Netherlands’ historical calling to act as a global intermediary bridging Old and New Worlds, and called on his fellow citizens not only to maintain but develop these bonds between the European Netherlands and its overseas territories in Asia and America. Although a difficult assignment, the Dutch had already proven themselves to be worthy of the task, so proclaimed *De Unie*.⁵¹ Further, the Dutch had little choice, because, as one Unie writer noted in December 1940, the East Indies constituted the backbone of the Dutch economy.⁵² Without this vital source of income, the European

⁴⁸ “Programma van De Nederlandsche Unie,” Doc II Collection – Nederlandsche Unie, Number 541 B, File 27, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁴⁹ The Netherlands’ rich history as a mercantile and naval power is singled out for extensive discussion in the following articles: “Nederland moet blijven varen, hoe de wereld er na dezen oorlog uit moge zien,” *De Unie*, March 8, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 29), 8–9; “Het Tweede Nederlandsche Imperium (I),” *De Unie*, April 5, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 35), 8–9 and “Het Tweede Nederlandsche Imperium (II),” *De Unie*, April 17, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 35), 10–11.

⁵⁰ “Nederland en Indië: Verhoogde belangstelling noodzakelijk,” *De Unie*, March 8, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 29), 10, and “Het Tweede Nederlandsche Imperium (II),” *De Unie*, April 5, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 33), 8–9.

⁵¹ “Ons staatkundige program: Terughoudendheid is geen werkloosheid!” *De Unie*, August 31, 1940, (Vol. 1 No. 2), 5. See also a lead article appearing nearly a year later, which similarly stressed the Netherlands’ history and prospects of serving as a global intermediary power: “Neerlands taak: onze bemiddelende bevoegdheid,” *De Unie*, July 17, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 48), 1–2.

⁵² “Koloniale Economie: Ook hier is ordening noodzakelijk,” *De Unie*, December 7, 1940 (Vol. 1 No. 16), 7. As support for his claims that the viability of the Dutch economy depended in large part on trade with its Asian colony, the Unie writer listed import and export values for 1938: According to this piece, 21 percent of the Indies’ exports made their way to the Netherlands, whereas 24 percent of Dutch exports went to the Indies. By contrast, J. Th. Lindblad’s detailed analysis of Dutch-Indonesian trade during the period of 1874–1939 notes that the respective figures for this year were 20.3 and 10.2 percent: “De Handel tussen Nederland en Nederlands-Indië, 1874–1939,” *Economisch- en sociaal-historisch jaarboek* 51 (1988), 240–298; Bijlage III, 280–281. Or, as Lindblad has explained elsewhere in slightly different terms, the Netherlands after World War I “grew less important as a supplier of foreign imports in colonial Indonesia, whereas the colony remained insignificant as a market

Netherlands would stand in dire straits indeed, as even the German authorities seemed to realize. For these reasons, *De Unie* recommended that other (here unnamed) powers adopt a hands-off approach toward the East Indies, if only to protect their own interests. After all, three centuries of colonial experience could hardly be shoved aside in one fell swoop, and the Dutch empire, with its tremendously valuable Asian market, could only be expected to assume an ever-greater role in the world economy. In the future, the Dutch might need to enact certain reforms intended to create a “socially-legitimate colonial economy” in accordance with “the aspirations of the native people,”⁵³ but such changes could be expected to reinforce the centuries-old relationship between the two realms and people. Of course, the Unie was in no position to act on these or any other colonial plans, especially as Hitler and his emissaries in the European Netherlands appeared largely uninterested in the empire’s overseas colonies. The Nederlandse Unie, dependent on German approval for its mere existence, maintained no actual authority nor did its leaders expect to be appointed to leadership positions within the German administration.

All the same, the new mass movement continued to emphasize the interconnectedness and solidarity throughout the Dutch empire, even in this time of conflict. Formal connections between metropole and colony may have been severed, but less tangible bonds continued to unite the people of the Netherlands and the East and West Indies. According to the organization’s paper, *De Unie*, the relationship between metropole and colony had become increasingly reciprocal. Colonial experts had long acknowledged the cultural influence of the Netherlands on the native culture of the Indies, but in recent years the Dutch public had become more receptive to learning about native culture and society, so the paper explained in November 1940. Even under the current “unfavorable” circumstances of German occupation, a multitude of images, exhibits, and publications dedicated to the Indies remained available. In fact, the wartime severing of ties between motherland and colony had only served to strengthen the cultural and spiritual bonds between the inhabitants of both realms. “More than ever,” noted a staff writer, “one thinks of the Netherlands Indies with a feeling of warm

outlet for Dutch exports at large”: J. Th. Lindblad, “The Economic Relationship Between the Netherlands and Colonial Indonesia, 1870–1940,” in *The Economic Development of the Netherlands since 1870*, ed. L. van Zanden (Cheltenham, the United Kingdom: E. Elgar Pub. Co., 1996), 112.

If Lindblad’s figures are to be believed, then it would appear that the Unie correctly appraised the share of Indonesian exports to arrive in the Netherlands but greatly overestimated the share and value of Dutch exports to the East Indies. In all likelihood, this *De Unie* staff writer either fabricated this higher number or reproduced inflated figures then in circulation in order to support his claim that the Netherlands simply needed the Indies to survive.

⁵³ “Koloniaal Economie: Ook hier is ordening noodzakelijk,” *De Unie*, December 7, 1940 (Vol. 1 No. 16), 7.

solidarity,” a sentiment presumably also shared by their countrymen in the tropics. The Indies may have been “out of sight” for the moment, but they certainly were not out of mind. If anything, *De Unie* awkwardly proclaimed, the Indies were “out of sight, but in the heart” of the Dutch people.⁵⁴

That the organization’s leaders and writers were well versed in their country’s rich imperial history is certain; that they fully comprehended the magnitude of recent metropolitan events, however, remains far less obvious. On the one hand, they acknowledged that, under the present “unfavorable” circumstances, there existed little contact between these two parts of the kingdom, but on the other hand, they truly seemed to believe that the Germans, acting in their own best interests, would preserve the imperial structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Furthermore, an otherwise uninformed *Unie* follower who relied solely on information gleaned from the organization would have had little reason to believe that Japan was even vaguely interested in the East Indies. At times, *Unie* leaders and representatives seemed to inhabit an alternate colonial universe, one in which The Hague continued to preside over millions of colonial subjects, and neither Japan nor any other power harbored designs on the East Indies. In actuality, of course, the colonies had essentially been left to their own devices after May 1940, and Dutch authorities in Batavia confronted a Japan even more insistent on extracting maximum economic advantage from the now-isolated colony.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1941, as negotiations between Japan and the colonial government in Batavia stalled and German rule became more oppressive at home, the *Unie* maintained focus on the Netherlands’ impressive colonial achievements. As one *De Unie* writer claimed in March 1941, the organization sought to remedy popular but ultimately faulty understandings of Dutch colonialism, understandings that privileged the mistakes made by the Dutch in the colonies instead of the considerable progress they had brought to the colony and its people. By contrast, the *Unie* sought to instill national and personal pride in Dutch colonial rule, based as it was on authority and consent, not violence and brute force. After all, the Dutch position in the Indies was not guaranteed by a massive military presence – which, in any case, the Netherlands did not possess – but rather by the respect, loyalty, and attachment of the native people to the Dutch authorities. With good reason, the entire civilized world considered Dutch rule in Asia a textbook example of a “wise and mild colonial policy.”⁵⁵ Two months later, the organization’s weekly paper recounted the Netherlands’ impressive achievements in the East Indies: Dedicated, well-trained Dutch citizens had developed and modernized the colony’s various industries; built

⁵⁴ “Indië’s plaats in Nederlands Hart,” *De Unie*, November 9, 1940 (Vol. 1 No. 12), 7.

⁵⁵ “Nederland en Indië: Verhoogde belangstelling noodzakelijk,” *De Unie*, March 8, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 29), 10.

necessary hospitals and complex irrigational systems; established vital trade networks; and performed essential missionary and religious work. These accomplishments not only served Dutch interests, but greatly benefited the Indonesian people, who in turn were much appreciative of Dutch efforts in their land. Such work needed to continue well into the future, and the Netherlands needed to be prepared to send its “best and most competent sons” to guide the rapid process of development now under way in the archipelago.⁵⁶

With such grandiose rhetoric, the Unie did not chart a bold new path, but rather reflected current trends in colonial thinking and writing. Indeed, the organization had reason to note the surge in popular interest concerning the Indies. The first two years of the occupation – when paper was still readily available and the German authorities preferred to let the printing houses and other presses exercise self-censorship – witnessed the publication of numerous historical, geographical, and pictorial works about the East Indies. Collectively, these popular new books glorified the imperial position of the Netherlands, the greatness of its people, and the import of its good works overseas. Without a doubt, the most successful of these new titles was Willem Henri van Helsdingen’s *Daar wérd wat groots verricht: Nederlandsche-Indië in de XXste eeuw* – “Over There, Something Great Was Accomplished: The Dutch East Indies in the Twentieth Century.”⁵⁷ Van Helsdingen himself was a former colonial official, having served as the chairman of the Volksraad, the People’s Council of the Indies, until 1939,⁵⁸ and his edited work assembled essays written by other colonial experts, administrators, and missionaries well acquainted with the Indies. Published and then quickly reprinted in 1941, *Daar wérd wat groots verricht* lauded the tremendous accomplishments of the Dutch in the Indies: While the colonial government had overseen the modernization of the colony’s infrastructure, economy, and agricultural system, missionaries and other religious and cultural emissaries brought civilization and salvation to the native people. Underlying these essays was the notion that, as much as the Dutch had been able to achieve, they had much more to accomplish, and with war’s end they would resume where they had left off in May 1940. Such was also the dominant theme of the Nederlandse Unie’s colonial stance, which asserted that although Dutch achievements were indeed impressive, an even more promising future awaited the Dutch and Indonesian alike. Yet neither *Daar*

⁵⁶ “De Nederlanders in Indië,” *De Unie*, May 15, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 39), 11.

⁵⁷ Willem Henri van Helsdingen and H. Hoogenberk, Eds. *Daar wérd wat groots verricht: Nederlandsche-Indië in de XXste eeuw* (Amsterdam: N.V. Uitgevers-Maatschappij Elsevier, 1941). This work was later published in English translation as van Helsingden and H. Hoogenberk, eds. *Mission Interrupted: The Dutch in the East Indies and their Work in the XXth Century* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1945).

⁵⁸ As chairman of the *Volksraad* during the fall of 1936, van Helsdingen had voted against the Soetardjo Petition.

wérd wat groots verricht nor the Unie took stock of present circumstances, and neither proposed a wartime plan or a set of directives for the future. The Netherlands, both implied, simply needed to wait out the war and hope for the best.

Further, the Unie, although content to employ the country's colonial past to advance its goals of preserving a measure of autonomy for the occupied Netherlands, did not confront the possibility that the country might, in fact, lose the East Indies during the course of the war. Whereas the Dutch Nazis were prone to paranoia and hyperbole, seeing in every British action a threat to the status of the Indies, the Unie discounted the gravity of the current situation and instead emphasized that colonialism remained the Netherlands' destiny. Tensions in the Pacific, if noted at all, appeared couched in such vague terms as "the present-day conflict," without any further explanation or analysis.⁵⁹ Yet, writing in his memoirs after the war, former Unie leader Johannes Linthorst Homan claimed that during the group's existence, "many experts explained and spoke about the colonial question in both [their] general and other meetings." As a result of these Unie meetings, "the countless questions of our members were answered and a great deal of new interest awakened."⁶⁰ However, little surviving evidence, whether from the national organization, its regional branches, or its more informal local discussion groups – known as *Unie Kringen* – supports Linthorst Homan's claims.⁶¹ The proceedings of such meetings might not have been recorded out of fear that German authorities could use these records against Unie members. Equally likely is that Linthorst Homan, who penned his recollections in the immediate postwar years with the situation in the Indies escalating, may have exaggerated his group's wartime concern with the colonies. After the war, former Unie leaders and members were forced to explain their involvement in a movement now widely scorned as collaborationist, naïve, and short-sighted, and Linthorst-Homan may have been trying to rehabilitate the image of the Unie by focusing on its global agenda. Ultimately, the Unie's written records reveal that, for this group, there was no pressing "colonial question." For the Unie, the fate of the Dutch colonies was all but certain: With the end of conflict in Europe, and no matter the victor, the Netherlands would resume its historic mission in the East Indies, to

⁵⁹ See, for example, "Kort Commentaar," *De Unie*, January 25, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 29), 2.

⁶⁰ Johannes Linthorst Homan, *Tijdskenning: Herinnering aan vernieuwingswerk vóór en na 10 Mei 1940* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1946), 387.

⁶¹ Since the organization's inception, locally organized discussion groups, known as *Unie Kringen* ("circles"), played a pivotal role in both determining and disseminating the organization's agenda and ideology. Regular Unie members became involved with a *Kring* at their own request, and the topics for discussion at each meeting were determined by participants. After April 1941, when the German authorities forbade the organization to hold meetings of more than twenty members, these Unie Kringen became the sole means by which the Unie faithful were able to meet and plan their work.

the benefit of all involved. Certainly, the Unie intended such discussions for domestic consumption by their Dutch readers, in desperate need of reassurance that even under German rule, the Dutch maintained their rightful position in Europe and the world. Yet these colonial discussions also constituted a plea, if not a veiled threat, to German policy makers: Should the Netherlands lose control of the Indies, then the German Reich would suffer the consequences as well.⁶² Again, and contrary to whatever its leaders may have believed, the Unie was hardly in a position to make explicit demands of its occupiers.

Tensions between the German authorities and Unie leadership revealed themselves in dramatic and somewhat surprising fashion during the summer of 1941. The conflict revolved around Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart's June 27, 1941, "Look to the East!" speech, in which he called on the Dutch to participate in the crusade against the Bolshevik menace and, in the process, help colonize the newly conquered and fertile territory. His rallying call to these ends was immediately and publicly rebuffed by the three Unie leaders, who claimed that only their own government, acting in complete freedom, could make the decision to enter this conflict. The Unie might have been prepared to help build a more closely connected Europe with increased harmony among peoples, but, claimed the triumvirate, this should not be taken to imply that the Dutch would follow lock-step with German plans; the Dutch people were no National Socialists in the German sense. The Unie's leaders also argued that although they were certainly concerned with the situation in Europe, the Dutch maintained a global perspective. With their centuries' worth of colonial leadership, the Dutch have "commanded the recognition and admiration of the entire world," and as a result, have been "charged with a responsibility towards those people living within the empire." Even under German occupation, the Netherlands continued to function "as a bridge between the nations of the entire world."⁶³ Whereas the NSB adopted – even superficially – Seyss-Inquart's call to colonize the east, the Unie refused to take up this banner. The pull exerted by the historic colonies was simply too strong, and, should the Dutch acquiesce in the Nazis' Eastern European settlement scheme, they would still be unable to write off the East and West Indies.

The triumvirate's less-than-deferential response neatly encapsulated the Unie's colonial stance. Since its inception in July 1940, the new mass movement had repeatedly emphasized the Netherlands' centuries-old connections with the people and economy of the East Indies as well as its historic role as a mercantilist, seafaring power, sure to retain its vital position as a global intermediary no matter the German occupation or the larger war. More unexpected was the subsequent behavior of Linthorst Homan, who in his

⁶² Such are the implications of the piece "Nederland en Indië: Verhoogde belangstelling noodzakelijk," *De Unie*, March 8, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 29), 10.

⁶³ "Waar wij staan: Verklaring van het Driemanschap," *De Unie*, July 3, 1941 (Vol. 1 No. 46), 1.

capacities as both Unie leader and Royal Commissioner for the province of Groningen (a position from which he was soon “honorably discharged”), refused to let up in his opposition to the Nazis’ “Look to the East” plans. Until this point, Linthorst Homan had been known as the most conciliatory of the three leaders, his previous support for close cooperation with the German authorities and even the Dutch Nazi Party nearly causing a schism within the Unie’s leadership. In July of 1941, however, he confronted the Reichskommissar for his failure to support the Unie and its agenda and his apparent preference toward the Dutch Nazi Party. Linthorst Homan reiterated the Unie’s staunchly anticommunist position and explained that the group gladly would have worked with the Germans to create anticommunist propaganda if asked to do so. But this was a moot point, because according to the Unie leader, the Netherlands could not choose a side in the present conflict between Germany and Russia: As an occupied nation, the Netherlands simply lacked the ability to declare war. Furthermore, should the Dutch people choose to participate in such a war, their actions would have “irreparable consequences for the Indies.” “Both the East and West Indies would be lost,” presumably to the British, who were eager to seize the prized colonial possessions of a German-allied Netherlands. Although Linthorst Homan left open the possibility that the Dutch would participate in the Nazis’ Eastern European settlement program, he could see no real advantage in doing so. Rather, the Netherlands would continue to serve as a western port for Europe and a global intermediary, and the Dutch people were well prepared for their colonies to play an invaluable “bridge-building” role after the conclusion of a peace agreement. For all these reasons, Linthorst Homan boldly recommended that, in accordance with the wishes of the Dutch people, the Germans should allow colonial “development to take its course.” If Linthorst Homan failed to specify precisely what he meant by such “development,” the implications of his argument were clear: German interests would be best served if Seyss-Inquart and company kept their hands off the Dutch colonies.⁶⁴

The points contained in this letter could only have taken the Reichskommissar by surprise. During its twelve months of existence, the Unie had not accused the German authorities of belittling the significance of the East and West Indies, nor for that matter had the Unie indicated any overarching concern with the current colonial situation. Its leaders were more preoccupied with immediate matters, such as German efforts to limit political activities – that is, their own Unie meetings – in the occupied country, or

⁶⁴ Memorandum sent from J. Linthorst Homan to the Reichskommissar, July 1941, Doc I Collection, Dr. Johannes Linthorst Homan, 1063a, NIOD, Amsterdam. A discussion of this memorandum also appears in Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 82–83.

the behavior of Dutch Nazis. Unlike his coleader Louis Einthoven, a former colonial official with long-standing professional and familial ties to the East Indies, Linthorst Homan possessed no obvious connections to the overseas territories. Yet once he felt that the Germans were trying to redirect Dutch colonial ambitions away from more traditional pursuits, he drew a line in the sand. If the Germans wished to acquire new domains, such was their prerogative as Europe's new rulers. However, the Dutch, quite satisfied with their own well-established and well-regarded empire, would refrain from conquering and settling new lands. Launching his protest as one of the leaders of the Unie, Linthorst Homan nonetheless assumed that he spoke on behalf of the Dutch people as a whole: He assumed that the masses similarly considered the empire as essential, indivisible, and, even in this time of war and occupation, enduring. Members of the general public – those same people in whose name Linthorst Homan professed to speak – were obviously not privy to the contents of this letter, nor were they made aware that with this high-minded and confrontational letter, the Unie had provided Seyss-Inquart with a reason to disband the organization. The last issue of its weekly paper, *De Unie*, appeared in early September 1941, and three months later the larger organization was formally banned by the Germans. Still, the Unie's demise did not signal the end of this particular colonial discourse. The leaders of this organization would resume their colonial discussions, first in the hostage camps located in the southern part of the country and then in the pages of the clandestine newspaper *Je Maintiendrai*.

Seen in hindsight, the Dutch East Indies was in an extremely precarious position during the first two years of the German occupation. Formally under the jurisdiction of the government-in-exile, the archipelago found itself isolated from London and forced to strike a balancing act between neutrality and military preparedness. Nor did the situation in the West Indies provide the occupied metropole with particular reason to rejoice. For the Unie, the West Indies scarcely mattered in the grander scheme of Dutch imperial traditions and resources. For Mussert and the Dutch Nazis, the Allies' presence in these territories signified the permanent loss of the West Indies. With the Germans ruling the European Netherlands and the overseas territories imperiled, the leaders of the NSB and the Nederlandse Unie anointed themselves the guardians of a storied colonial history and an even more glorious future. However, as would soon become obvious, neither organization could control the pace and scope of wartime developments, and neither was able to extract meaningful political concessions from the Germans occupiers. Forced to abandon their claims to popular legitimacy and administrative authority, they were also forced to forfeit their titles as protectors of the kingdom. Quite unintentionally, they had left open the door for the resistance.

“Indies Lost, Disaster Born”

The Trauma of Early 1942

On December 7, 1941, Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor, and the following day the Dutch government-in-exile declared war on Japan. These events sent immediate shockwaves throughout metropole and colony alike. Dutch colonial authorities in the colonial capital of Batavia placed the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) on high alert and, as a precaution, rounded up a few thousand Japanese men, women, and children who were then sent to Australia. Speaking in a radio broadcast from London on December 9, Queen Wilhelmina proclaimed her country's solidarity with the British and Americans, pledging to lend any necessary military forces and supplies to her allies as they bravely fought Japanese aggression. She called on all Dutch citizens in the Indies, civilians and soldiers alike, to accept their pure and righteous mission, the success of which she had no doubt.¹ However, despite this rousing call to arms, soon echoing in the pages of clandestine press, public responses in the German-occupied Netherlands evidenced trepidation, fear, and anger. Apparently, the Dutch Nazis were not alone in worrying that the government's declaration of war would force Japan's hand.

During the first weeks of December, civilian and military occupation officials repeatedly noted the presence of a generalized and mounting anxiety concerning the present position of the East Indies. On December 11, for instance, an official of the *Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP* (the Foreign Political Office of the Nazi Party) in The Hague explained that “in spite of all omens” pointing in this direction, the outbreak of war in the Pacific Ocean had come as a great surprise to the Dutch. According to his vantage point, public opinion concerning the queen's declaration of war was clearly ambivalent. Those who traveled in more anti-German circles saw the declaration as a positive contribution to the fight against the Axis powers,

¹ “Proclamatie van 9 December 1941,” in *De Koningin Sprak. Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940–1945*, eds. M. G. Schenk and J. B. Th. Spaan (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 34–35.

whereas others were convinced that “with Holland’s entry into the war in the Pacific, the colonial empire in the Far East has been lost, whether to Japan or to the United States.”² Similarly, a staff member attached to the offices of General Christiansen, Commander of the Armed Forces in the Netherlands, explained that these events overseas had caused many Dutchmen to “begin to doubt whether the present political policy of alliance with England was correct.” In fact, so speculated this military staffer, the Germans could drastically improve their public image in the occupied country if they could convince the Dutch that friendship with Germany was the best guarantee of their economic welfare, now that a Japanese New Order in Asia was in the works.³

By contrast, the country’s leading clandestine publications responded to the events of December 1941 with righteous indignation, directed as much toward Japan as toward those traitors in their midst who vilified the colonial policies of London and Batavia. In its first issue to appear after Pearl Harbor, *Het Parool* placed the blame for the present conflict solidly on the shoulders of the “Japanese officer caste,” which consisted of racist, power-hungry military figures deluded about Japan’s place and mission in the world. In preparation for the coming struggle against this perfidious enemy, the editors of *Het Parool* provided their readers with a crash-course in Japan’s attempts to create its own *Lebensraum* in East and Southeast Asia. As they explained it, contemporary events in the Asia-Pacific region should serve as no surprise, because for decades Japan had sought to secure itself a place in the Indies. In addition to their well-known efforts to establish economic hegemony in the colony, Japanese troublemakers had bribed Indonesian journalists and enticed Indonesian students to come to Japan. They had established an extensive espionage network in the colony and conspired with the extremist opposition in the Indies, even going so far as supplying them with weapons to overthrow the Dutch government.⁴ In essence, the Japanese were cruel, militaristic, and power hungry, and at the same time naïve, primitive, and vastly underprepared for the present conflict. For

² Memorandum, Bericht Nr. 1976/41, December 11, 1941, Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP, NS43, File 328, Bundesarchiv (Deutsches Reich Archiv), Berlin. This discussion of public opinion appears on page 2, under the section entitled “Holland und der Krieg im Pazifik.”

³ Lagebericht für die Woche vom 8.-14.12.41 and Lagebericht für die Woche vom 15.-21.12.41, compiled by the office of the Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlande: Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-22, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

⁴ For this last charge, *Het Parool* specifically referred to the events of the year 1926, a time of localized Indonesian revolts and subsequent Dutch repression. However, contrary to these statements, little proof existed that Japan had, in fact, played a role in these particular events, or that in the decades before the war, the various Indonesian nationalist organizations had received significant material support from the Japanese. Further, the 1926 revolts were the work of Indonesian communists, who, if looking toward any foreign power for material support, would have turned to Moscow, not Tokyo.

these reasons, Japan was bound to be defeated by the far-superior Allied forces. As *Het Parool* graphically explained, “the Japanese tumor” had now burst and needed to be excised.⁵

Writing a few weeks later, editor Frans Goedhart addressed the criticism – voiced not only by the Dutch Nazis but other segments of society too – that the government-in-exile’s actions had irreparably threatened the position of the East Indies.⁶ Citing secret instructions purportedly issued by the German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) to Dutch press correspondents in July 1941, Goedhart argued that Germany, as well as Japan, harbored designs on the Indies. He explained as follows: With the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact in late September 1940, Hitler and Germany formally acknowledged Japan’s sphere of influence to include the Indies, thus writing off the Indies for both the Dutch and the Germans. Yet the same *Auswärtiges Amt* – which, as Goedhart rightfully pointed out, often found itself at odds with Himmler’s police state – had continued to press Germany’s claims, even after the government-in-exile’s declaration of war against Japan. For Goedhart, the implications were clear: Because both Axis powers coveted the East Indies, the government-in-exile was fully justified in its hard-line approach. Goedhart also rejected Mussert’s anti-British posturing and his attempts to position himself as imperial protector. So too were the Dutch people unconvinced by such rabid “fanfare against our imperial politics.” According to Goedhart, 90 percent of the Dutch population supported the government’s alliance with Britain and France.⁷ The Dutch realized that the London and colonial governments had to protect the overseas colonies from any and all threats, and that their leaders, unlike those of Vichy France, refused to bow before the demands of their enemies. The queen and her ministers, not Mussert and his “rotten colleagues,” were the “true guardians of the unified empire.” They were “the voice and the representatives of the Dutch people’s indomitable spirit of freedom, which cannot be broken by oppression.”⁸

⁵ “Het Japansche gezwel gebarsten,” *Het Parool*, December 9, 1941 (No. 30), 2–3.

⁶ “De Positie van Nederlandsche-Indie: Wat Duitschlands bedoelingen zijn. Krachtig Nederlandsch Beleid in het Pacific-Conflict,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 2–3. The handwritten notes of Louis de Jong, Dutch historian and the original director of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, indicate Goedhart alone – as opposed to the regular editorial board of Goedhart, H. B. Wiardi Beckman, Koos Vorrink, Lex Althoff, J. C. S. Warendorf, and Jaap Nunes Vaz – penned this piece of December 27, 1941: Files 74–78 (page numbered 341, indicated as “van de hand van F.J. Goedhart”), *Het Illegale Parool* Collection 185c, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁷ Not surprisingly, Goedhart did not cite his source for this dubious statistic. Not only would it have been impossible to accurately conduct such a poll under German occupation, but it is doubtful that this extremely high percentage of the population supported an alliance with Britain and France at this particular point in the war.

⁸ “De Positie van Nederlandsche-Indie: Wat Duitschlands bedoelingen zijn. Krachtig Nederlandsch Beleid in het Pacific-Conflict,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 3.

As presented by Goedhart and his clandestine organization, the colonial issue was, at its very core, a question of Dutch self-determination. Put simply, the Dutch should be able to control their territories, and even while occupied by the Germans in Europe, the legitimate leaders of the Netherlands were effectively steering a course that allowed them to maintain the sovereignty of the overseas colonies. If Goedhart’s discussion revolved around the Netherlands’ right to rule the colonies, *Het Parool* also simultaneously provided a more critical appraisal of the Dutch colonial past, present, and future. In fact, this other analysis offered the first significant contribution to a self-reflective colonial discourse, which coupled a more objective examination of the Dutch colonial past and a rough series of guidelines for the future. In *Het Parool*’s early contribution to the subject of colonial reform, the Indonesians did not function solely as abstractions or subjects to be acted upon by their colonial rulers, but rather as a people and nation striving for the same rights and freedoms now denied to the Dutch.⁹

Now, weeks after Pearl Harbor, *Het Parool*’s editorial board – consisting of Goedhart, H. B. Wiardi Beckman, Koos Vorrink, Lex Althoff, J. C. S. Warendorf, and Jaap Nunes Vaz – addressed the ever-widening scope of the war against fascism. As had become clear to all, the fascist enemy must be fought in all realms of the kingdom, not simply the European metropole. *Het Parool* remained confident that, if put in the position of having to defend the Indies, the native inhabitants had two major reasons to rise to the occasion: One, leading figures in native society recognized the dangers posed by totalitarian nations and ideologies such as those of Japan; and two, Indonesian nationalists hoped that their supportive attitude during these trying times might bring about the concessions they had long requested, in vain, from the Dutch authorities. Nominally accepting this reasoning, the resisters of *Het Parool* also questioned why and to what ends the Dutch government continued to take for granted this native support: How could the Indonesians be expected to enthusiastically defend the colony when they had learned that nothing was to be gained by cooperating with the Dutch colonizers? With good reason, these resisters explained, the Netherlands had come to acquire a reputation as “the leading and best colonial power.” For centuries, the Dutch had been able to achieve great things in the colonies, and such work had brought them much honor and respect among the native people. However, the Dutch colonial government proved unable to understand that native peoples might desire something other than the blessings of their colonial rulers. It was only natural that the colonial natives would wish to reap the fruits of this colonial system or, for that matter, bear some resentment

⁹ “Naar grooter eenheid van ons rijk. De banden met Indonesië dienen versterkt te worden. Democratiseering van Indië’s staatsbestel is noodzakelijk,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 4. The subtitle of this piece can be translated as “The connections with Indonesia must be strengthened; the democratization of Indies’ government is necessary.”

toward their colonizers. Still, the Dutch failed to appreciate that the nationalist movement and its leaders were largely driven by idealism and fierce love for their country and people.

For the resisters of *Het Parool*, this was an intolerable situation, especially now that the Dutch could better relate to the Indonesians' situation: Struggling under the German yoke, the Dutch knew "personally what it means to be without rights, to lack the freedom to speak and to write, and the freedom to assemble and meet; to be arrested and deported, without formal charges." Admittedly, *Het Parool* acknowledged, this analogy could only go so far, because the Nazi criminals, driven by a particularly deadly type of racism, were oppressors of a far different magnitude than were Dutch colonial officials. Nonetheless, the parallels should be obvious to all. In Indonesia – and *Het Parool* did refer to the colony as "Indonesia" – a "boorish" Dutch policeman could put an end to political meetings of all sorts "simply because one word uttered by a speaker did not please him," whereas natives striving for the most basic of reforms, such as the official recognition of local dialects, could be sentenced to either disproportionately long prison terms or exiled to penal colonies like Boven Digul. These measures, although obviously directed against "dangerous and irresponsible elements" among the Indonesian nationalists, could also be used against more innocent members of society – a phenomenon easily observable in the German-occupied metropole. By extension, so argued Goedhart and company, the Netherlands' hard-line colonial policies had served to isolate the more moderate and serious nationalist leaders and groups, convincing them that lawful behavior and cooperation could reap few rewards. Little wonder, then, that many of these nationalists had turned to extremist ideas advanced by either Moscow or Tokyo and refused to cooperate with Dutch authorities.

This "difficult position" need not define the Dutch-Indonesian relationship, according to *Het Parool*. The time was now ripe for change, especially because the looming threat of war in the Pacific had convinced the Indonesian nationalists that Japan's desire for economic hegemony posed a greater danger than Dutch colonial rule. Indonesians now realized that whereas Dutch colonialism was on a path of democratic evolution that would gradually remove restrictions, a fascist regime would mean the destruction of all freedoms. Furthermore, the most astute nationalists realized that the Dutch needed the help of the native population, and they had shown themselves willing to provide such assistance, that is, if they could obtain long sought-after reforms. For *Het Parool*, initial Dutch responses appeared promising, for the colonial government's recent release of select Indonesian nationalists detained for "political offenses" went a long way toward instilling good will on the part of native nationalists. These developments, although certainly auspicious, merely constituted first steps in a longer, more thorough

process of democratization and reform.¹⁰ If aware of the Indonesian nationalists’ most recent push for a fully functional parliament, these resisters mentioned neither this campaign nor Batavia’s refusal, yet once again, to grant such requests. Had the activists behind *Het Parool* known the extent of Indonesian disillusionment at this time, they might have adopted a more fatalistic approach toward the prospects of future cooperation.

For the Dutch and Indonesians to have any type of postwar relationship, the Dutch would need to adjust their attitudes, and according to *Het Parool*, Dutch colonial officials could lead the way. They would have to raise their expectations of the native population, acknowledging that representatives of Indonesian society had already demonstrated considerable talents and political prowess as members of the Volksraad, the People’s Council of the Indies, or as leaders in the ongoing process of industrialization and economic modernization. Put simply, the Dutch must rid themselves of their superiority complex and be prepared to grant the Indonesians greater autonomy, particularly in the realm of cultural affairs. This “new, fresh spirit” would render impossible the type of grievous treatment as shown toward the Soetardjo Petition of 1936, which was tabled and then rejected by then Prime Minister Colijn and the second chamber of parliament. Responsibility for this new state of affairs would not rest solely with the Dutch, either, for the Indonesian people would also need to lay aside their suspicions of the Dutch government, and they would need to disavow nationalist extremism. Unfortunately, however, current circumstances in Europe precluded immediate action to this effect. Only after the defeat of the Germans and Japanese would it be possible to determine whether a new *mentalité* had taken hold among the Dutch people. Still, Queen Wilhelmina had given the resisters of *Het Parool* reason to believe that this kind of psychological shift was already under way. As evidence, they cited her May 10, 1941, speech, explaining that after the war one of her first tasks would entail “the adjustment of the structure of the overseas territories and the determination of their place in the Kingdom, in accordance with the changed circumstances.” She also professed her willingness “to recognize the desires and views of those people concerned and to carefully consider them.” For *Het Parool*, these statements clearly revealed the queen to be charting a distinctly different path than that of the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹

Following the lead of the queen, *Het Parool* stopped short of endorsing an independent or even fully autonomous Indonesia, but neither did it

¹⁰ “Naar grooter eenheid van ons rijk. De banden met Indonesië dienen versterkt te worden. Democratiseering van Indië’s staatsbestel is noodzakelijk,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 4–5.

¹¹ “Naar grooter eenheid van ons rijk. De banden met Indonesië dienen versterkt te worden. Democratiseering van Indië’s staatsbestel is noodzakelijk,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 5.

rule out this possibility. In fact, at this moment in late 1941, these resisters tentatively and indirectly raised the possibility of a Dutch commonwealth, albeit without referring to this structure by name. Under this arrangement, the Indonesians would be able to manage their own affairs, the Dutch would manage theirs, and the two peoples and territories would remain part of a larger political entity, whatever it might be called. Neither the queen nor the underground activists of *Het Parool* appear to have been particularly threatened by the prospects of Indonesian autonomy. At the same time, they also did not call into question the Netherlands' right to remain in the colony. On the contrary, they envisioned a bright future for all parts of the empire, no matter the reforms instituted. As Goedhart and his fellow editors explained, "there must exist a strong unity between the different parts of the Kingdom, a unity that is based not only upon power relationships, but upon mutual understanding, mutual interests, and a mutually-gratifying and legally-supported feeling of solidarity."¹² The empire would remain one coherent whole, but at the same time, bear little resemblance to the kingdom as it looked in May 1940. By outlining the contours of a colonial relationship founded on mutuality and a sense of shared purpose, the resisters of *Het Parool* offered a foundational contribution to a new critical wartime discourse centering on the Dutch empire and the Netherlands' place in the world. Not only had these resisters broken a mainstream journalistic taboo by expressing sympathy and understanding for the Indonesian nationalists and their cause, but they provided a rough sketch of the future relationship between metropole and colony – all the while summoning the Dutch to draw on their own status as an occupied people.

If the comparison between Dutch colonizers and German occupiers stemmed from present circumstances, the other sentiments expressed by *Het Parool* reflected the prewar position of the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP). Repeatedly throughout the interwar period, SDAP leaders had sought to clarify the party's stance on Indonesian independence. In the 1920s and early 1930s, both the Dutch Communist Party and the radical left wing of the SDAP had advocated unconditional, even immediate, Indonesian independence, a stance neatly encapsulated in their well-publicized slogan, "Indonesië, los van Holland nu!" ("Indonesia, free from Holland, now!"). The SDAP stopped short of this position. After significant internal debate, the SDAP's Colonial Congress of 1930 agreed on a twelve-point program that, in its final incarnation, unconditionally recognized the colony's right to independence and proclaimed that Dutch social democracy would work toward this end. Two years later, SDAP leadership revisited this somewhat vague colonial program, a move prompted by the

¹² "Naar grooter eenheid van ons rijk. De banden met Indonesië dienen versterkt te worden. Democratiseering van Indië's staatsbestel is noodzakelijk," *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 5.

departure of the party's oppositional left wing as well as the ever-worsening economic situation in Europe. Now, Dutch social democrats rejected the idea of immediate, unequivocal Indonesian independence, because independence should be gradual and peaceful, not sudden and potentially chaotic. In both this 1932 statement and its general 1935 economic program, “Het Plan van de Arbeid,” the SDAP called for wide-ranging political and fiscal reforms in the colony, reforms intended to increase Indonesian participation in their national political system and the world economy. However, party leaders also reiterated that such reforms must be carefully considered and implemented, because if the colony were to obtain independence before the Indonesians could develop a self-sufficient and preferably highly industrialized domestic economy, political autonomy would be rendered meaningless. As such, Indonesia would remain susceptible to recolonization by other developed nations.¹³ For these reasons, the SDAP supported the Soetardjo Petition, which advocated democratic reforms to be implemented gradually and within the boundaries of a Dutch-Indonesian union of some sort.¹⁴ The

¹³ Erik Hansen, “The Dutch East Indies and the Reorientation of Dutch Social Democracy, 1929–1940,” *Indonesia* 23 (1977): 59–85 provides a detailed English-language analysis of the party's evolving stance in the interwar period. Hansen, who emphasizes the evolutionary and malleable nature of the SDAP's colonial policy, nonetheless maintains that the Indies “were never a central concern to the party's leadership.” Furthermore, although the social democrats did voice their support for the colony's eventual autonomy, they also feared that the rupture of all ties between motherland and colony would result in massive unemployment at home. As the Depression had already created a precarious economic situation in Europe, the potential loss of industrial jobs at home was to be avoided at all costs. See Hansen, 60, 74–76. Similarly, in his analysis of the colonial policies advanced by the SDAP's postwar successor, the Labor Party (PvdA), Frans van Baardewijk maintains that the “fundamental significance of the colonial question” disappeared with the departure of the party's oppositional left wing in 1932. After this point, only a small number of Dutch social democrats, whether in the Netherlands or in Indonesia itself, concerned themselves with colonial policy: Frans van Baardewijk, “De PvdA van het koninkrijk 1945–1947,” *Het Jaarboek voor het democratische socialisme* 2 (1980): 164–212, with these comments on page 165. Madelon de Keizer, although focusing largely on the postwar period, points to the “fundamental ambiguities of socialist anticolonialism”: de Keizer, “Mission Impossible’: The Intermediary Role of the Dutch Politicians and Journalist Frans Goedhart in the Dutch Indonesian Conflict, 1945–1947,” *Indonesia* no. 55 (April 1993), 113–139, with this comment appearing on page 115. Peter van Tuijl's detailed analysis of party discussions and debates during the pivotal period of 1930–1935 reveals that the SDAP's colonial stance was not entirely ambiguous. Rather, van Tuijl shows that the small group of theorists and planners actively involved with colonial policy worked toward the political and economic development of the East Indies. This group's internal disagreements and its conflicts with SDAP leadership reflected larger contradictions inherent in Dutch – and even European – social democracy and not necessarily a lack of concern for Indonesian independence: Peter van Tuijl, “Koloniaal politiek in crisistijd; de SDAP en Indonesië, 1930–1935,” *Het Jaarboek voor het democratische socialisme* 7 (1986): 44–73.

¹⁴ Susan Abeyasekere, “The Soetardjo Petition,” *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973), 81–108, page 102 for the SDAP's support for the petition.

petition's failure at the hands of the government did not make the SDAP adjust its position, although developments in Europe soon refocused the party's attention closer to home.

In late 1941, when the socialist and left-wing resisters of *Het Parool* called for extensive colonial reform as well as continued Dutch-Indonesian cooperation, they acted solidly within the parameters established by earlier SDAP discussions.¹⁵ Just as the prewar SDAP leadership had recognized that the present economic crisis limited the scope of action for significant political change, *Het Parool* acknowledged that present circumstances precluded any immediate revision of the existing colonial relationship. However, this group of resisters also introduced a new dimension into the leftist discussion of the colony's future. In the 1930s, the SDAP had concentrated on the prospects of autonomy or independence for the East Indies. Now, under drastically different circumstances, the leftist resisters of *Het Parool* raised the possibility of a larger imperial superstructure that would allow Indonesian autonomy while also protecting the historic, economic, and cultural bonds between metropole and colony.

Despite its significance, *Het Parool's* discussion of these subjects went unnoticed by the other leading clandestine publications. In fact, the actual events unfolding in the Pacific theater of war in early December 1941 garnered only scant attention from either communist *De Waarheid* or (at this time) centrist-Protestant *Vrij Nederland*. At year's end, the Dutch communists remained preoccupied with their overarching mission: namely, the creation of a unified, nation-wide resistance front against Nazi oppression. Writing in a local version of *De Waarheid* appearing in December 1941, the Dutch communists – under the leadership of Paul de Groot – prominently condemned Japan's "traitorous, fascist" attack on the United States. They explained that countries from the around the world, including the United States, England, Australia, the Netherlands, and China, had now joined forces to remove the scourge of the fascist aggressors.¹⁶ Here, as

¹⁵ In the early 1930s, Frans Goedhart had been affiliated with the Dutch Communist Party but in October 1934 was removed from both the party and his editorial position at *De Tribune*, the party's daily newspaper. He remained a committed leftist, although he never formally joined either the SDAP or its more radical counterpart, the RSAP. By contrast, both Koos Vorrink and Herman Bernard Wiardi Beckman represented the SDAP in the second chamber of parliament.

¹⁶ "Vijf werelddelen in oorlog," *De Vonk*, December 1941 (Vol. 2 No. 2), 1. Although the main version of the communists' paper was entitled *De Waarheid*, locally produced versions of the paper often bore the name *De Vonk* ("The Spark"). Copies of this publication can be found at the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Amsterdam, Illegale Pers Collectie 556, publication number 938 (Den Haag version).

in subsequent discussions, the communists emphasized the importance of a united Dutch anti-Nazi front, in solidarity with the newly expanded Allied coalition of nations. In January 1942, editor-in-chief de Groot elaborated on the diverse nature of the Allied coalition, which had assembled a broad array of political and social systems: the United States, a “bourgeois republic”; Great Britain, a kingdom and a great imperial power; and the Soviet Union, a socialist state with the most accommodating form of democracy.¹⁷ The communists paid little attention to either the queen’s declaration of war against Japan or the status of the East Indies. Neither the Dutch empire nor the individual Dutch colonies merited further discussion at this point.

Similarly, *Vrij Nederland*, especially concerned with political, social, and religious developments in the European Netherlands, devoted little attention to the East Indies in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor. Writing in January 1942, shortly before the Japanese invaded the colony, *Vrij Nederland* mentioned the East Indies only in the final paragraph of the regular “Foreign Overview” section. This placement was rather intentional, its editors explained: The war in Europe was more important than the war in the Far East, and the Dutch needed to realize that in all likelihood, peace would come to Europe before it came to the Pacific. The resisters of *Vrij Nederland* acknowledged that “our Dutch East Indies, which in the first months of the war already demonstrated their brave spirit, will be one of the main targets of future Japanese aggression.” Still, they continued to hold out hope for the colony. After all, the Japanese would need to claim Singapore and the Philippines before they could attack the East Indies, and the fall of Singapore seemed especially unlikely. Although hesitant to render a detailed analysis of the current military situation for the benefit of its readers, the *Vrij Nederland* organization did wish to point out that in their struggle against the “fiery center” of international aggression and tyranny, the Allies could count on the support of twenty-six countries. Taken together, this alliance totaled “1400 million souls (3/4 of humanity),” all mobilized against Germany, Japan, and Italy. This was a tremendous and unprecedented struggle, but as Queen Wilhelmina announced in her recent speech of December 23, 1941, the Allied victory drew ever nearer.¹⁸ The irony, of course, is that by the time this issue of *Vrij Nederland* saw the light of day in January 1942, the Indies were under attack by the Japanese. Singapore would be attacked on February 8 and occupied one week later. The “1400 million souls” cited by *Vrij Nederland* would be unable to prevent the Japanese juggernaut from seizing the European-held territories in Asia.

¹⁷ “Nationale eenheid voor de nationale bevrijding,” *De Waarheid*, January 1942 (No. 34), 1–4.

¹⁸ “Buitenlandsch Overzicht,” *Vrij Nederland*, January 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 8), 4–5.

WAR COMES TO THE INDIES

Shortly after the occupied Netherlands celebrated the arrival of a new year – a year widely expected to bring the final defeat of Nazi Germany – Japan invaded the islands of the Dutch East Indies. On January 10, 1942, Japanese forces landed on the oil fields at Tarakan, near Borneo. Within weeks of this initial landing, the Japanese had seized the oil installations at Balikpapan in southeastern Borneo and Palembang in southern Sumatra. After quickly securing these strategic positions, the Japanese set their sights on the colonial capital of Batavia, located on the northern coast of Java. On February 20, the colonial government moved from the now-exposed Batavia to the inland city of Bandung, where it would continue to wage war against the invading forces. The Allies' ABDA Command, consisting of American, British, Dutch, and Australian forces under the leadership of British General Archibald Wavell, was to defend a vast area in the region including not only the Dutch East Indies, but Singapore, Burma, and Thailand.¹⁹

News of the Japanese invasion sent shockwaves throughout the occupied metropole. German observers immediately noted the complex range of emotions triggered by the invasion: fear, disappointment, anger, a sense of defiance and confidence in Allied victory. On January 16, Otto Bene, the representative of the German Foreign Office stationed in The Hague, noted a deep depression felt among broad segments of the Dutch population. Both the officially sanctioned (i.e., above-ground) Dutch press and Mussert's Dutch Nazi Party proclaimed the East Indies' entry into the war as unnecessary, and should Dutch forces be defeated in the Indies, the blame would rest with the government-in-exile. Some worried about the economic repercussions of events in the Pacific region, already evident by the falling price of colonial shares in the Dutch stock exchange. However, as Bene explained to his superior in Berlin, the Dutch people as a whole

¹⁹ At least initially, the defense of the colony rested primarily with the KNIL, the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, which at the outbreak of war in the Pacific consisted of approximately 1,400 officers and 40,000 noncommissioned officers and soldiers, with Indonesians and Indo-Europeans constituting over two-thirds of the army. After December 1941, an additional 32,000 conscripts, all Dutch or Indo-European, were mobilized. Their ranks were supplemented with various local auxiliary corps and newly created militias. For more detailed accounts of the events of January–March 1942, see L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 11a, *Tweede Helft* ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1984), and, Deel 11b, *Erste Helft* ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1985); Jan Krancher, ed., *The Defining Years of the Dutch East Indies 1942–1949: Survivors' Accounts of Japanese Invasion and Enslavement of Europeans and the Revolution That Created Free Indonesia* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1996), Appendix I, 257–262; and Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong, *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 29–41; and Kemperman, "Cijfers Japane bezetting, Pacific-oorlog en Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsstrijd," NIOD, Amsterdam.

still remained optimistic that all would end well in the colony. They hoped and even expected that their position in the East Indies would be restored after the war.²⁰ Other German observers similarly portrayed a people struggling to make sense of the news from abroad. In late January, for instance, the Wehrmacht's *Feldkommantur* in Utrecht explained that the European Netherlands had enjoyed ample riches from its colonies for hundreds of years, but now the Dutch widely feared that their stocks, pensions, and other forms of capital, whether in the European Netherlands or the Indies, were gravely imperiled. Former colonial officials, soldiers, and other retirees were especially worried that they would lose their well-deserved source of steady income.²¹ Further, the Dutch were concerned that the Germans were looking to exploit this financial misfortune too, because, as Bene explained in late January, the Dutch suspected the German occupiers of buying up depreciated colonial shares.²²

So profoundly disturbing were recent events that even normally pro-German segments of the population expressed nothing but mistrust and skepticism toward Germany's Asian ally.²³ German observers perceived that, at least for the moment, the Dutch population appeared to be united in their concern for the colony and their support for the Allies. Citing both the Allies' tremendous industrial production and Germany's failures on the Eastern Front, the Dutch were confident that victory belonged to the Allies and that the islands of Java and Sumatra would prove to be decisive

²⁰ Report written by Otto Bene, dated January 16, 1942, to the Auswärtige Amt in Berlin; “Allgemeine Lage in den besetzten niederl. Gebieten,” *Berichte und Meldungen zur Lage in und über die Niederlande, vom 1940 bis 1944*, Signatur R 101102, Fichenummer 2845-2847, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt, Berlin.

Bene's formal title was “Vertreter des Auswärtigen Amtes beim Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete,” and in this position he answered to Martin Luther, the State Secretary of the German Foreign Office in Berlin. Although a convinced Nazi, Bene was actually accorded very little authority within the administrative structure of the occupied Netherlands, and the German Foreign Office was not allowed to craft or enforce occupation policy here. Bene was allowed to participate in Seyss-Inquart's weekly councils, but only in an advisory capacity. Yet despite – or perhaps because of – his limited authority, Bene served as an astute observer of political, social, and economic developments in the occupied country, and he diligently relayed such observations to his superior in Berlin.

²¹ Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 19, *Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht)*, January 29, 1942, and Lagebericht für die Woche vom 23.2-1.3.1942, compiled by the office of the Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden: Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

²² Report written by Otto Bene, dated January 31, 1942, to the Auswärtige Amt in Berlin; “Allgemeine Lage in den besetzten niederl. Gebieten,” *Berichte und Meldungen zur Lage in und über die Niederlande, vom 1940 bis 1944*, Signatur R 101102, Fichenummer 2845-2847, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin.

²³ Lagebericht für die Woche vom 26.1-1.2.1942, office of the Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden; Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 19, *Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht)*, January 29, 1942: Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

battlegrounds en route to this final triumph.²⁴ Such confidence would not last long. By late January 1942, a small but vocal minority of the population began to profess its disappointment with the behavior of their country's supposed allies. With each passing week of the war in the East Indies, the Dutch began fear that the country's "beautiful, rich *Insulinde*" – "Insulinde" being an affectionate and popular term for the East Indies coined by the author "Multatuli" in his novel *Max Havelaar* – would become a spoil of war for the Japanese. According to German military and civilian occupation authorities, the Dutch people had come to doubt the government-in-exile's recent colonial policies, specifically, its December 1941 declaration of war against the Japanese. Consequently, they were now prepared consider a closer alliance with its occupiers but only if Germany would protect the Netherlands' ties with the East Indies. According to these German observers, the Dutch seemed convinced that should Japan conquer the Indies, the Germans could persuade their ally to return the colony to its rightful ruler, the Netherlands.²⁵

As the situation in the Indies worsened from one day to the next, the Dutch people became increasingly despondent. On February 18, 1942, Wehrmacht headquarters in The Hague noted the profound effects of the fall of British-held Singapore a few days prior: The Dutch greatly feared for the future of their *Insulinde* because they now realized that "what the Japanese conquer, they keep."²⁶ By the end of the month, the Dutch appeared to have lost all hope that the colony could be defended from its Japanese attackers. Although some continued to maintain faith in Allied victory, public opinion shortly before the Dutch surrender reflected bitter disappointment and anger with the country's British and American allies, widely seen as unable and/or unwilling to protect the prized colony at this pivotal moment.²⁷

²⁴ Report written by Otto Bene, dated January 31, 1942, "Allgemeine Lage in den besetzten niederl. Gebieten," and Stimmungsbericht (presumably authored by Bene), dated March 10, 1942, both sent to the Auswärtige Amt in Berlin from The Hague: Berichte und Meldungen zur Lage in und über die Niederlande, vom 1940 bis 1944, Signatur R 101102, Fichenummer 2845-2847, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin.

²⁵ Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 19, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), January 29, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg. Similarly, in late January 1942, Otto Bene reported to Berlin a scheme devised by a group of Dutch economists who wished to protect the East Indies from economic ruin: They proposed that Germany conclude a peace treaty with Japan specifying the return of the East Indies to the Netherlands. Telegram to the Auswärtige Amt in Berlin, January 31, 1942, Berichte und Meldungen zur Lage in und über die Niederlande, vom 1940 bis 1944, Signatur R 101102, Fichenummer 2845-2847, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin.

²⁶ Lagebericht, Wehrmachtkommandantur Den Haag, February 18, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

²⁷ Lagebericht für die Woche vom 23.2-1.3.1942, office of the Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden; and Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 20, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), February 28, 1942; both contained in Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

Regardless of who was to blame, the East Indies had been placed in harm’s way, and those living in the German-occupied metropole were powerless to do anything about it.

REFLECTIONS ON DEFEAT, DISASTER, AND REFORM

With the military battle for the Indies in high gear, the resisters of *Het Parool* dealt with other pressing matters closer to home. In mid-January 1942, two of the organization’s intellectual strongmen, Frans Goedhart and Herman Wiardi Beckman, were arrested while trying to escape to London. Two months later, coeditors Koos Vorrink and Lex Althoff would leave the organization as a result of long-standing political and philosophical differences, mostly with Goedhart. Yet even while contending with such internal conflict, the organization continued the self-reflective colonial discourse initiated in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Now they struck an intermediate position between the glorious praises sung by the government-in-exile’s “Radio Oranje” broadcasts from London on the one hand, and the gloomy proclamations increasingly heard around them on the other. In late January, then editors Voorink, Althoff, Wahrendorf, and Nunes Vaz acknowledged that much had changed since their previous issue. With the commencement of the Japanese attack, the Netherlands had become part of the valiant “ABCD front”²⁸ and had thus joined the ranks of the world’s great powers. Countering Mussert’s claims that the Dutch had been left to their own devices, *Het Parool* affirmed that the Allies had rushed to defend the Netherlands as soon as the first shot was fired. This war, however, was not solely about military battles and domestic politics. Rather, the very independence, freedom, and the overseas territories of the Netherlands were at stake. Although confident that the nation would survive this terrible struggle, this group of resisters was also convinced that the war’s conclusion would trigger far-reaching changes. Already the Netherlands had charted a new course for itself: No longer a neutral observer, the small country had assumed a new international significance, and postwar foreign policy would have to take this new position into account. For *Het Parool*, other developments also indicated the shape of things to come. For one, Hubertus van Mook, appointed Lieutenant Governor General of the East Indies in late December 1941, appeared to be an “ardent supporter of Dominion Status.” Speaking before American audiences, he had repeatedly emphasized that the East Indies constituted its own economic unit after May 1940. Further, now that communications and trade between metropole and colony had been severed, local Indonesian administrators and businessmen were left to their

²⁸ That is, the ABDA Command of American, British, Dutch, and Australian forces, also referred to as the ABCD front, with “C” referring to China, which supplied forces albeit not to the extent implied by this name.

own devices, which, as *Het Parool* explained, had endowed segments of Indonesian society with a “piece of emancipation” on which to build later. After the war, the Netherlands would need to grant Indonesia even greater autonomy and control over its own affairs while also keeping in mind its own future position within the world community. Regardless of the precise form of these changes, one thing was certain for this group of resisters: The motherland would never again be able to enjoy the types of colonial profits to which it had become accustomed. In the meantime, the Dutch people should maintain their faith in an Allied victory and the resurrection of a democratic “new order” in the Netherlands.²⁹

In early 1942, however, Allied victory seemed far from certain, at least in the Pacific theater of operations. After the loss of Singapore on February 15, Wavell disbanded ABDA Command, leaving the defense of Java in the hands of Allied naval forces, which then waged the ultimately unsuccessful Battle of the Java Sea. By early March, Japanese forces had landed on the north coast of Java, and on March 5, Japanese forces entered an undefended Batavia. Here, two days later, General Hitoshi Imamura, the commander of the Japanese Sixteenth Army, publicly declared that the colony of the Dutch East Indies had ceased to exist; henceforth, the country would constitute part of Japan’s Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. The formal capitulation of the Netherlands was announced by radio on the morning of March 8, and the following day, General Imamura became the commander of the military administration of Java. All told, the battle for the East Indies resulted in the destruction of nearly all planes, ships, and materiel held by the various branches of the Dutch colonial military in the East Indies. A total of 1,653 naval personnel lost their lives in the fighting, as did 896 soldiers of the KNIL. Nor would these be the only military losses for the Dutch: 42,233 former soldiers would be held as prisoners of war in the East Indies, of whom 8,200 would die. But more was still to come. During the next few years, nearly 100,000 Europeans from all corners of the archipelago would be rounded up and interned; approximately 16,800 of them would die in squalid detainment centers, camps, and forced labor details. Hundreds of thousands of others – Indonesian, Indo-European, Chinese, and Arab – also perished, the direct result of their conscription as soldiers, forced laborers, or “comfort women,” or because of the mounting physical privations caused by the impossibly cruel and remarkably inept Japanese bureaucrats charged with administering the Indies.³⁰

Not surprisingly, the news of this Dutch capitulation triggered an existential crisis in metropolitan society. As the local *Wehrmacht*kommandantur

²⁹ “Onze taak en onze perspectieven: naar een nieuwe toekomst,” *Het Parool*, 24 January 1942 (No. 33), 1–2.

³⁰ Jeroen Kemperman, “Cijfers Japane bezetting, Pacific-oorlog en Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsstrijd,” NIOD, Amsterdam.

in The Hague explained ten days after this monumental event, "for many Dutchmen, the ninth of March was the darkest day of their lives,"³¹ thereby implying that the recent loss of the East Indies was felt on a far greater scale than were the events of May 1940. Confronted with the realization of this worst-case scenario in Asia, the Dutch quickly sought to allocate blame for this unexpected loss of life, property, and national patrimony. They made clear their disappointment with the government-in-exile for offering the East Indies as a senseless sacrifice to Great Britain and the United States, but according to their German occupiers, they reserved their most scathing criticism for the purportedly all-powerful Allies. The Dutch now complained that by failing to reinforce Dutch defenses on the islands of Java, Sumatra, and Malakka, the Allies had denied Java the opportunity to serve as a staging ground for a decisive counter-offensive against the Japanese; Allied military planners and politicians had hardly cared to protect the East Indies. To these ends, in late March 1942, the office of the Feldkommandantur in Utrecht reported that, in response to the RAF's recent bombings of the eastern Dutch city of Arnhem, the Dutch had cynically remarked, "Oh, the British have planes for this, but they had none when it came to help the Indies."³²

In the weeks immediately following the Japanese invasion, German observers had hoped that, at long last, the tide of public opinion in the Netherlands might turn in Germany's favor: When the Dutch realized that their traditional empire was gone, they would accept their place within the German-led New Order and the material benefits to be accrued by German-Dutch cooperation.³³ Yet as the Germans soon realized, they too would see blame for recent events. Even as the Dutch people adjusted to the new circumstances, they continued to see the German occupiers as the instigators of all such misfortune.³⁴ In German opinion, the loss of their most precious colony had only made the Dutch more resentful of their occupiers, to whom they attributed all sorts of sinister motives in these darkest of days. Furthermore, as much as the Dutch might harbor great anger toward the Allies and the British especially, they would change their tune the minute British forces landed on Dutch soil. At this point, their rage would

³¹ Lagebericht, Wehrmachtkommandantur Den Haag, March 19, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

³² Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 21, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), March 27, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

³³ Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 19, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), January 29, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

³⁴ Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 22, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), April 28, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37-23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

turn against the Germans once again, so surmised one especially acerbic commentator.³⁵

If in March 1942 the occupied metropole entered a mourning period for its prized colony, the queen and her ministers struck a more triumphant tone obviously intended to galvanize Dutch subjects around the globe. Even before the official surrender, Queen Wilhelmina extended her personal gratitude to those who had fought the Japanese invaders and proclaimed that the victims of this battle would not have died in vain, for their deaths would help ensure the final Allied victory in both Europe and the Far East.³⁶ Speaking in her first post-capitulation broadcast to the occupied metropole on March 15, Queen Wilhelmina reaffirmed the merit of these sacrifices and strength of the Dutch-Indonesian ties: Never before “have we felt as close to our beloved *Insulinde*” as during this tense time, and never before had the empire been so united. She expressed her great compassion toward those living in the Japanese-held areas, as Japan was an enemy whose cruelty knew no bounds. She wished them strength, and she hoped that they would be able to find comfort in the solidarity between these two parts of the kingdom, now united in their shared experiences of oppression and their desire to evict these foreign rulers. Last, she explained that commanders and sailors who had escaped the Indies were already busy rebuilding the Dutch navy. Fighting side by side with the Allies, they would help ensure that the empire would rise again, stronger than ever.³⁷ For the next few months, the queen repeated these themes, assuring her subjects, whether in Europe or the colonies, that the fight continued, and that the kingdom’s imperial resurrection was both inevitable and imminent.

The resisters of *Het Parool* accorded their queen’s public statements a prominent position, but they also shored up the new circumstances confronting the Kingdom of the Netherlands: namely, a unique double occupation, both at home and overseas. Writing in their first issue to appear after the Dutch defeat in the Indies, *Het Parool*’s editors lauded the fiercely fought battle waged by their brave countrymen and allies in the East Indies and explained the circumstances leading to this devastating blow.³⁸ As they did so, they placed a harsh spotlight on the behavior of their fellow citizens.

³⁵ Lage- und Stimmungsbericht Nr. 21, Feldkommandantur 724 (Utrecht), March 27, 1942, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in den Niederlanden RW 37–23, Bundesarchiv (Militärarchiv), Freiburg.

³⁶ Speech of February 21, 1942 and Proclamation of 3 March 1942, reprinted in *De Koningin Sprak. Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940–1945*, eds. M. G. Schenk and J. B. Th. Spaan (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 39 and 40, respectively.

³⁷ Speech of March 15, 1942, reprinted in *De Koningin Sprak. Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940–1945*, eds. M. G. Schenk and J. B. Th. Spaan (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 41–42.

³⁸ At this point, editors Wiardi Beckman and Goedhart were in German custody, and editorial responsibilities lay with original cofounders Jaap de Nunes Vaz and J. C. S. Warendorf, and three new editors, Jan Meijer, Wim van Norden, and Cees de Groot.

For one, all too many of them had refused to confront reality after the German invasion and occupation in May 1940, and rather than aiming to bring about German defeat, they simply placed their faith in the downfall of the Teutonic barbarians. For these blissfully unaware compatriots, “the awareness that the largest and the most economically important part of the empire remained free from enemy oppression, and that, over there, all forces were working together towards the liberation of Europe, inspired trust and gave them courage.”³⁹ Now that the Indies were under Japanese control, the same people had become dejected and despondent. Most infuriating to *Het Parool* was the rampant finger pointing accompanying these feelings of desperation. Fed by the corrupt above-ground Dutch press and encouraged by Nazi propaganda, fellow citizens accused the British and Americans of making false promises and fleeing the Indies. *Het Parool* did not deny that the military conflict in the Pacific Ocean had been a debacle, for even Lieutenant Governor General Van Mook had seen fit to criticize the way in which this battle had been fought. However, this did not conceal the fact that the loudest grumbling came from armchair observers – people who complained but failed to resist their German occupiers. These do-nothings were content to leave everything, including their own liberation, in the hands of the Allies, and they failed to see that they too bore as much responsibility for the recent military failures as did American and British forces.

Developing this assertion, the editors of *Het Parool* focused on the long-term causes of the present situation. In their view, the most obvious failure was the democratic countries’ refusal to confront the true dangers posed by Japan and Germany. During the 1930s, the Netherlands had chosen to remain neutral toward both countries, looking the other way while Japan armed itself to the teeth and inflicted tremendous suffering on the Chinese. In the face of such developments, The Hague’s decision to fortify the East Indies’ defenses came entirely too late. Even more important, however, both the Netherlands and its British ally had committed the grave mistake of refusing to accommodate nascent nationalist groups in their respective colonies when these groups had petitioned their colonial rulers for greater freedoms and limited self-government. If the British and Dutch had instituted these reforms, they would have assured the loyal cooperation of substantial segments of the native population. The people of the East Indies would have formed “massive people’s armies”; they would have enthusiastically defended their country against the Japanese attackers, and they would have fought “with an élan, commanded only by young nations, defending their newly-acquired freedom.”⁴⁰ Yet perhaps because they lacked clear evidence

³⁹ “Voorjaarsoffensief: ons andeel in den strijd,” *Het Parool*, March 23, 1942 (No. 35), 1.

⁴⁰ “Voorjaarsoffensief: ons andeel in den strijd,” *Het Parool*, March 23, 1942 (No. 35), 1. The expression “jonge volken” translates literally as “young people,” but the connotation here

to these ends, this group of resisters stopped short of declaring that the Indonesian people had failed to support the Dutch during the battle for the colony. Rather, *Het Parool* merely intimated that if the Indonesians had not offered the type of enthusiastic defense the Dutch had expected of them, their behavior hardly would have been surprising. This stance represented an about-face for *Het Parool*, because only three months prior, its editors had expressed their confidence that the Indonesians would rise to the occasion and enthusiastically defend the colony from the Japanese aggressors – a subtle shift, certainly, but one that presaged the shape of things to come from this clandestine organization.

Unlike their clandestine peers at *Het Parool*, the communists of *De Waarheid* did not laud the heroic defense of the colony. Rather, editor and underground party leader Paul de Groot condemned the short duration, futile efforts, and poor military command evident during both the war for the European Netherlands and the battle for Indonesia. *De Waarheid* also issued a scathing indictment of Dutch colonial rule in the East Indies, as events of the past few months had revealed the colonial government of Indonesia to be a house of cards. “Hard as steel” against the oppressed and unarmed Indonesians – that is, those nationalists deemed to pose a threat to Dutch rule – the colonial government was nonetheless “weak as cardboard” when it came to defending the colony against the fascist enemy. The Dutch governments in both London and Batavia had failed to draw valuable lessons from the events of May 1940, as seen by their inability to bring Indonesia to a “sufficient state of defense.” For the communists, this state of defense could have been achieved in one way only: by granting freedom to the sixty million Indonesians. Had the Netherlands done so in May 1940, the Indonesians would have had two years to develop industries that could have been used for the war effort, and they would have been able to form armed militias to defend the country against hostile powers. Because the Dutch had refused to consider such changes, they had to rely on a much smaller colonial army and navy. To be sure, the Dutch had contracted and even paid for American airplanes, but these planes had not been delivered to the colony in time to be of any use. Nor was the Netherlands, a smaller nation, very important to its supposed Allies, the United States and Great Britain. For the Dutch communists, only one great power, the Soviet Union, was prepared to help the smaller nations. In the Soviet Union, people were truly free, and the notion of solidarity between nations actually meant something. Elsewhere,

is of a young nation or even a lesser-developed group of people. In their arguments against Indonesian autonomy or independence, Dutch conservatives were especially quick to cite the “undeveloped” status of the Indonesian people, who needed to be elevated to a higher political, economic, and spiritual level. Because the editors of the leftist *Het Parool* were less likely to employ this type of rhetoric, I have taken their words to signify a newly created nation.

however, “the law of the wilderness” reigned supreme, as the Netherlands had recently – and painfully – learned with its Asian debacle.⁴¹

De Waarheid bemoaned these various failures, which had left Indonesia and its vast natural resources in Japanese hands. Even worse still for these resisters was the accommodating attitude of the colonial administration, which had ensured the continuing production of oil, rubber, metals, rice, and other foodstuffs under the colony’s new occupier. Unbeknownst to the underground communists, however, the highest-ranking Dutch colonial administrators and business leaders, the self-same “Orange imperialists” who would have presided over this smooth transition, had promptly been taken into Japanese custody, where they would spend the next few years. Other communist claims about the newly occupied colony proved to be more accurate and astute. For instance, the communists doubted recent reports claiming the complete destruction of the colony’s oil installations undertaken in accordance with the Netherlands’ scorched-earth policy. *De Waarheid* highly doubted that the Indonesian people, kept in a position of immaturity for centuries, would have engaged in widespread sabotage as demanded of them by their Dutch rulers.⁴² Put simply, the Indonesians had no reason to help the Dutch or even obey this last-ditch command. Here, the underground CPN’s appraisal proved correct: The oil works had not been fully destroyed during the Japanese invasion, and within only a few months of their arrival, the Japanese were able to resume oil production.⁴³

If the “Orange imperialists” deserved to lose their position of authority, the communists also recognized the tremendous ramifications of recent events overseas. For three centuries, the Netherlands had depended on the substantial income derived from Indonesia, and these colonial profits – although inflicting hunger, misery, and impoverishment on sixty million Indonesians and their land – propped up “the power of the reactionary bourgeoisie.” After May 1940, with the ties between the European Netherlands and its colonies now severed, certain segments of society learned that they could no longer count on the vast colonial riches to which they had become accustomed. Although the communists considered this development a welcome step on the path to creating a more egalitarian society, it also delivered a great blow to the hundreds of thousands of Dutch workers whose livelihoods depended on the production of goods for export. Paul de Groot and his underground communist party thus admitted that the loss of the Indies

⁴¹ “De val van Indonesië,” *Het Signaal: Orgaan van de Nederlandse Vrijheidsstrijders*, March 1942, 1–2. *Het Signaal* was an edition of *De Waarheid* specifically intended for Dutch government personnel.

⁴² “De val van Indonesië,” *Het Signaal: Orgaan van de Nederlandse Vrijheidsstrijders*, March 1942, 1.

⁴³ Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong, *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 35–36.

was sure to have a negative effect on the working class in the European Netherlands, which, for better or for worse, was intrinsically linked to the Dutch imperial project.⁴⁴

Ultimately, then, for the communists, the Dutch defeat in the East Indies constituted a hollow victory, merely replacing one colonial power with another. The long sought-after Indonesian emancipation could happen only after the war, once Germany and Japan had been defeated and the world community recognized the Indonesians' right to self-determination. Like all other nations and peoples, the Indonesians were entitled to control their own affairs and reap the benefits of their own labor and resources, and the Netherlands would be wise to acknowledge these rights. In fact, according to *De Waarheid*, the Dutch people confronted but one choice after the war: They had to help the Indonesian people obtain these rights. Further, by extending these rights of their own volition, the Dutch might also ensure that the Indonesian people, now "standing on an equal footing" with their former colonial masters, would be "willing to cooperate with the Dutch in the future."⁴⁵ This position, although seemingly at odds with the CPN's decades-old "independence now" policy, represented the wartime extension of the party's prewar "Popular Front" agenda. After 1935, with the Comintern urging the creation of leftist popular front governments to contend with the fascist threat, the CPN began to temper its calls for colonial emancipation, because the immediate, unequivocal severing of ties between metropole and colony might benefit the fascists. Certainly, the events of early 1942 – one by one, the overseas territories of the Orange imperialists and their bourgeois allies fell victim to the fascist scourge of Japan – only confirmed the soundness of this stance. So, as in the years preceding the war, the underground Dutch communists professed a wait-and-see approach to the question of Indonesian independence. They did not exclude the possibility that Dutch-Indonesian ties might endure well into the postwar period, but for this to happen the Dutch would need to recognize the Indonesians' natural rights to self-determination. On this count, the Dutch communists appeared skeptical but willing to be convinced that their fellow citizens were up to task. First, however, the Allies would need to win the war.

If both communist *De Waarheid* and leftist *Het Parool* paused their resistance struggles to reflect on events transpiring halfway around the world and their implications for the Dutch empire, *Vrij Nederland* addressed the same developments with a newfound vigor and intensity. Throughout January and February 1942, the resisters of *Vrij Nederland* – which at this point in time included left-leaning Protestants as well more Orthodox and

⁴⁴ "De val van Indonesië," *Het Signaal: Orgaan van de Nederlandse Vrijheidsstrijders*, March 1942, 2.

⁴⁵ "De val van Indonesië," *Het Signaal: Orgaan van de Nederlandse Vrijheidsstrijders*, March 1942, 2.

politically conservative Calvinists – carefully relayed the fragments of information they had obtained from various sources. Following the lead of their queen in London, they struck a hopeful and confident tone. In late February, for instance, and even while the Japanese stood “before the opened gates of Australia and our Indies,” they implored their fellow citizens to maintain their faith in the military might of the Allies and the Dutch forces, the Dutch navy in particular.⁴⁶ Naturally, the Dutch surrender forced this group to adjust its message, and unlike *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid*, which blamed the defeat on their nation’s long-standing refusal to grant democratic reforms in the East Indies, *Vrij Nederland* looked to military and geopolitical factors. Specifically, editors Henk van Randwijk, Arie van Namen, and Gesina van der Molen pointed to the intelligence and patience of their Japanese enemy, which had rightfully perceived the absence of a united anti-Japanese front among the Allied powers. For their part, the Dutch had fatally relied on “the politics of a balance of power between the great powers of Japan, England, and America” to maintain the status quo of the colony, whereas their other Allies refused to see the signs pointing toward the terrible events to follow. The only nation to deploy its full power against the Japanese was China, which had proven its ability to slow the pace of Japanese expansion and inflict significant damage on the aggressors.⁴⁷ In other words, Dutch policy makers had simply waited too long to take action of the sort required of them, and their belated defensive measures proved too insignificant to repel the highly prepared Japanese forces.

By pronouncing such harsh criticisms, *Vrij Nederland* appeared to echo the claims of those well to the political right, such as the Indies-based Fatherlands Club and Mussert’s NSB, which had long demanded a strong, well-supported – and, incidentally, strictly European – colonial defense. Yet as they explored the exceptional position of China vis-à-vis European colonies in southeast, the resisters of *Vrij Nederland* touched on the importance of political reform, a subject more fully explored by their leftist counterparts at *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid*. Certainly, the Chinese had proven able to stand up to the Japanese, but unlike British India and the Dutch East Indies, China was a free nation of free people, with a large, well-supported army. By contrast, the native populations of both British India and the East Indies had never learned to fight for themselves; they had never been allowed to. “Was this a mistake in the way the native people had been raised?” *Vrij Nederland* asked, as if the Indonesians were children taught the wrong lesson by

⁴⁶ “Buitenlandsche Overzicht,” *Vrij Nederland*, February 21, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 10), 3–4. Until his arrest in the spring of 1941, Cees van Rij had written this “Foreign Overview” section. Absent information to the contrary, we can assume that after van Rij’s departure from the paper, remaining editors such as Henk van Randijk, Arie van Namen, and, until her own departure in August 1942, Gesina van der Molen assumed responsibility for this and other columns.

⁴⁷ “En thans Indie,” *Vrij Nederland*, April 1, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 13), 7–8.

well-intentioned but naïve parents. Indeed, this group of resisters questioned whether another course of action might have prevented the Japanese victory. For decades, Japan prepared itself to fight the smaller armies Europeans maintained in the colonies, and in more recent years had counted on war in Europe to further reduce the size of these colonial forces. What would have happened, so wondered the editors of *Vrij Nederland*, if instead of these smaller European-led forces, Japan had been confronted with an army of a million men from among the “free Indonesian people”? This native army might not have defeated the Japanese, but it certainly would have slowed the pace of the Japanese advance.⁴⁸ Unlike the communists of *De Waarheid*, however, the editors of *Vrij Nederland* did not associate the creation of this native army with the institution of lasting political reforms, nor did they explain their conception of a “free” Indonesian people. With such criticisms, they simply became another group engaged in post facto colonial hand-wringing: The Dutch as a nation had failed to protect the prized colony and in turn would pay the price.

If in the weeks immediately following the Dutch surrender, *Vrij Nederland* limited itself to such vague condemnations of past policy, the organization soon adopted a more critical stance. In late April 1942, it became the first of the major clandestine publications to describe – and vividly – the postwar relationship between the European Netherlands and the East Indies. This newfound emphasis on colonial matters great and small stemmed not from any editorial change of heart, but rather from the guest authorship of this particular piece. Unlike the paper’s previous colonial writings penned by the editorial board of Arie van Namen, Henk van Randwijk, and Gesina van der Molen, this colonial analysis of April 1942 was written by P. J. Schmidt, another member of the *Vrij Nederland* organization. In this group, Schmidt – or simply “Slot,” the pseudonym under which he authored this piece – was very much an anomaly. He had spent the early part of his career in the East Indies and Bangkok, serving as a correspondent for various Dutch and Dutch-Indonesian newspapers and working in such locales as China, Japan, Canada, and England. While in London, he had been introduced to the pacifist, anti-colonial Independent Labor Party (ILP), an encounter that would prove formative. From 1924 until 1928, Schmidt, since returned to the land of his birth, held a leading position in both the NVV, the socialist-leaning Dutch Federation of Trade Unions (*Nederlandse Verbond van Vakverenigingen*), and the SDAP. So too did he lead the Dutch section of the Comintern-supported League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression, which for a time united leading leftists under the banner of anti-imperialism.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ “En thans Indie,” *Vrij Nederland*, April 1, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 13), 7.

⁴⁹ Piet Hoekman, biographical entry for Petrus Johannes Schmidt, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 8 (2001), 241–248,

Acting in these capacities, Schmidt called on the SDAP to eschew its “bourgeois” politics of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The party’s willingness to work with nonsocialist parties had failed, and the collapse of capitalism was imminent; now was the time for socialist revolution, so proclaimed Schmidt and his leftist opposition. Mirroring that of the British ILP, Schmidt also adopted an overtly anticolonial position, and he urged his SDAP colleagues to pledge immediate independence for the Indies, with decolonization to be effected by force if need be. Speaking before the first and only colonial congress of the SDAP in January 1930, Schmidt took particular issue with the popular claim that decolonization would have an adverse affect on Dutch workers already feeling the effects of the world financial crisis. According to Schmidt, the severing of colonial ties would only hasten the demise of capitalism and thus improve conditions for both Dutch workers and Indonesians alike. Not long thereafter, however, Schmidt conceded his doctrinaire “independence now” position. For the sake of preserving party unity, he lent his support to the SDAP’s Colonial Program of 1931, which recognized the colony’s right to independence, but only if two preconditions could be met: First, the Indonesians themselves must recognize the authority of their new “native administration”; and second, this administration must show itself willing and able to integrate the new nation into the world of “international commerce.” This was hardly a revolutionary position of the kind Schmidt would have preferred, but rather one intended to reconcile Schmidt’s oppositional wing with the rest of the SDAP, which supported more moderate democratic reforms in the colony.⁵⁰

These concessions proved to be of little consequence, because in the spring of 1932, Schmidt’s oppositional group finally broke with the party. He in turn founded the Independent Socialist Party (*Onafhankelijke Socialistische Partij* or OSP). When riots erupted in working-class Amsterdam during the summer of 1934, Schmidt and the OSP urged revolution, a stance that landed him in prison for three months. Upon his release, he merged the OSP with another revolutionary party to form the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (*Revolutionair Socialistische Arbeiders Parti* or RSAP) in March 1935. His leadership of the RSAP was also short lived: In August 1936, he was expelled for criticizing Stalin. Coming full circle, he now returned to the SDAP, holding a number of leadership positions until the German

accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/schmidt-p.html>. The special Liberation Issue of the clandestine paper *Je Maintiendrai* – on whose editorial board Schmidt later served – also contained a brief biography of Schmidt and other leading members: “In het Centrum der Wereldpolitiek,” *Je Maintiendrai*, May 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 21), 7.

⁵⁰ Peter van Tuijl, “Koloniale politiek in crisistijd; de SDAP en Indonesië, 1930–1935,” *Het Jaarboek voor het democratische socialisme* 7 (1986): 47–50; Erik Hansen, “The Dutch East Indies and the Reorientation of Dutch Social Democracy, 1929–1940,” *Indonesia* 23 (1977), 70–76.

occupation.⁵¹ When in July of 1940 the SDAP essentially dissolved itself,⁵² Schmidt moved in yet another direction. Now, he joined the burgeoning *Nederlandse Unie*, that new mass movement seeking to forge a unified, revitalized Netherlands out of the ashes of defeat and occupation. In October 1940, Schmidt became a member of the *Unie's* General Secretariat, where he would focus on socioeconomic affairs until this organization was forced to disband in December 1941. At this point, he went underground, joining the ranks of political activists already engaged in clandestine activity. First working with the *Vrij Nederland* organization, he spent the final two years of the war as an editor for *Je Maintiendrai*, the most centrist of the leading clandestine publications. Schmidt's shift from insurrectionary, radical leftism was now complete.

Writing for *Vrij Nederland* in the spring of 1942, Schmidt returned to the familiar subject of the East Indies.⁵³ Espousing a more moderate approach than that seen during his SDAP days of the early 1930s, Schmidt's analysis nonetheless called for a "reborn Dutch empire," with legal equality between the European Netherlands and the East Indies enshrined in a revised Dutch constitution. Before the war, Schmidt explained, the East Indies remained subordinate to the European Netherlands, whether in legislative, administrative or financial matters; the Governor General was authorized to rule the East Indies by personal decree, with the queen and the minister of colonies in The Hague allowed to overrule the Governor General. In this way, the queen and her cabinet retained ultimate control over the internal affairs of the Dutch colonies. However, if the war now called into question this type of "partial dependency" – which, as described by Schmidt, seems to have been more total than partial – no clear system stood poised to replace it either. To be sure, this Indies question was hardly a new one, but the circumstances of war had pushed it to the foreground. Schmidt explained that, for years, certain voices had proposed a more autonomous Indies, and from these calls there had emerged two streams of thought: the first encapsulated by the slogan "Indonesië los van Holland!" ("Indonesia Free from Holland!"), as popularized by leftist radicals and Schmidt himself during the 1920s and 1930s, and the second proclaiming "dominion status." Schmidt rejected the first option out of hand, as he doubted that after the war the prospects of immediate and unconditional Indonesian independence would suddenly find broad support in either the Netherlands or the colony. Furthermore, he argued, recent events had demonstrated the strength and depth of the

⁵¹ Piet Hoekman, biographical entry for Petrus Johannes Schmidt, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 8 (2001), 241–248, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/schmidt-p.html>.

⁵² For this series of events, see Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 94–97, 99–100.

⁵³ "Nederland-Indië (Slot)," *Vrij Nederland*, April 24, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 13), 7–8.

bonds between the two territories and peoples: Dutchmen, Indonesians, and Indonesian-Chinese had fought, suffered, and rejoiced side by side, and as a result, “even the most persistent supporters of this [Indonesia Free!] slogan have become convinced that the Netherlands and the Indies are not to be separated.” By contrast, the creation of an Indies “dominion” appeared a far more palatable option for Schmidt, convinced as he was that the post-war relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia would bear little resemblance to that seen before the war. If the Netherlands and the Indies were “to stay together” in an “indivisible Dutch kingdom” – an *ondeelbare Nederlandsche Koninkrijk* – then their relationship would have to be a more mutual one.

Importantly, Schmidt did not propose an autonomous East Indies governed by Indonesian political leaders and parties. His days of political radicalism were long behind him at this point, and he had fully disavowed the anticolonial sentiment that had once been his calling card as a vocal leader of the SDAP’s oppositional left wing. Now, two years into the war, Schmidt advocated a more decentralized colonial administration, freed from metropolitan political, economic, and military oversight, but no less in control of the Indonesian territories and its peoples than it had been before 1940. Echoing the claims of colonial administrators and civil servants who in the 1920s and 1930s demanded a greater scope for action,⁵⁴ Schmidt envisioned a scenario whereby ministers in The Hague could no longer dictate the behavior of the Governor General in Batavia, and the Dutch parliament would lose the authority to control the internal affairs of the Indies. If others had achieved only limited results with this quest for heightened local autonomy, Schmidt was now convinced that the Indies would become “the boss of its own house.” To shepherd along this process, he proposed a number of reforms, foremost among them the creation of a *Rijksraad*, or Imperial Council, which would oversee matters of mutual interest, such as foreign policy, defense, and currency. Each of the four parts of the empire would find representation in this Imperial Council, with Schmidt recommending five representatives for the European Netherlands and the East Indies each, and one representative apiece for the West Indian territories of Surinam and Curaçao.

In suggesting this Imperial Council, Schmidt could draw inspiration from the queen’s recently stated intentions to convene an advisory board consisting of representatives from the various realms of the kingdom.⁵⁵ However,

⁵⁴ For further discussion of Dutch advocacy to these ends, see Susan Abeyasekere, “The Soetardjo Petition,” *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973), 98–99, and Harry J. Benda, “The Pattern of Administrative Reforms in the Closing Years of Dutch Rule in Indonesia,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 25 no. 4 (August 1966), 589–605, but 593–594 especially.

⁵⁵ The queen referred to the creation of an imperial advisory board in her radio speeches of July 30, 1941 and April 3, 1942.

his plans also reflected colonial discussions of the previous decade, when political parties in both the European Netherlands and the East Indies advanced the notion of *Rijkseenheid*, or “imperial unity.” Like the Dutch commonwealth idea soon to inspire a new cohort of colonial planners, *Rijkseenheid* remained subject to interpretation. For those on the political right, the term implied an imperial coherence and consistency achieved only by virtue of Dutch civilizing efforts: Without the Netherlands, the Indies remained but a collection of islands, but under Dutch rule, they constituted an essential and indivisible part of a mighty kingdom. Those approaching the topic from a more middle-of-the-road position could claim that an autonomous Indonesia might actually further the cause of imperial unity, presumably because Indonesians bound by less restrictive ties to the metropole might prove more cooperative.⁵⁶ Schmidt cannot be considered a colonial hard-liner diametrically opposed to reforms of any kind, but as he made his case for an array of new colonial offices and policies, he drew on the plans advanced by a motley array of conservative thinkers, such as W. K. H. Feuilletau de Bruyn, a parliamentary representative for the far-right Association for National Recovery (*Verbond voor Nationaal Herstel*). In 1938, Feuilletau de Bruyn had called for the creation of a Rijksraad, which in his view would bolster imperial unity.⁵⁷ Writing in the pages of *Vrij Nederland* four years later, Schmidt neither acknowledged his intellectual debt to Feuilletau de Bruyn or others who thought like him, nor did he argue that this Imperial Council would allow the Netherlands to restore the status quo ante bellum. For Schmidt, the bonds between the European Netherlands and the East Indies had grown stronger as a result of war and occupation, but such bonds needed to find appropriate expression in the postwar period. Accordingly, he was careful to specify that, in his proposed Imperial Council, the East Indies would be represented by delegates chosen by the people of the Indies, not by so-called *Indischgasten*, that is, former colonial civil servants who had since returned to the European Netherlands to enjoy their pensions. Members of this prewar colonial elite, try as they might to resurrect their privileged positions of power, had no place in this new institution.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ By contrast, Dutch leftists, whether in the East Indies or the European Netherlands, tended to avoid this language of *Rijkseenheid*. For this term and its various uses, see Susan Abeyasekere, “The Soetardjo Petition,” *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973), 82fn; and Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten; Vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische archipel* (Utrecht: HES, 1981), 120.

⁵⁷ Feuilletau de Bruyn’s plans called for a larger imperial council than that proposed by Schmidt. He envisioned eighteen representatives from the European Netherlands; eight from the Indies, of which two were to be European; two from Suriname; and one from the Dutch Antilles: Bob de Graaf, “*Kalm temidden van woedende golven*”: *Het ministerie van Koloniën en zijn taakomgeving 1912–1940* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1997), 256.

⁵⁸ “Nederland-Indie (Slot),” *Vrij Nederland*, April 24, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 13), 7.

Such changing of the guard aside, Schmidt remained hesitant to completely overhaul the traditional structures and trappings of Dutch colonial rule. In addition to an Imperial Council assembling representatives from the kingdom’s four territories, he envisioned a group of *Rijksministers*, or imperial ministers, appointed (and dismissed) solely by the queen and responsible to a new fully functional Indies parliament. This new parliament would replace the merely advisory Volksraad first established in 1916. As conceived by Schmidt in this analysis of April 1942, the Governor General of the Indies would no longer be able to issue his own decrees, as his decisions now would have to be counter-signed by one of these Indies ministers. Still, the Governor General would possess wide-ranging authority over the internal affairs of the Indies and would even see the expansion of his power in the colony: Although forced to take into account the views of the Rijksraad, or Imperial Council, the Governor General could act in the confidence that parliament, whether in the Netherlands or in the Indies, would not “rap his knuckles” as punishment for his decisions.⁵⁹ If implemented, Schmidt’s plan would not necessarily have fostered heightened autonomy for Indonesian political actors, but certainly would have granted Dutch officials greater room to maneuver. Schmidt’s conception of political autonomy was a limited one indeed, and his *Vrij Nederland* readers would have had reason to question the extent to which such reforms constituted a departure from established colonial policy. All the same, Schmidt claimed that his blueprint for the political reorganization of the empire both preserved the unity of the empire and recognized the autonomy of its various parts.

Admittedly, Schmidt did not intend his *Vrij Nederland* contribution to constitute the last word on the matter of colonial reform. Instead, he sought to stimulate further discussion of this most pressing topic affecting the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands. Nor were *Vrij Nederland*’s editors either prepared or especially willing to take up his challenge at this particular moment in time. After issuing Schmidt’s challenge to reconsider the legislative and administrative facets of the Dutch-Indonesian relationship, the organization retreated, now focusing solely on present conditions in the newly occupied colony. Weeks after printing Schmidt’s analysis, the editors of *Vrij Nederland* confidently proclaimed that, like Germany, Japan had overextended itself and would be defeated, although there was no way of telling when exactly this would happen. These resisters remained confident that the oppressed peoples in the Far East would soon have the opportunity to “shake off the Japanese yoke.”⁶⁰ With these statements, they also ignored Schmidt’s calls for reform and instead intimated a possible restoration of the imperial status quo as it stood on the eve of the German occupation.

⁵⁹ “Nederland-Indie (Slot),” *Vrij Nederland*, April 24, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 13), 7–8.

⁶⁰ “Buitenlandsch Overzicht,” *Vrij Nederland*, May 8, 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 14), 5–6.

Such was the approach evident in August 1942, when editors Arie van Namen and Henk van Randwijk turned to recent disturbances in British India following the failed Cripps Mission of March 1942. Seeking to obtain from Gandhi and the Indian National Congress public support for the British war effort, Sir Stafford Cripps – recently appointed by Churchill to lead the House of Commons – traveled to India, where he conveyed Britain’s offer to extend dominion status to the colony as well as a new constitution, but only after the Allies had won the war with Indian assistance. The Indian National Congress refused the offer and later that year adopted its “Quit India” campaign of noncompliance. British authorities in India responded by banning the Congress, imprisoning its leaders, and suppressing all protest actions with force. Observing these events from afar, *Vrij Nederland* blamed both sides for these recent outbursts of violence. Britain had long refused to reconsider some of its more conservative colonial policies, and now the Indian nationalists were avenging themselves at the very moment when the maintenance of order was most critical. Although the position held by the Indian National Congress did not represent the majority of the Indian population – or so *Vrij Nederland* maintained – the British were justified in taking decisive action, lest such disruptive behavior impede their war efforts. For van Randwijk and van Namen, these developments half a world away were important not only in their own right, but they also served as a powerful example for the Dutch, who might confront a similar scenario after driving the Japanese from the Indies. Already the Japanese had begun to agitate in the Dutch colony, providing the natives with new self-government, positions of authority, and increased social standing against humiliated white Europeans. As a result of these experiences under Japanese rule, the Indonesian natives could be expected to press their own demands against the Dutch once they returned to the colony, and the Dutch needed to be prepared for resulting unrest.⁶¹ Presumably, too, the Netherlands also needed to ready itself to use force should the Indonesians elect to follow the lead of the rebellious Indians.

However, all was not doom and gloom for *Vrij Nederland*. After all, this was a resistance group, not the Dutch Nazi Party that foresaw imperial disaster lurking around every corner. *Vrij Nederland* coupled its more ominous warnings with inspiring reportage and optimistic prognostications obviously intended to reassure a Dutch public concerned about conditions in the East Indies. In November 1942, *Vrij Nederland* proclaimed “Good News!” for those fellow citizens fearful that the Japanese had granted their German allies a privileged position within the Indies and other Japanese-held territories. Surveying the scene for their readers – albeit without citing the source for such fortuitous pieces of news – these resisters noted that, after an initial “difficult period,” the safety and position of (presumably

⁶¹ “Buitenlandsch Overzicht,” *Vrij Nederland*, August 19, 1942 (Vol. 3 No. 1), 5–6.

European) women had been preserved, with troublemakers subjected to harsh Japanese military punishment. War and occupation might have displaced the colony’s female residents, but these women had since created schools and carved out their own spheres in remote areas, where they were left alone by the Japanese. Fighting continued in parts of the colony, most notably in Java and Atjeh, where Dutchmen and natives fought side by side against the occupiers. *Vrij Nederland* did acknowledge a few reasons for concern. European salaries had been drastically reduced if distributed at all, and interned men – detained for reasons unspecified in this discussion – were being held in cramped conditions and forced to pay the costs for their own internment. None of this boded well for the Dutch, of course. Still, *Vrij Nederland* preferred to focus on more auspicious developments. By and large, the relationship between the Japanese occupation authorities and the population was “good,” and “mutual confidence” existed between the two parties. Contrary to recent news reports issued by “Radio Oranje,” all European men between the ages of eighteen and sixty had not been arrested and detained. The Japanese, *Vrij Nederland* reported, had both created new administrative positions and kept in place existing administrative bodies when and where circumstances allowed; contrary to Dutch fears, they had not employed the services of the “extremist nationalists.” “People have hope and confidence”; and on the whole, the behavior of the Japanese military was “correct.”⁶² In actuality, by this point, all European males in the Indies were either in detention, enjoying their last moments of freedom before detention, or trying to evade the Japanese authorities by hiding in the natural terrain or living an “underground” existence indoors. European women would soon follow the men into these camps and improvised detention centers. The resisters of *Vrij Nederland* probably did not intentionally fabricate or knowingly relay inaccurate information to the Dutch public. In all likelihood, they simply filtered out those news items contradicting their belief in an enduringly united if temporarily occupied kingdom. The prospects of Indonesian collaborators working with their Japanese occupiers, just as Mussert and his NSB willingly offered themselves up to the Germans, might have been too much to bear.

If P. J. Schmidt distanced himself from his earlier radicalism, so did *Vrij Nederland* distance itself from Schmidt’s analysis of April 1942, which recognized the fundamental shifts triggered by war and occupation. Seen in retrospect, the organization’s ambivalent stance during this period may have stemmed from logistical problems. In June 1942, the paper’s editors, with the exception of Arie van Namen, were arrested by German authorities and detained for a period of four weeks. The Germans, apparently unaware that they had apprehended nearly the entire editorial board of *Vrij Nederland*,

⁶² “De Toestanden in Nederlandsch-Indie: Goed nieuws!” *Vrij Nederland*, November 2, 1942 (Vol. 3 No. 4), 3.

released their prisoners shortly thereafter. However, in prison, coeditor Gesina van der Molen had decided to leave the paper because of her religious and philosophical differences with editor Henk van Randwijk. A few months later, the paper's leading distributors defected and joined van der Molen in the production of a new paper, the conservative Calvinist *Trouw*. Accordingly, the summer and fall of 1942 constituted an especially trying time for the *Vrij Nederland* organization, and a reversion to more tried-and-true colonial sentiments might have presented the path of least resistance for young resister Arie van Namen, manning the helm of *Vrij Nederland* by himself. Put differently, danger and confusion, not ideological schizophrenia, may have created a more conservative position by default. This would not last for long. After the queen's pivotal December 7, 1942, speech, *Vrij Nederland* would place itself solidly on the side of colonial reform.

Writing nearly thirty-five years after the war, Dutch historian Louis de Jong noted that, until the queen's speech of December 1942, the clandestine press had little to say about the relationship between the Netherlands and the East Indies. Similarly, Willem Schermerhorn – the first postwar prime minister of the Netherlands and, later, the chair of the Dutch delegation sent to negotiate with the newly declared Republic of Indonesia – stated that the colonial discussions in the clandestine press began only in early 1943, that is, after the December speech.⁶³ Undoubtedly, the queen's speech of December 7, 1942, exerted a formative influence in the occupied Netherlands, where resisters of all political stripes seized on it as evidence of a new colonial policy. Yet it was not the occasion of this particular speech, but rather the events of early 1942 that forced clandestine thinkers, writers, and planners to turn both eastward and inward. Poorly defended and consequently defeated, the precious East Indies were now subjected to a humiliating foreign occupation. If the familiar prophesy of “Indies lost, disaster born” implied a catastrophic collapse of the European Netherlands, the resistance envisioned a far different outcome for the kingdom and its peoples. Out of this unexpected and tragic dual occupation would emerge a more unified but drastically changed empire, with arbitrary and autocratic rule replaced by administrative autonomy and representative government in the Indies. For these clandestine groups, disaster had already presented itself in German and Japanese form, and reform, even rebirth, lay in store. The Dutch simply needed to draw the appropriate lessons from the debacle of 1942.

⁶³ L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 9, Tweede Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979), 1065; Willem Schermerhorn “Nederlandsche Indië of Indonesië. Illusie en werkelijkheid over Nederland- Indonesië,” in *Visioen en werkelijkheid: de illegale pers over de toekomst der samenleving*, eds. Bert Bakker, D. H. Couvée, and Jan Kassies (Den Haag: Bert Bakker/Daamen, 1963), 166.

Mutuality, Equality, and the Commonwealth

The Queen's Speech of December 7, 1942

Whereas Dutch resisters considered the prospects of imperial rebirth from their perspective as an occupied people – or, as some of them would have it, subjects in a new Nazi empire – exiled politicians and policy makers conceived of their respective empires in a distinctly global context. Whether in London or dispersed throughout their overseas territories, these exiles maintained closer contact with one another than did, for instance, French and Dutch resisters, who by and large showed little interest in transnational anti-resistance efforts. Further, according to historians Paul Sorum and Andrew Shennan, metropolitan French resisters were not especially concerned with their nation's colonies.¹ The same could not be said for their leaders in exile. The final year of the war, in fact, saw a flurry of empire-related activity, much of it centered on the prospects of a new French federation. On January 30, 1944, General Charles de Gaulle opened the Brazzaville Conference assembling representatives from both his Free French government-in-exile and the French colonies in Africa. The agenda for this imperial conference contained a slate of potential political, economic, and social reforms to be implemented in “black Africa” after the coming Allied victory. By the time of the Brazzaville Conference, other realms of the French empire had already been provided a glimpse into their possible future. On December 8, 1943, de Gaulle's government-in-exile – the French National Liberation Committee, or CFLN – publicly promised the people of French Indochina “a new political status” within some type of “federal organization.” This yet-to-be-determined structure would grant the Indochinese new liberties and opportunities, such as access “to all forms of employment and public offices in the Empire,” but “without losing the original stamp of the Indo-Chinese civilization and traditions.” Speaking in Constantine, Algeria, four

¹ Paul Sorum, *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 30; and Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940–1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 35–36.

days later, de Gaulle sent further shockwaves throughout the French empire. Now, he announced the CFLN's decision not only to increase the proportion of Muslims serving in local assemblies and administrative positions, but also to grant French citizenship to tens of thousands of Algerian Muslims.² In essence, he held out the promises of a kind of junior citizenship, to be bestowed on select Algerian subjects deemed deserving of this new status.³

The French empire, so it seemed, had turned a new, more inclusive and democratic page, and at the Brazzaville meeting of January 1944, de Gaulle was only too pleased to reinforce these impressions. Speaking before the bevy of administrators and officials gathered in the capital of French Equatorial Africa, de Gaulle lauded the "immortal genius" of France, which sought to "raise men towards the summits of dignity and fraternity where, some day, all will be able to unite." This glorious nation needed a new colonial policy, one that would do justice to the tremendous bond unifying metropolitan France and its imperial territories. Even in France's darkest moment, the populations of these overseas lands remained unfailingly loyal to mother France, and now, de Gaulle intimated, they would see their loyalty rewarded in the form of a newly revitalized colonial policy. France, he assured his listeners, had drawn "appropriate conclusions" from wartime developments and remained ardently committed to the process of renewal.⁴

Yet with few exceptions – among them René Pleven, the CFLN's commissioner of colonies, who both planned and presided over the imperial meeting – conference participants proved unwilling to consider the type of far-reaching reforms implied by de Gaulle's grandiose rhetoric. The official Conference Declaration generated after ten days of debate and discussion reaffirmed long-standing ideologies and practices, such as the traditional policy of assimilation governing relations between metropolitan French and colonial populations. Further, France's continued "civilizing mission" explicitly precluded "any idea of autonomy" and "all possibility of evolution outside the French bloc," as well as "the eventual establishment of self-government in the colonies, even in a distant future."⁵ Yet at the same

² English-language versions of the public statements issued by both de Gaulle and the CFLN appear in "Gen. de Gaulle and Moslems: Increased Rights in North Africa," *The Times* (London), December 13, 1943, 3; Henri Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian Empires 1919–1963*, transl. Stephan de Vos (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 125; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 415.

³ I would like to thank one of my anonymous readers for suggesting this notion of "junior citizenship."

⁴ De Gaulle's opening speech cited in Paul Clay Sorum, *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 27.

⁵ As cited and discussed by Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940–1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 147; Martin Shipway, *The Road to War: France and Vietnam, 1944–1947* (Providence, Rhode Island: Berghahn Books, 1996), 35; and Martin

time, Brazzaville also raised the prospects of a new federal structure, which would gather all imperial territories into one political unit. Under this arrangement, these individual territories would not constitute autonomous regions, free to act independently of the metropolitan center, nor would all imperial subjects automatically receive French citizenship. Rather, and in keeping with de Gaulle's previous commentary to this effect, the French would grant provisional citizenship to select individuals and groups. The highly vexed task of actualizing these proposed changes would rest with the postwar *Assemblée Nationale Constituante*. Indeed, in 1946, the constitution of the new Fourth Republic called into being a "French Union" assembling the territories of the empire into one overarching structure, although this arrangement remained subject to debate, revision, and negation well into the postwar period.

Seen in retrospect, Brazzaville may not have been the watershed moment envisioned by Pleven and other like-minded officials, but it also cannot be discounted as an empty gesture toward reform. At that time, Brazzaville's recommendations appeared to indicate a new colonial policy, or at the very least, a willingness to consider new forms of imperial governance. According to Martin Shipway, the wartime conference and its declaration came none too soon for France. If the French were to assuage their American and Soviet allies – each perceived to be anti-imperialist in starkly different ways, and each expected to lead the new world order established after the war – then they would need to act quickly, especially because leaders of other empires had already made their plans known.⁶ In this regard, the British seemed to lead the way. Since 1907, the self-governing territories of Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, and New Zealand had constituted "dominions" in the British empire, with the Union of South Africa later joining their ranks. During the course of the next thirty years, the empire itself would be reborn as "the British Commonwealth of Nations," or simply "the British Commonwealth," and with the 1931 Treaty of Westminster, the dominions received constitutional autonomy within the boundaries of this commonwealth. During the interwar period, India remained excluded from the commonwealth club but nonetheless saw the implementation of various reform measures – the most notable being the Government of India Act of 1935 – intended to heighten local autonomy, or in British parlance, "responsible government." Most recently, of course, London had offered India dominion status, but the failure of the Cripps Mission in March 1942, coupled with

Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 88–89.

⁶ Martin Shipway, *The Road to War: France and Vietnam, 1944–1947* (Providence, Rhode Island: Berghahn Books, 1996), 20, 28; Martin Shipway, "Reformism and the French 'Official Mind': The 1944 Brazzaville Conference and the Legacy of the Popular Front," in *French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front*, eds. Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan Press, 1999), 144.

the violence seen in its wake, halted its plans for a multiracial commonwealth, at least for the time being.⁷ Such difficulties aside, the British commonwealth continued to impress French and Dutch imperial planners, who sought the same successful blend of diversity and unity, localized autonomy and central authority.

French policy makers apparently also believed that Queen Wilhelmina had pledged to turn the Dutch empire into a commonwealth. Thirteen months before French officials descended on Brazzaville, the Dutch queen had issued her own groundbreaking statement, and like the French imperial conference, it too acquired semimythical status. For contemporary observers and postwar scholars alike, the queen's December 7, 1942, speech revealed a new colonial trajectory, in particular, the Netherlands' attempt to refashion itself in the image of Britain. Yet contrary to persistent claims, the queen neither offered nor promised to create a Dutch commonwealth out of the historic empire; she did not present herself as a one-woman Cripps Mission, extending dominion status to the East Indies. Rather, during the course of the radio broadcast from London, she reiterated her intentions to convene an imperial conference after the war and consider the prospects of imperial reform. She stated that she could envision a Dutch commonwealth uniting the four realms of the kingdom in one harmonious whole, but she committed neither herself nor her government to any precise course of action. She did not promise colonial autonomy or independence to the overseas territories, but she did not explicitly reject them, unlike those French officials assembled in Brazzaville. In comparison to the various schemes and proposals hatched before the war, or for that matter, in the spring of 1942, when P. J. Schmidt, that former leftist radical turned *Vrij Nederland* writer, detailed his plans for an imperial parliament, the queen's statement appeared obscure and ambiguous. In the words of Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, the speech was simultaneously "more than window dressing and less than a program."⁸ Like the Brazzaville Declaration of early 1944, it reflected competing claims and countless points of tension, and it allowed listeners to make of it what they wished.

The fifteen-minute address that came to be known as the queen's December 7, 1942, speech was actually delivered at 8:45 P.M. London time on December 6, but by the time of BBC's "Radio Oranje" broadcast, the following day was already upon listeners in the East Indies. Because the

⁷ Concise histories of the British commonwealth include John Darwin, "A Third British Empire? The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, volume eds. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 64–87, and James Sturgis, "What's in a Name? A Perspective on the Transition of Empire/Commonwealth, 1918–1950," *Round Table* 83, issue 334 (April 1995), 191–205.

⁸ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 416.

speech was intended to coincide with the first anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, popular memory has conflated these two dates. Commemorating this “treacherous attack,” the queen defended her decision to declare war on Japan, which was part of her government’s efforts to forestall Japanese military action against the East Indies. Although the colony had since been occupied, Wilhelmina rushed to assure her people that Japan had been pushed to its limits. Its downfall was imminent, despite whatever propaganda for its “so-called new order” it heaped on the East Indies. Brave men from both the Netherlands and the East Indies continued the fight, on land, at sea, and in the air; their actions and accomplishments would restore peace to the region and, in the process, create “a new and better future” for their country and people. Continuing along these lines, the queen set her sights on the Netherlands’ imperial future, devoting particular attention to the relationship between the European Netherlands and the East Indies. As she explained to her subjects far and wide, these two realms of the kingdom had been poised to collaborate “on the basis of equality” when war broke out in Europe. The traumatic events of the previous two years had not destroyed the bonds that existed between metropole and colony, but rather had only strengthened them. Both realms of the kingdom experienced the agony, distress, and bitterness caused by foreign occupation, thereby strengthening the “mutual understanding” and “ages-old historical solidarity” between the two territories and peoples.

To these ends, the queen reiterated her plans, as declared earlier this year, for a postwar conference consisting of representatives from all four realms and vested with the task of adapting the structure of the kingdom in accordance with the “changed circumstances” of recent years. She explained that the three overseas realms of the kingdom – the East Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao – had already begun to prepare for this conference when the Japanese invasion of the East Indies put a halt to this process. Conference preparations could only resume when “everyone will be able to speak his mind freely.” In the meantime, however, the queen was willing to address imperial political matters, albeit only in general contours as “it would be neither right nor possible” to define the precise form of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at this particular moment in time. In her view, the political reconstruction of both the kingdom as a whole and the relationship between the Netherlands and its overseas territories needed to account for the “natural evolution” toward mutual cooperation and respect; the notion of “complete partnership” represented the culmination of this trajectory toward mutuality and cooperation. However, such cooperation needed to be strictly voluntary, because, as she explained, “no political unity nor national cohesion can continue to exist if it is not supported by the voluntary acceptance and the faith of the great majority of the citizenry.” Queen Wilhelmina was confident that her people in both the European Netherlands and the Indies recognized that “the best guarantee for the recovery of their peace and happiness” lay in

this increasing drive toward cooperation. After all, a political entity founded on these principles would not only be in keeping with the Dutch people's history and values, but it would help realize those goals for which the Allies were fighting, as embodied, for instance, in the Atlantic Charter. Then, in what would become the most cited and misunderstood line of the speech, the queen sketched a rough outline of this "political unity" as she imagined it might materialize after Allied victory. Careful to note that she could not speak for the members of the pan-imperial conference yet to be convened, she nonetheless envisioned they might recommend a "Commonwealth in which the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam and Curaçao will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct for each part regarding its internal affairs, but with the readiness to render mutual assistance." For the queen, this "combination of independence and collaboration" would provide both the kingdom and its individual territories with "the strength to carry fully their responsibility, both internally and externally." Such an arrangement would "leave no room for discrimination according to race or nationality," as "only the ability of the individual citizens and the needs of the various groups of the population will determine the policy of the government."⁹

With this commentary, the queen did not commit herself or her government to the creation of a Dutch commonwealth, nor did she explicitly mention granting dominion status, autonomy, or independence to the overseas colonies. She did not provide a detailed blueprint for future political reform; she did not specify how this commonwealth might function in practice. Nor did she and her government-in-exile spend the rest of the war-time years promoting its creation, either. If de Gaulle's French Provisional Government "played the key role in sustaining momentum behind the idea of an imperial federation"¹⁰ hatched at the Brazzaville Conference, the same could not be said for Queen Wilhelmina and her collection of ministers. Rather, in the Dutch case, the task of promoting reform and federation fell to the underground political activists in the German-occupied Netherlands, who believed the queen's December speech to contain the promise of both Indonesian autonomy and a new Dutch commonwealth. After December

⁹ The Dutch-language version of this speech appears in *Koningin Sprak: Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940-1945*, eds. M. G. Schenk and J. B. Th. Spaan (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 54-57. At the time, a complete English-language translation of the speech, accompanied by a detailed commentary, appeared in the *Netherlands News*, an English-language bulletin issued twice a month by the Netherlands Information Bureau in New York City: "Details of the New Commonwealth of the Netherlands, Indonesia, Curaçao, and Surinam, as Envisaged by H. M. Queen Wilhelmina," *Netherlands News* (Vol. 5 No. 3), November 26/December 10, 1942, 103-109.

¹⁰ As noted by Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 151.

1942, the clandestine organizations, and indeed all those concerned with the Netherlands' imperial future, would situate their discussions within the context of this speech, regardless of whether they considered it a means to effect positive change or a dangerous experiment sure to harm Dutch interests. Resisters in the German-occupied Netherlands took these statements at face value, and they fully expected the queen to follow through on what they perceived to be solid declarations of intent.

COLONIAL REFORM IN A TIME OF WAR

Since its arrival in London in May 1940, the Dutch government-in-exile repeatedly declared that, after the war, it would revisit and revise the traditional administrative structure of the Dutch empire. In a speech broadcast on May 10, 1941, for instance, the queen announced her intentions to both reconsider "the structure of the overseas territories" and determine "their place in the Kingdom in light of the changed circumstances." Two months later, she publicly reaffirmed this commitment, now stating that her government would undertake "a revision of the Constitution, with a view to bringing about changes in the Netherlands proper as well as in the relation between the constituent parts of the Kingdom as a whole." She announced the creation of an advisory committee including representatives from all realms of the kingdom, which would help plan "a sound and happy future for the entire Kingdom."¹¹ The Kingdom of the Netherlands might still be at war, but the queen and her government-in-exile appeared committed to instituting far-reaching changes in the coming years, or so it seemed in the summer of 1941. Perhaps, at long last, the metropolitan government intended to heed the calls of cooperationist Indonesian nationalists, who for decades had pushed the Dutch to grant moderate, incremental reforms.

In calling for this postwar imperial conference, the queen drew on the precedent provided by the Soetardjo Petition of July 1936, which requested the convening of a conference intended to address the granting of Indonesian autonomy. Tabled for years by the Dutch government, the Soetardjo Petition met its end by royal decree only in November 1938. Yet now, a few years later, and under radically different circumstances, the queen and her ministers returned to this ill-fated petition, specifically to its call for a pan-imperial

¹¹ Radio speeches of May 10, 1941, and July 30, 1941 reprinted in *De Koningin Sprak. Proclamaties en radio-toespraken van H.M. Koningin Wilhelmina gedurende de oorlogsjaren 1940-1945*, eds. M. G. Schenk and J. B. Th. Spaan (Utrecht: Ons Vrije Nederland, 1945), 20-23, 25-27. The latter speech was also reprinted in London's *Vrij Nederland* (not to be confused with the clandestine publication in the German-occupied Netherlands, also bearing the same name), issued by the information service of the government-in-exile as a means of conveying Dutch-language news to expatriates, exiles, and members of the armed forces throughout the world: "Radio-rede van H.M. de Koningin," London *Vrij Nederland*, August 9, 1941, 35.

conference. In London, Minister of Colonies Charles Welter, who only a few years prior had overseen the rejection of the Soetardjo Petition, reversed course. He was prompted to do so by his trusted advisor, W. G. Peekema, a legal expert and a former Dutch advisor to the Volkraad, who had long urged the minister to consider the possibility and even necessity of Indonesian autonomy. As he had done before the war, Peekema argued that the political status quo in the Indies could not be maintained *ad infinitum*, and the Dutch needed to surrender some of their authority. Now, with metropolitan Holland occupied by the Germans and the East Indies confronting its own threats, Peekema's advice finally took hold. Accordingly, in the fall of 1940 Minister Welter and Peekema resurrected Soetardjo's calls for an imperial conference, to be convened after the war with the express purpose of advising the queen and her government as they reorganized the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Until his resignation in November 1941, Welter continued to push these plans for an imperial conference, even presenting them before the Volksraad during his visit to the Indies in the spring of 1941. In doing so, he encountered the opposition of other cabinet members and colonial administrators, who urged the minister to adopt a more cautious and circumspect approach. In the eyes of his critics in both London and Batavia, Minister Welter had acted unilaterally when he announced an unnecessary imperial conference. H. J. Levelt, Batavia's Volksraad Delegate for General Affairs, expressed one popular criticism of this proposed conference: The Indonesians simply did not understand the problems inherent in constitutional reform, and so negotiations between Dutch and Indonesians would prove fruitless. In his view, the Indonesians were not Indians, who had proven themselves able to understand and work with their British rulers on complex political and legal matters.¹²

Laying aside such objections, the queen publicly ascribed to Welter's conference plan. On January 27, 1942 – that is, during the Japanese invasion and battle for the East Indies – she released the aptly titled “Statement of the Netherlands Government Announcing the Calling of a Post-War Reconstruction Conference Composed of Representatives from All Parts of the Kingdom,” which reiterated her commitment to a postwar imperial

¹² Cees Fasseur, “Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942,” in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Aanroij et al. ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979), 267–281, pages 268–269 especially. A slightly revised English-language version of this signal article has appeared as Fasseur, “A Cheque Drawn on a Failing Bank: The Address Delivered by Queen Wilhelmina on 6th/7th December 1942,” *The Low Countries History Yearbook (Acta historiae Neerlandicae)* 15 (1982): 102–116. Unless otherwise noted, I have cited the original Dutch-language analysis. See also the following discussion of Peekema's reformist stance and efforts: Susan Abeyasekere's *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch 1939–1942*, Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 5 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1976), 58–61.

conference. Presumably in response to the criticisms launched by members of her government, she defended the necessity and evolutionary nature of colonial reform. The present political structure of the kingdom, she explained, was founded on the constitutional revision of 1922, which turned colonies into “overseas territories” and bestowed “equal standing” to each of the four component parts of the kingdom. In the years since then, the overseas territories and the East Indies in particular had undergone an unusually rapid “spiritual and material development.” Now that the territories had proven themselves able to stand on their own two feet, the queen would convene a postwar conference “in order to prepare the way for carrying through political reforms.” She did not refer to the ill-fated Soetardjo Petition, and she did not elaborate on her specific reasons for revisiting the issue four years after her government rejected the petition. She referred to even more recent developments: The governors of the overseas territories had provided excellent leadership and “spiritual energy,” even as the circumstances of war and occupation in Europe necessitated the severing of ties between the various component territories of the kingdom. At the same time, she lent concrete form to the imperial conference idea by specifying its precise structure. The European Netherlands and the East Indies were to be represented by fifteen (appointed) delegates apiece, whereas the territories of Surinam and Curaçao would each have three delegates, also appointed. Further, and despite the fact that the East Indies was presently at war against invading Japanese forces, the queen assured her subjects that the government-in-exile and colonial administrators overseas were hard at work selecting their respective delegates, whose names would be announced shortly.¹³ In reality, the colonial government in Batavia had far more pressing matters with which to contend than the appointment of representatives for a potential round-table conference, especially one that might occur years on the horizon. However, while the Japanese and Dutch forces fought for control of the East Indies, the queen and her government refused to contemplate the possibility of Japanese victory. Reform would proceed apace, as London intended it to.

The queen’s comments – and, more specifically, the timing of her comments – concerning this imperial conference were not the only evidence of a disconnect between London and the East Indies. During the period of May 1940 to January 1942, the government-in-exile had issued one lofty

¹³ “Rijksconferentie na den oorlog: voor aanbevelingen tot staatkundige hervorming,” *London Vrij Nederland*, January 31, 1942, 23; “Statement of the Netherlands Government Announcing the Calling of a Post-War Reconstruction Conference Composed of Representatives from All Parts of the Kingdom,” in *War and Peace Aims of the United Nations*, September 1, 1939–December 31, 1942, ed. Louise W. Holborn (Boston: World Peace Organization, 1943), 512–513; and the Netherlands Information Bureau’s *The Netherlands Commonwealth and the Future: Important Statements of H.M. Queen Wilhelmina on Post-War Aims* (New York: The Netherlands Information Bureau, 1945), 9–10.

proclamation after another, lauding the bonds that existed between the various realms of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and pointing the way toward a more cooperative, harmonious future. Administrators in the East Indies were not sold on these plans and promises. Isolated from their metropolitan leaders and confronting the very real threat posed by Japan, Dutch authorities tightly guarded their own authority. Governor General Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer declared martial law throughout the archipelago, and his police forces continued to arrest, detain, and isolate nationalists deemed dangerous. Particularly disturbing was the fate of Volksraad member Mohammed Hoesni Thamrin, accused of working with Japanese agitators and arrested during a January 1941 sweep netting a number of well-known Indonesian nationalists. By this point, Thamrin counted among the most recognizable of nationalists, having grown to prominence in a number of cooperative organizations and causes. Beginning in 1939, his Indonesian Political Federation, or GAPI, spearheaded the campaign for a full-fledged Indonesian parliament, and in the summer of 1940 he introduced into the *Volksraad* a proposal requesting that the word “Native” (*Inlander*, or *Inlands*) be replaced with “Indonesian” (“*Indonesiër*,” or “*Indonesisch*”) on all official government documents.¹⁴ On January 6, 1941, Dutch police placed Thamrin and two others under house arrest, all three accused of spying for the Japanese. Five days later, Thamrin was dead. At the time of the house arrest, Thamrin had already been quite ill, and no evidence pointed to foul play on the part of the colonial authorities.¹⁵ All the same, Thamrin’s death only further damaged an already tense relationship between colonial authorities and Indonesian nationalists.

These developments were especially troubling to those cooperative nationalists who, after the German invasion of the European Netherlands in May 1940, had both rushed to proclaim their solidarity with the Dutch in their hour of need and placed a moratorium on nationalist political agitation. Surprisingly, too, even nationalists of a distinctly less cooperationist bent, such as the interned Sukarno, declared their opposition to fascism during these heady May days, gestures that were warmly received by colonial administrators and communities. Yet neither these feelings of solidarity nor the moratorium on political agitation lasted very long. In return for their professions of support and cooperation, the Indonesian

¹⁴ Susan Abeyasekere, *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch 1939–1942*, Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 5 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1976), 55–57.

¹⁵ One of the detained men was soon freed, but a third remained in custody. M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 231; Paul W. van der Veur, *The Lion and the Gadfly: Dutch Colonialism and the Spirit of E.F.E. Douwes Dekker* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2006); 571–573; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 11A, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1984), 571–576.

nationalists expected a more amenable climate for reform, and they used this opportunity to advance their own decades-old and, by all accounts, fairly moderate goals. In August 1940, the Volksraad opened debate on three measures recently introduced by Indonesian nationalists, the first of which was Thamrin's proposal concerning the use of "Indonesian" in place of "Native." The second, introduced by Soetardjo of the famed petition initiative of a few years prior, requested an investigation into the granting of full Indies citizenship to all those currently classified as "native" under the colony's tripartite classification system. The third proposal, submitted by Wiwoho Poerbohadidjojo of the Indonesian Islamic Party (*Partai Islam Indonesia* = or PII), called for especially far-reaching political reforms. His motion requested an expanded and more representative Volksraad containing a larger number of Indonesian representatives, which would wield actual authority over colonial administrators. Wiwoho also called for the creation of a Rijksraad, an imperial council including an equal number of representatives from all parts of the kingdom. Although hardly radical in their scope and intent – after all, the Rijksraad idea remained popular among Dutch political conservatives, both in the East Indies and the European Netherlands – these proposed reforms seemed doomed from the outset, casualties of circumstances well beyond the control of the cooperating nationalists who proposed them. The colonial government quickly conveyed its unwillingness to consider such changes at the present time. According to Batavia's line of reasoning, the war would certainly result in new conditions and circumstances, thereby rendering any changes subject to reevaluation at a later point. Furthermore, constitutional change of the sort requested would need to be approved by both chambers of the Dutch parliament, which was obviously not possible during the war. Anticipating certain rejection by the Governor General, all three Indonesian sponsors withdrew their proposed measures. Meanwhile, at approximately the same time, the leaders of GAPI decided to revisit and resubmit their plans for a new Indonesian parliament, but this revised proposal also met with little success, as did the organization's suggestions that the government use its emergency powers to establish a more representative and responsible Volksraad. Fundamental reforms, whether issued on a temporary or permanent basis, simply would have to wait until after the war.¹⁶

¹⁶ Susan Abeyasekere, *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch 1939–1942*, Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 5 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1976), 50–56, 70–72; M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 230–232; and "Petition of G.A.P.I. to the Governor-General, 9 August 1940" and the government-in-exile's response, "Despatch of the Minister of Colonies (Welter) to the Queen, 13 February 1941," in *Indonesia: Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism 1830–1942*, ed. and trans. Chr. L. M. Penders (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977), 338–339 and 147–148, respectively.

If the events of May 1940 did not trigger lasting political change, then perhaps the Allies' Atlantic Charter might have forced London and Batavia to reevaluate their position and push through temporary wartime reforms, or so the Indonesian members of the Volksraad hoped. In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill publicly affirmed their partnership and described Allied war aims in the form of the Atlantic Charter, the third point of which stated that the signatories "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." For the Indonesians and other colonized peoples, these clauses concerning self-determination seemed to point the way toward independence, or at the very least, autonomy. Just as those European nations once part of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman empire had been granted their own responsible governments and nation-states in the wake of World War I, so too would these overseas colonies reinvent themselves as sovereign countries after Allied victory in the present war. Upon learning of the Atlantic Charter, Indonesian nationalists of the cooperationist bent did not hesitate to press their case yet again, this time to the government-in-exile in London. Even before Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco van Kleffens publicly announced his government's adherence to the Charter, the twenty-eight Indonesian members of the Volksraad had already penned a letter to London asking the government-in-exile to explain the significance of the Charter for the Indonesian people.¹⁷ But here too, they found themselves disappointed.

Dated mid-November 1941 but presumably not arriving in the Indies until a few weeks later, London's response reaffirmed the Netherlands' commitment to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, which would promote national and international security and prosperity, and therefore a better world order. According to the government-in-exile, the charter was intended to provide general rules of conduct for international relations, although signatory governments should also be willing to accept its principles as applied to their own internal affairs. Fortunately, the Netherlands need not concern itself with the latter, as it had long adhered to the charter's principles: After all, the world was well familiar with the Dutch government's "policy of ordered, free collaboration for all groups of the population and interests within the Kingdom." However, although the charter did not require the Dutch to revisit their tried-and-tested policies concerning

¹⁷ "Declaration of Principles, Known as the Atlantic Charter, by the President of the United States of America (Roosevelt) and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Churchill), August 14, 1941," in *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. IV. July 1941–June 1942, ed. Leland M. Goodrich (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1942), 209–210; E. N. van Kleffens, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, Speech on Adoption of the First Resolution (Atlantic Charter), September 24, 1941, in *War and Peace Aims of the United Nations*, September 1, 1939–December 31, 1942, ed. Louise W. Holborn (Boston: World Peace Organization, 1943), 509–510.

the Indonesian population, the government remained committed to doing so. It reiterated its plans to convene “a post-war investigation of constitutional relations” consisting of “prominent persons” from all realms of the kingdom and intended to “give the Government, as well as those governed, an opportunity to form a clear idea of the stage of development which has been reached, and to plan reforms.”¹⁸ To those Indonesians working for democratic reform within the East Indies, this official response must be especially insulting. Not only did the Dutch government publicly refuse to recognize that by signing the Atlantic Charter, it had pledged at least nominal support for the principle of self-determination, but it exaggerated the extent and pace of reforms implemented in the Indies thus far. Lastly, officials in both London and Batavia portrayed the postwar conference as a cure-all for the many problems inherent in the colonial system, but their refusal to consider more immediate reforms inspired little confidence in Dutch policy making.

For Indonesian nationalists of all political stripes, the German occupation of the European Netherlands could hardly be considered a turning point. Other than the Governor General’s declaration of martial law and the fleeting moment of Dutch-Indonesian solidarity, the East Indies looked much as it had before. Perhaps most egregious, colonial administrators and officials in both Batavia and London appeared convinced that they were charting the correct path. For instance, although making clear his unwillingness to consider even token reform under the present circumstances, Governor General A. W. L. Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer offered a rare concession to the nationalist movement after Thamrin, Soetardjo, and Wiwoho withdrew their reform proposals from Volksraad consideration. In September 1940, the Governor General announced the creation of what would become known as the “Visman Commission.” Named for its chairman, F. H. Visman, a member of the Governor General’s advisory Council of the Dutch East Indies, the commission also included two other Dutchmen, three Indonesians, and one Indonesian-Chinese member. These men were tasked with studying popular political opinion in the colony, and more

¹⁸ An English-language copy of the government’s November response from London, entitled “Declaration of the Netherlands Government to the People’s Council, Netherland East Indies, Batavia, November 13, 1941,” appears in *War and Peace Aims of the United Nations*, September 1, 1939–December 31, 1942, ed. Louise W. Holborn (Boston: World Peace Organization, 1943), 511–512. See also Susan Abeysekere, *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch 1939–1942*, Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 5 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1976), 63–64. A few weeks later, the London version of *Vrij Nederland* further reiterated the government’s position that the Atlantic Charter did not necessitate a reevaluation or clarification of the Dutch-Indonesian relationship while at the same time reaffirming the government’s commitment to a postwar imperial conference intended to address the prospects of political reform: “Indië en het Atlantische Handvest,” London *Vrij Nederland*, November 22, 1941, 533–534.

specifically they were to determine how the colony's various ethnic groups and social classes viewed the "political development" question. They spoke to representatives of these groups and examined the political statements issued by different leaders and organizations, and on December 8, 1941, they issued their final report, which affirmed that all non-European groups in the East Indies – the Indonesians, Chinese, and Arabs – desired equal status to that of the Europeans. However, although singling out for particular mention certain political, social, and economic grievances cited by Indonesians, the report downplayed their significance. Instead, the Visman Commission emphasized the nationalist movement as small, fragmented, and only marginally significant. According to its final analysis, the Indonesian people supported the maintenance of the current colonial system. Superficial and simple, the commission's findings failed to influence colonial policy. Even if officials in Batavia or London wished to act on its decidedly contradictory findings, they would soon face infinitely more pressing matters, such as the Japanese invasion and occupation. Intended as a conciliatory nod to the Indonesian nationalists, the Visman Commission merely confirmed the colonial government's position that political reform was neither necessary nor especially prudent at this moment in time. Further, the commission's optimistic rendering of Dutch-Indonesian relations helped convince the queen and her ministers that come what may during the war, the Dutch continued to have a place in the East Indies.¹⁹

THE ANATOMY OF A BROADCAST

Six months after the appearance of the Visman Commission report, two new cabinet members joined the London government. Both were recently arrived in London from the newly-occupied East Indies, and both men supported political reforms in the East Indies and the larger imperial superstructure. On June 9, Javanese regent Raden Adipati Ario Soejono was appointed as Minister without Portfolio. Soejono, the first and last Indonesian to serve in the Dutch cabinet, was a moderate Indonesian

¹⁹ The report in its entirety, published in two volumes, was entitled *Verslag van de Commissie tot Bestudeering van Staatsrechtelijke Hervorming: ingesteld bij Gouvernementsbesluit van 14 september 1940*, no. 1X/KAB, Two Volumes (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1941–1942). W. F. Wertheim, one of the Dutch appointees to this commission, has also written a critical examination of the commission and its findings: *Indonesië: van vorstenrijk tot neo-kolonie* (Amsterdam: Boom Meppel, 1978), 94–97. Discussions of the Visman Commission's mandate and findings can also be found in L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 11a, Tweede Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1984), 562–571; Jeroen Kemperman, Introduction to Louis de Jong, *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 28–29; and Cees Fasseur, "Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942," *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Anroij et al. ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979), 268.

nationalist and a former member of both the Governor General's Advisory Council of the Dutch East Indies and the Visman Commission.²⁰ On May 21, 1942, the Lieutenant Governor General of the East Indies, Hubertus van Mook, assumed the position of Minister of Colonies.²¹ Van Mook was no stranger to the debates swirling around the question of colonial reform. As a young civil servant in the Indies, van Mook counted among the thirteen founding members of the *Stuw* organization and journal, which from 1930 to 1933 promoted the cause of Indonesian emancipation, albeit mostly in the cultural and economic spheres. *De Stuw* – consisting of civil servants like van Mook, plus professors and Indies scholars – envisioned an “Indies Commonwealth” assembling the various territories and peoples of the Indies into one federated structure. Van Mook imagined that this Indies Commonwealth would be formally independent of the Netherlands yet still connected in unspecified ways, much in the matter that the United States continued to supervise the Philippines but remained committed to its independence. Yet neither van Mook nor his colleagues at *De Stuw* dwelled on such details, because at the present moment, the people and territories of the Indies needed Dutch leadership. Accordingly, van Mook focused on more incremental reforms intended to gradually pave the way for Indonesian autonomy and, eventually, to facilitate the creation of this Indies Commonwealth. In addition to his work with the *Stuw* group, van Mook served a five-year stint in the Volksraad, where his consistent defense of Indonesian rights and his willingness to entertain the prospects of a new colonial relationship earned him the reputation as “pro-Indies to the detriment of Dutch interests.”²² He was hardly a political radical, but he could appear as such to his colleagues and fellow citizens, many of whom turned to the far-right Fatherlands Club (VC) and the Indies branch of the Dutch Nazi Party to protect their colonial interests.

Now, in 1942, as a member of the queen's cabinet, van Mook urged the queen to clarify the Netherlands' postwar intentions concerning the East Indies. In pressing for some kind of public declaration, the new Minister of Colonies joined forces with Prime Minister Pieter Gerbrandy and Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco van Kleffens, two rather unlikely partners for this

²⁰ Soejono died suddenly on January 5 of the following year. Neither during nor after the war did the Dutch cabinet see another Indonesian minister.

²¹ Minister Welter had resigned from the position in late November 1941, and Prime Minister Gerbrandy then also served as Minister of Colonies from the time of Welter's resignation until van Mook's appointment in May 1942.

²² For van Mook's prewar career in the Indies, as well as the history of *De Stuw*, see Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten; Vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische archipel* (Utrecht: HES, 1981), 118–149; Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945–1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 13–23, with this description of van Mook's “pro-Indies” position appearing on page 16.

endeavor. Until this point, neither minister had proven himself especially amenable to the idea of colonial reform – van Kleffens, in fact, loudly proclaimed the Netherlands’ irrevocable ties to its overseas colonies – but they agreed with van Mook that if the Dutch did not soon clarify their postwar intentions regarding Indonesia, they might be unable to determine colonial policy in the future. They were especially concerned that the Americans, widely expected to be among the first forces to liberate the colony, would gain the upper hand in the region and deny the Dutch the right to return as colonial rulers. Tapping into Dutch fears concerning Japan’s geopolitical designs in Asia, Minister van Mook also argued that a clear statement of policy concerning the future of the Indies would help counterbalance Japanese propaganda promising autonomy to the Indonesian people.²³ His position found additional support in the person of advisor H. G. Peekema, who had served under Minister of Colonies Welter but remained in position after Welter’s departure in the fall of 1941. Peekema argued, convincingly, that Indonesian independence was all but inevitable after the war, and that if the Dutch wished to salvage anything from the colonial relationship, they would need to make continued cooperation with the Netherlands as attractive as possible for the Indonesians.²⁴ Van Mook agreed that Indonesian independence loomed on the horizon, but he also considered such enticements unnecessary. Like the Visman Commission report, he stressed the prospects of mutual cooperation between Dutch and Indonesian, claiming that, “together, the Netherlands and the Indies could form a major power, linked by ‘the peaceable nature and the tolerance which both peoples possess’.” Further, the Indonesians needed the Dutch, and because of this, they would prefer any arrangement that would bind together the two peoples.²⁵

Just as in the East Indies civil service, Van Mook stood out among his colleagues. Unlike his fellow ministers, he remained committed to the cause of political emancipation, and he worked toward the creation of a new post-war relationship and legal status for the Indies. As he looked forward, however, he too drew on well-established assumptions and policies. For about

²³ Cees Fasseur, “Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942,” in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Aanroij et al. (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979), 271.

²⁴ However, in his own published analysis appearing in 1942, Peekema stops short of positing that Indonesian independence was somehow foreordained: “Imperial Relations within the Kingdom of the Netherlands,” *Journal of Comparative and International Law* 24, 3d ser. (1942), 90–107, pages 106–107 especially.

²⁵ Van Mook and Peekema as cited in Cees Fasseur, “Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942,” in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Aanroij et al. (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979), 271. Here, I have cited van Mook’s statements as they appear in Fasseur’s English-language work: Fasseur, “A Cheque Drawn on a Failing Bank: The Address Delivered by Queen Wilhelmina on 6th/7th December 1942,” *The Low Countries History Yearbook (Acta historiae Neerlandicae)* 15 (1982): 102–116, page 108 for this statement.

fifty years, the notion of “guardianship” had occupied a central place within Dutch colonial policy and thinking: The Netherlands, acting like a benevolent parent with a dependent child, was to elevate and develop the Indies until the colony was ready to stand on its own two feet. Yet while a child was expected to leave the parental home eventually, the people of the East Indies were not expected to sever their ties with the European motherland. The Dutch, who continued to harbor a moral obligation to repay its “debt of honor” to the Indonesian people after centuries of raw exploitation, needed to remain in the Indies to continue this process of development, and they needed to prepare the Indonesians for eventual (but hardly imminent) self-rule. Van Mook did not seek to reinvent the colonial relationship in its entirety, but rather sought to modernize the colony, speed up the pace of development, and, in the final analysis, strengthen the Dutch-Indonesian connection. In essence, he wished to fast-track the reforms already in place, again, with an eye toward a stronger, more cohesive, but also more diverse kingdom. The queen also continued to support moderate, incremental reform in this manner. In both private and public, she voiced the possibility of autonomy or self-rule, not Indonesian independence. However, even these halting steps were too much for most of her ministers, who were afraid that the Indonesians would hold the Dutch to the letter of their word after the war and that any such changes to the colonial relationship would meet broad public disapproval in the Netherlands. With his appointment to the cabinet in May 1942, Van Mook had intended to introduce an assortment of administrative and legislative reforms to be instituted after the war, but in the face of such heavy opposition from his peers soon abandoned these plans. Still, by late October 1942, he and Minister of Foreign Affairs van Kleffens were able to convince their ministerial colleagues that some statement of wartime and postwar aims was necessary and desirable at this moment in time.²⁶

Meanwhile, Soejono, the sole Indonesian member of the cabinet – and, indeed, the only Indonesian ever to hold such a position – urged the queen to go further, for he refused to concede his strongly held position that the Indonesians wished for freedom, not guardianship. Throughout the fall of 1942, Soejono cited recent developments in British India and the Philippines as he pressed his colleagues to recognize the Indonesians’ right to self-determination, even if unaccompanied by concrete reforms.²⁷ On this

²⁶ Cees Fasseur, “Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942,” in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, ed. F. van Aantroij et al. (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979), 271–272, 275–276; Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945–1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 28–30.

²⁷ In the case of the Philippines, Soejono was presumably referring to the United States’ public commitment to full independence for the colony, as expressed most recently in the Tydings-McDuffie Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1934. Also known as the Philippine Commonwealth and Independence Act, it declared that the Philippines would obtain

count, Soejono stood alone. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, now supporting a public statement concerning the Indies, denied that “Indonesia” even existed. Employing the logic used by former Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn decades earlier, van Kleffens argued that Indonesia was not a single entity, but rather a collection of islands and peoples united under Dutch rule; consequently, there could be no talk of self-determination for this “Indonesia.”²⁸ Another minister argued that such recognition would necessarily threaten the Netherlands’ sovereignty, whereas others, including van Mook, cited the Netherlands’ continuing responsibility toward the Indies. Their discussions eventually raised the possibility of a Dutch commonwealth modeled on that of the British; within this structure, the Indies would constitute an autonomous dominion. But van Mook, perhaps the most vocal supporter of colonial reform, stopped short of fully endorsing this option, for he feared it could drive a wedge between the Netherlands and the Indies. The two territories, he explained, needed to be brought together, not separated, and moreover, the Dutch East Indies were not British India. The Indies needed the Netherlands, just as the Netherlands needed the Indies, and any new arrangement needed to take stock of this fact.²⁹ The ministers might have come to agree that the queen should make a statement of some sort, but they did not support any explicit discussion of a Dutch commonwealth, let alone Soejono’s demands that the queen recognize the Indonesians’ rights to self-determination.

Yet somehow the Dutch commonwealth idea made its way into the queen’s December 1942 speech. It was hardly accorded a prominent position, for she only mentioned the word once and in a rather guarded fashion. Still, the content of the queen’s radio address implied a position sharply out of keeping with even her most reformist cabinet members, who were convinced that granting dominion status to the Indies would force an eventual schism between metropole and colony. Her reference to a potential commonwealth must be seen as proof that the government-in-exile, in spite of the very real differences of opinion concerning the future of the East Indies,

independence in July 1946 after a ten-year transitional commonwealth government. In the India case, Soejono likely referred to the failed Cripps Mission of that April, which held out the promise of postwar Indian independence if the Indian National Congress would agree to a number of wartime concessions. Naturally, these two cases held out starkly different examples to the Dutch, as Soejono would have realized.

²⁸ See, for instance, H. Colijn, *Koloniale vraagstukken van heden en morgen* (Amsterdam: N.V. Dagblad en Drukkerij De Standaard, 1928), 59–60. An English-language selection of Colijn’s earlier statements to this effect is reproduced as “H. Colijn: On Political Reforms, 1918,” in *Indonesia: Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism 1830–1942*, ed. and trans. Chr. L. M. Penders (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977), 135–138.

²⁹ Cees Fasseur, “Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942,” in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Aanroij et al. (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979), 272–275.

placed great stock in the findings of the Visman Commission, especially its claims that the Indonesian people wished to maintain their age-old connection with the Netherlands. As vaguely understood at this time, a commonwealth would allow the Dutch to institute significant changes while preserving the colonial relationship. So too would it satisfy Indonesian aspirations, because according to the Visman Commission's final report of December 1941, Indonesians preferred moderate, gradual political reforms in place of full independence.

Admittedly, the queen's speech may not have been intended for Indonesian consumption at all. Indonesian members of the Volksraad and other nationalists had spent the past two years agitating for such reforms, and if the colonial administration in Batavia proved unwilling to change course, the queen had already promised a postwar imperial conference that would address such grievances. Well-informed Indonesian listeners – and we do not know how many Indonesians even heard the speech at the time of its broadcast³⁰ – would have heard little new information in the speech of December 1942, nor would they have had any reason to trust that the Dutch would fulfill these lofty promises. Over the years, numerous observers have claimed that the December speech was primarily intended for American audiences eager to hear evidence that European governments were committed to democratizing their empires.³¹ Such claims, however, reduce the speech to a mere

³⁰ See, for instance, the postwar commentary provided by R. A. Hoessein Djajadiningrat, the head of the delegation representing the soon-to-be independent Indonesia at the inauguration of Queen Juliana in September 1948. While offering his congratulations to the new queen he also emphasized two formative moments in her mother's reign. The first was Queen Wilhelmina's 1901 speech announcing the new "ethical" policy in the Indies, and the second was her December 1942 speech. Djajadiningrat explained that both "the contents and the form" of this latter speech had greatly touched the Indonesian people, but he did not note whether he or other Indonesians heard the speech at the time of its delivery. R. A. Hoessein Djajadiningrat, "Gelukwensen namens de vier delen van het Koninkrijk," in *Koningin Juliana: Officiel gedenkboek ter gelegenheid van de troonsbestijging van Hare Majesteit Koningin Juliana Louise, Emma, Marie, Wilhelmina, 6 september 1948 in de Nieuwe Kerk te Amsterdam*, eds. F. Beelaerts van Blockland, Arn. J. D'ailly, et al. (Amsterdam: Scheltens and Giltay, 1948), 283–284, and, for contextual information concerning his comments, Berteke Waaldijk and Susan Legêne, "Ethische politiek in Nederland: Cultureel burgerschap tussen overheersing, opvoeding en afscheid," in *Het Koloniale Beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië 1890–1950*, eds. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2009), 187–216, with this discussion on 205–206.

³¹ Cees Fasseur, "Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942," in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Aanroij et al. ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979) 277–278; Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945–1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 28–30; Whitney T. Perkins, "Sanctions for Political Change – the Indonesian Case," *International Organization* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1958), 6–42, pages 28–29 especially. In the early 1960s, Willem Schermerhorn, a postwar prime minister and for a time the Netherlands' chief negotiator in the postwar talks with the Republic of Indonesia, declared the speech to be "aimed more at its consumption by

publicity stunt. They disregard the queen's previous statements concerning the prospects and even desirability of colonial reform, some of which were issued months before the Americans entered the war, and they downplay the decisive influence of individuals such as van Mook, Soejono, and Peekema, all of whom urged the queen to formulate a more progressive colonial policy. Further, such claims obscure what scores of contemporary observers and historians have amply documented: European perceptions of American anti-imperialism overstated and simplified a complex reality. Even President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a self-proclaimed advocate for self-determination and defender of exploited peoples around the globe, could adjust his position as it suited American interests at home and abroad. Lastly, Roosevelt and his wartime advisors hardly placed all European empires on an equal footing. Indeed, particularly when seen alongside the French and British, the Dutch acquired a kind of "most favored empire" status in Roosevelt's eyes. Alternately attributed to such factors as the president's Dutch ancestry, the Roosevelts' warm relationship with Queen Wilhelmina and her family, and American strategic interests in both Europe and Asia, this favorable impression placed the paternalistic, level-headed Dutch at the head of a model empire, to which exploitative and oppressive France and Britain could only aspire.³² Correspondingly, Queen Wilhelmina hardly needed to mount a serious publicity campaign if she was worried about American responses.

If, however, the queen had intended to woo the Americans with her speech of December 1942, she was certainly able to do so. Upon hearing the speech, American lawmakers, statesmen, and the popular press congratulated Queen Wilhelmina on her bold declaration of intent. President Roosevelt, although convinced of her good intentions, had long urged the queen to issue a statement of this sort, and he welcomed her speech as an indication of her commitment to democratic reform. For the remainder of the war, he implored French and British leaders to follow her lead. Similarly, Secretary of State Cordell Hull announced that the speech demonstrated

international allied politics than it was intended to serve as a national program of reform." Understandably so, because according to Schermerhorn, "the Netherlands was reacting to a sometimes rather primitive anti-colonial sentiment of the American masses": "Nederlandsche Indië of Indonesië. Illusie en werkelijkheid over Nederland-Indonesië," in *Visioen en werkelijkheid: de illegale pers over de toekomst der samenleving*, eds. Bert Bakker, D. H. Couvée and Jan Kassies (Den Haag: Bert Bakker/Daamen, 1963), 168.

³² For further discussion of American and Roosevelt's anti-imperialism, as well as the Netherlands' preferential position, see Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920-1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 66-73 and 88-89; Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 63-65; Gerlof D. Homan, "The Netherlands, the United States and the Indonesian Question, 1948," *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 1 (Jan., 1990), 124-125 and "The United States and the Netherlands East Indies: The Evolution of American Anticolonialism," *Pacific Historical Review* 53, no. 4 (Nov., 1984), 438.

“good statesmanship, good practical sense, and humanitarianism in every essential response.”³³ The American popular press provided its own ringing endorsement, with the *New York Times* announcing that “Wilhelmina Plans Autonomy Abroad: ‘Commonwealth’ of Homeland, Indies, Curacao and Surinam to Have Internal Freedom,” and *Time* magazine noting that the Dutch queen had given the Atlantic Charter “bone, meat, flavor.” *Time* also explained that whereas “mightier democracies continued pussy-footing on post-war plans,” Wilhelmina had “flatly rejected Empire” and “plunked for Commonwealth.”³⁴

If American observers exaggerated or misread the contents and implications of the queen’s speech, Minister of Colonies van Mook reinforced their assumptions during a simultaneous tour of the United States. Although expressly forbidden by Prime Minister Gerbrandy to provide any concrete details, van Mook nonetheless elaborated as to how these imperial revisions might be implemented after the war. Speaking before a group of American journalists on the eve of the queen’s speech, he explained that the Governor General of the Indies would likely be endowed with the authority to appoint his own cabinet, and that the Volksraad could serve as a full-fledged parliament in which the Indonesians would be expected to hold a majority. The Netherlands and the East Indies would be accorded equal positions, but matters of mutual concern – such as foreign affairs, defense, and monetary policy – would remain under the jurisdiction of the kingdom, that is, the queen and her ministers in The Hague.³⁵ In other words, he described a potential Dutch commonwealth, albeit one that did not explicitly grant

³³ For Roosevelt’s apparent satisfaction with the queen’s speech, see Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 63; Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire 1941–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 29–30. Hull’s comments to this effect appear in L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 9, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979), 1110.

³⁴ “Wilhelmina Plans Autonomy Abroad: ‘Commonwealth’ of Homeland, Indies, Curacao and Surinam to Have Internal Freedom,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1942, 11; “The Netherlands: Brave New Commonwealth,” *Time*, December 14, 1942, 46. Somewhat more balanced was *Newsweek*’s reportage, which contrasted the plans offered by men such as Wendell Wilkie – who called for the United Nations to assume control of the Indies, grant self-government, and open its markets to the world – with the recent speech delivered by the “sorely tried” Dutch queen. The queen had responded to such far-reaching plans by offering “to give the Indies greater self-government, yet keep the Dutch exclusive brokers of their wealth”: “Queen’s Gambit,” *Newsweek*, December 14, 1942, 74.

³⁵ Cees Fasseur, “Een wissel op de toekomst: de rede van koningin Wilhelmina van 6/7 December 1942,” in *Between People and Statistics: Essays on Modern Indonesian History*, eds. F. van Aanroij et al. (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979) 277; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 9, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979), 1110–1113; Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945–1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 29.

dominion status to the East Indies. Nor was Minister of Colonies van Mook the only Dutch voice implying that a commonwealth stood in the pipeline. At approximately the same time that van Mook waxed philosophical on the future of the Dutch empire, the main branch of the official Netherlands Information Service, the Netherlands Information Bureau in New York City's Rockefeller Center, published what it termed the "details of the New Commonwealth of the Netherlands, Indonesia, Curaçao, and Surinam," implying that the Netherlands had already decided on this new structure.³⁶ Those in the United States would have had ample reason to believe that the Dutch commonwealth was quickly becoming a reality.

CHARTING A NEW COURSE: CLANDESTINE SUPPORT FOR A DUTCH COMMONWEALTH

If the occasion and contents of the queen's speech were readily accessible in the United States, such was not the case in the occupied Netherlands. In fact, a few months would pass before the clandestine press would be able to obtain any reliable information about the speech.³⁷ For the past two years, the underground newspapers had been able to reproduce verbatim government proclamations and speeches within a mere few days of their delivery over the London airwaves. Why was the resistance caught unaware with this particular speech? One explanation, proffered in 1964, was that technical difficulties rendered inaudible the original broadcast on the evening of December 6. Subsequent copies of the Dutch-language newspapers regularly produced in London and distributed in the Netherlands via clandestine networks or airdrops from Allied planes were of little help either, because two different air-dropped newspapers contained only summaries and contradictory ones at that. Sheer coincidence may have played a role too. Writing in the late 1970s, historian Louis de Jong cited a number of Dutch politicians held as hostages in St. Michielsgestel who claimed that few people happened to hear the entire fifteen-minute speech of December 6, and even fewer heard the rebroadcast of the speech the following morning.³⁸ To be

³⁶ "Details of the New Commonwealth of the Netherlands, Indonesia, Curaçao, and Surinam, as Envisaged by H.M. Queen Wilhelmina," *Netherlands News*, Vol. 5 No. 3, November 26/December 10, 1942, 103–109.

³⁷ As late as April 1944, *Vrij Nederland* explained that the organization had yet to obtain a complete Dutch-language text of the queen's speech: *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 6.

³⁸ L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 9, Tweede Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979), 1066. See also John H. Woodruff, *Relations between the Netherlands Government-in-exile and Occupied Holland during World War II*, Boston University Studies in Political Science (Boston: Boston University Press, 1964), 90. Woodruff further explains, but without citing sources for such information, that "Amsterdam" asked London – presumably by way of the now-operative Swiss Connection clandestine network – for an authentic text of the speech, but to no avail.

fair, in late 1942 and early 1943, those living in the occupied metropole had ample reason to be preoccupied with other matters. Only a few days after the queen's London broadcast, Hitler appointed Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert as the "leader of the Dutch people." This was an empty title, entirely fitting for what the Germans considered a hollow, unpopular leader and movement, but among the Dutch, the move triggered fears that Mussert and his party were preparing a seizure of power. The systematic deportation of the country's Jewish men, women, and children, which had commenced in July 1942, continued unabated but was now accompanied by whispers of gas chambers in distant Poland. Sectors of the Dutch resistance, inspired by the German surrender at Stalingrad, adopted increasingly brazen tactics, thereby creating what the Germans termed a "Wild West" atmosphere. In turn, German military authorities broadened the scope and severity of their reprisals, putting to death political prisoners, hostages, and innocent civilians alike.³⁹ In this heady environment, even a complete copy of the queen's speech might not have garnered much attention.

Yet once available – at least in part – across the channel, the speech quickly became a catalyst for debate in the resistance press and, indeed, in the larger underground movement. For better or worse, the queen's purported promises were held up as truly groundbreaking, sure to effect great changes throughout the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands. The first explicit analysis of the queen's speech was issued by *Vrij Nederland*, an organization that in recent months had experienced a profound foundational shift. At approximately the same time that Queen Wilhelmina delivered her December speech, Henk van Randwijk became the editor in chief of *Vrij Nederland* after a massive defection of resisters during the previous year. The final months of 1942 and the first few months of 1943 constituted a pivotal moment for this clandestine group. Developments on the battlefield finally seemed to point the way to Allied victory; the more conservative members of the original *Vrij Nederland* organization had departed, and van Randwijk – a former educator and Christian Democratic writer turned anticapitalist, anticolonialist, and humanist – worked to establish a new tone and agenda for this now-prominent underground newspaper. His right-hand man, the young Arie van Namen, provided critical assistance, but van Randwijk remained largely responsible for the contents of the paper. Standing at the helm of this major clandestine organization, van Randwijk and van Namen continued to call for sustained, principled anti-Nazi resistance, but they also sought to prepare their fellow citizens for the postwar period. If previous editorial boards provided critical appraisals alternating with rosy assessments of Dutch colonial rule in

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of these developments, see Jennifer L. Foray, "The 'Clean Wehrmacht' in the German-occupied Netherlands, 1940–1945," *Journal of Contemporary History* (October 2010), 768–787, pages 783–785 especially.

the East Indies, van Randwijk's *Vrij Nederland* declared itself solidly on the side of lasting colonial reform.

Four months after the queen's December speech, *Vrij Nederland* explained that the future relationship between the Netherlands and the Indies constituted one of the many pressing problems that would confront the nation at war's end, a matter that should concern every forward-thinking Dutch person. Shamefully, the prewar period had been characterized by indifference and ignorance on the part of most people, who knew only that "the Indies was the most important of the Dutch colonies" and that the prosperity of the Netherlands was influenced in large part by the "well-being" of the Indies. However, the war in the Far East had shaken the Dutch out of their complacency, and they had come to appreciate the tremendous solidarity connecting the Netherlands and the Indies. They also needed to realize the tremendous changes that would result from the war. Van Randwijk and van Namen did not pretend to know how the war would end, but they predicted that nothing would be the same again. During the present conflict, nearly all "Eastern peoples" had embarked on the path of freedom and autonomy, and traditional colonialism, at least in "the East," was now dead. Every Netherlander needed to realize this. The queen's recent and "important speech about the future status of the Indies" provided *Vrij Nederland* with especial reason to rejoice. Finally, so it seemed to these resisters, the Dutch had begun to understand Indonesian nationalist aspirations. If, four years prior, the government had rejected the Soetardjo Petition – which, incidentally, had gained a majority of votes in the Indonesian Volksraad – because of the "political and social immaturity" of the Dutch East Indies, the queen now seemed prepared to orient her government's policies in an entirely new direction. Of particular importance was her stipulation that the future relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia would be founded on the principle of full equality between the two peoples.⁴⁰ As van Randwijk would explain later this year, Indonesia would emerge from these terrible war-time years bearing little resemblance to the territory that had been dragged into war in early 1942. Political, cultural, and economic change was inevitable, because, after all, "our Queen and various government spokesmen have made it known, in no uncertain terms, that autonomy, in one form or another, could not be withheld from the overseas territory."⁴¹ Yet such reforms did not imply that the Indies would make a clean break from the Netherlands, or that in the future the two areas would have little to do with one another. On the contrary, as *Vrij Nederland* informed its readers, the historic, cultural, and economic bonds uniting the two areas pointed to yet another course of action. After the war, the Netherlands and Indonesia

⁴⁰ "Nederlandsche-Indie na den oorlog," *Vrij Nederland*, March 21, 1943, 7.

⁴¹ "De Toekomst van ons Nederland: Indonesië en Nederland," *Vrij Nederland*, July 30, 1943 (Vol. 3 No. 12), 4.

would be able to constitute a larger governmental unit, or *Rijksverband*, but only on the basis of full equality and “voluntary, mutual cooperation.”⁴² At this point, van Randwijk and van Namen did not define the parameters of this purported *Rijksverband*, but of this they were clear: Circumstances dictated a new course of action in the Indies, although the Netherlands need not – and should not – disregard entirely the centuries-old connections between the two territories and peoples.

These new policies, however, would mean nothing if unaccompanied by a drastically different mentality on the part of the Dutch, and so *Vrij Nederland* echoed the claims of those leftist resisters at *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid*, who for months had called on their fellow citizens to adopt a new attitude toward the Indies. Van Randwijk and van Namen acknowledged the complaints of their fellow citizens, whether living in or outside of the Indies, who alleged that the Indonesian people – and the Indonesian nationalists especially – had failed to appreciate “all that the Netherlands” had brought to the Indies and its people. On this point, these two resisters were willing to concede. Still, they sympathized with the plight of these Indonesians. All the “good things” in the world could not undo the reality of the situation – the Indies were a subjugated land, and the Indonesians wished only for their country’s freedom. Indonesian demands were hardly radical, as the Dutch should have been able to appreciate after three years of German occupation. The burden of proof now lay with the Dutch, who would need to adjust their attitudes and behavior – that is, if they wished to see a future marked by Dutch-Indonesian cooperation. Specifically, they would need to stop infantilizing the Indonesians and instead treat them as worthy and capable partners. They also needed to ensure the implementation of the queen’s ambitious agenda. After all, the directives boldly issued by the queen constituted but one part of the solution. Her professions of equality and reform would prove meaningless if thwarted by “reactionary powers and forces that have learned nothing from this war, instead desiring little else than an immediate return to the relationships and circumstances that existed before 1940.”⁴³ Again, the Dutch people could not turn back time; colonialism as they had known it was dead, never to be resurrected in its prewar form.

By adjusting both their policies and attitudes, the Dutch also had the opportunity to avoid the mistakes that had characterized British policy toward India since 1918, “mistakes that have clearly avenged themselves in this war.”⁴⁴ With their failure to effect reform in India, the British held out a powerful counter-example to the Dutch, who now had the opportunity to take action before “conflict made discussion between natives and Dutchmen

⁴² “Nederlandsche-Indie na den oorlog,” *Vrij Nederland*, March 21, 1943, 7.

⁴³ “Nederlandsche-Indie na den oorlog,” *Vrij Nederland*, March 21, 1943, 7.

⁴⁴ “Nederlandsche-Indie na den oorlog,” *Vrij Nederland*, March 21, 1943, 7.

impossible.” The Dutch could learn from their ally’s mistakes and turn their gaze inward. Specifically, and as *Vrij Nederland* had already proclaimed in the past, the Netherlands’ “own experiences during the German occupation” had made the Dutch appreciate, more than ever, “the Indonesian people’s drive for freedom.”⁴⁵ *Vrij Nederland*’s editors urged their fellow citizens to steer a new course and recognize that the Indonesians, the self-same people who had stood in solidarity with the Dutch against the Japanese invaders, would have heard in the queen’s speech the validation of their own aspirations. In turn, this new self-awareness would pave the way for “the monumental task of rebuilding and recovery” that awaited both peoples after this terrible war, “a task in which both Holland and Indonesia, acting in mutual cooperation and on the basis of equality, will and must contribute.”⁴⁶

Other leading clandestine organizations rushed to echo these calls for new policies and new mentalities alike. The underground Dutch Communist Party (CPN) quickly aligned itself with *Vrij Nederland*, an organization with which it appeared to have little in common until this point. In early May 1943, Paul de Groot – one of the three leaders of the underground CPN and, since its inception in November 1940, the editor in chief of its clandestine publication, *De Waarheid* – celebrated *Vrij Nederland*’s analysis of the queen’s speech and its implications for the Dutch-Indonesian relationship. According to de Groot, his resistance colleagues had demonstrated an “entirely new voice” in arguing that after the war Indonesia would no longer serve as a colonial territory. Although supportive of *Vrij Nederland*’s newly sympathetic approach, de Groot also reiterated his party’s well-documented history of anti-imperialism. As the Dutch communists had long argued, the Netherlands’ unfettered exploitation of the Indonesian people had created a gaping divide between Europeans and the native population, a gap that could not be bridged when the Japanese threat presented itself. On this last point, de Groot reminded his readers that before the war the CPN had supported the creation of a people’s army with the express purpose of allowing the Indonesians to defend themselves from enemy attack, but the colonial authorities myopically refused to put weapons in the hands of the Indonesians. Like his colleagues at *Vrij Nederland*, however, de Groot believed that developments in recent years had triggered a sea change of sorts. In particular, East Asia had seen the rise of a new national self-consciousness, which in turn narrowed the possibility for colonial exploitation and forced the Dutch to craft a “compromise solution” in Indonesia. So too did de Groot echo *Vrij Nederland*’s warnings to learn from Britain’s failures to make good on its promises to India.

⁴⁵ “De Toekomst van ons Nederland: Indonesië en Nederland,” *Vrij Nederland*, July 30, 1943 (Vol. 3 No. 12), 4.

⁴⁶ “Nederlandsche-Indië na den oorlog,” *Vrij Nederland*, March 21, 1943, 7.

Setting a different example than that of their allies, the Dutch needed to grant equality in all parts of their empire.⁴⁷

Still, if in the 1920s and early 1930s the CPN had proclaimed “Indonesian independence now,” the now-underground party had since tempered its stance and instead continued along the lines of the Popular Front policy initiated in 1935. An independent Indonesia, so the Dutch communists had claimed in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war in Europe, would prove unable to defend itself from the grave threat posed by fascist Japan. Now, in May 1943, underground CPN leader Paul de Groot expressly rejected the prospects of immediate independence, as the Netherlands and Indonesia needed and reinforced one another. The Netherlands’s highly developed industries supplied Indonesia with manufactured goods, and Indonesia served as an indispensable provider of hundreds of tropical products. Taken together, these two elements constituted a “healthy foundation for the prosperity of both peoples.” Yet this type of cooperation was only possible if “the Netherlands was able to assure the assistance of the Indonesian people.” Specifically, the Netherlands needed to signal the end of the colonial era by demonstrating its willingness to help the Indonesians “liberate themselves from the yoke of Japanese domination” and establish their own independent national community. As de Groot emphatically concluded, “No people is free if it oppresses another people!” “Liberation,” then, would be a multistep process involving not only the Netherlands’ defeat and removal of two Axis occupiers, but also the implementation of significant political reform. Worded slightly differently, if the Dutch were to play a role – indeed, the leading role – in the military liberation of the East Indies, they needed to be aware that their mandate extended well beyond the military realm. In essence, de Groot raised the prospects of a triple liberation: The Netherlands from Nazi Germany, Indonesia from fascist Japan, and Indonesia from the Dutch empire.⁴⁸

In October of 1943, near the conclusion of what would prove to a game-changing year in the Allied war effort, *De Waarheid* again returned to the queen’s December 1942 speech and its implications for the postwar Netherlands. Like *Vrij Nederland*, the underground communist party saw the speech as further evidence that the Dutch needed to reevaluate their approach toward their colonies. De Groot, although seemingly convinced that his fellow citizens had come to appreciate the Indonesian nationalists’ desire for freedom, still worried that certain segments of the population considered the liberation of the East Indies as an imperial “reconquest” of sorts. Contrary to what some might allege, there would be no return to the imperial status quo of 1940, for the events of the war in both territories rendered this restoration out of the question. In the future, de Groot explained,

⁴⁷ “Nederlandse-Indië na de oorlog,” *De Waarheid*, May 1, 1943, 5.

⁴⁸ “Nederlandse-Indië na de oorlog,” *De Waarheid*, May 1, 1943, 5.

the Dutch-Indonesian relationship would be founded on the principles laid forth by the queen in her speech of December 1942, in which she referred to the “autonomous and equal position of Indonesia within the context of a larger governmental unit,” or Rijkverband. Here *De Waarheid* struck a less optimistic tone than it did in May 1943, when it proclaimed that mutuality and cooperation would constitute the foundations for future Dutch-Indonesian relations, and that each party stood to gain valuable products and resources from one another. Now, a mere five months later, de Groot argued that the Netherlands needed to guarantee full equality to Indonesia, that is, if the Dutch wished to maintain any relationship with their former colony. However, ultimately this decision rested with the Indonesians alone: They alone would decide if they wished to cooperate with the Dutch at all. This did not mean that the two parties necessarily had to part ways with one another, but rather that this decision was the Indonesians’ to make. Finally, de Groot and *De Waarheid* warned the Dutch to consider how the December speech might have been received by Indonesians – a subject neglected until this point, presumably because those living in the occupied metropole did not know whether the queen’s colonial subjects had in fact heard the broadcast or even knew of the speech. De Groot sounded a note of caution: Although Indonesians would have found reason to rejoice in the queen’s purported plans, they had little reason to trust that such plans would be implemented. For years, Indonesian nationalists had argued for greater participatory powers and equality, only to have their plans rejected by both the colonial government and The Hague. The Soetardjo Petition of 1936 was but the most recent example of this.⁴⁹ *De Waarheid* warned that the Dutch could adopt a new mentality toward their long-oppressed colonial subjects, but no matter this new attitude, or whatever promises the government issued by a government-in-exile, such changes might still prove too little, too late.

If both *Vrij Nederland* and *De Waarheid* ventured to imagine a post-war Netherlands along the lines offered by the queen, the resisters of *Het Parool* adopted a more measured approach. Over the course of the previous two years, Frans Goedhart’s *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter ‘t Hoen* and its successor paper, *Het Parool*, had called into question the Dutch-Indonesian relationship at a time when other organizations concentrated on matters closer to home. During the early months of 1943, *Het Parool* allowed others to take the lead in shaping this clandestine discourse, a shift that may have been a result of cofounder Goedhart’s absence from the organization. Arrested in January 1942 while trying to leave for England, Goedhart spent months in German custody and was eventually sentenced to death. While being transported to his execution in August 1943, Goedhart escaped his captors and within weeks was able to resume his position with *Het Parool*.

⁴⁹ “Nederland en Indonesië,” *De Waarheid*, October 7, 1943, 1–2.

In his absence, and following the departure of other senior leaders during the course of 1943,⁵⁰ those left in charge of the organization – Jan Meijer, Wim van Norden, Cees de Groot, and Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart – may have been hesitant to assume Goedhart’s pen name, since “Pieter ‘t Hoen” now carried the distinction of being one of the earlier and most recognizable resistance figures. In mid-May 1943, this latter editorial cohort relayed the recent death of Minister Soejono, as announced in a recent issue of *De Wervelwind*, a monthly Dutch newspaper prepared in London and air-dropped into the Netherlands by Allied planes. According to *De Wervelwind*, Soejono’s appointment to the Dutch cabinet the previous year had both revealed the ever-increasing cooperation between the Netherlands and Indonesia and anticipated the sentiments later expressed in the historic December 7 speech, in which the queen announced that, in the future, Indonesia would be an “independent and equal part of the Dutch empire.”⁵¹ Whether because they had been unable to obtain reliable confirmation of the contents of the queen’s December speech or because they assumed that the *De Wervelwind* piece was self-explanatory, the resisters of *Het Parool* simply reprinted this announcement without further commentary.

This atypical reticence did not last long. In late May 1943, only two weeks after reporting Soejono’s death, *Het Parool* issued a full-page analysis of the December speech. As its editors readily admitted, their discussion of “Dominion Indonesia: ‘Free and Equal Partners between the Nations’” was based only on those fragments of the speech that they had been able to obtain. Yet even while relying on such fragmentary knowledge, the resisters of *Het Parool* did not hesitate to express their unequivocal support for the “wise policy” they believed the speech to embody. They were particularly impressed by Queen Wilhelmina’s reference to “Indonesia,” a name originating with the Indonesian nationalist movement; in and of itself, this nomenclature signaled the tremendous political changes to come. Indonesia would emerge from the war not as a colony in the traditional sense, but rather as a “sort of Dominion.” Or, as they explained in slightly different terms, Indonesia, already granted some measure of autonomy after World War I, was now “mature” enough to receive political autonomy. In one fell swoop, then, *Het Parool*, pushed aside decades’ worth of debates surrounding the question of Indonesian “ripeness”: To these resisters, it appeared obvious that the former colony was destined to become a self-governing state. Further, in their conception, this autonomous Indonesia

⁵⁰ Of the group’s original editors, Koos Vorrink and Lex Althoff had recently left the paper, and Jaap Nunes Vaz had been killed in the Sobibor extermination camp. In late December 1942, Gerrit-Jan van Heuven Goedhart – again, of no relation to Frans Goedhart – joined *Het Parool*, bringing with him years of (prewar) experience as editor in chief of two of the country’s leading daily newspapers, *De Telegraaf* and the *Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad*.

⁵¹ “Pangeran Ario Soejono,” *Het Parool*, May 10, 1943 (No. 52), 5.

would remain connected to the Netherlands by an enduring array of historic and economic bonds, not a set of legal obligations. Mature, ready, and willing to rule themselves, the Indonesians would nonetheless elect to continue their relationship with the Netherlands, that is, as long as they stood to gain by it. Correspondingly, *Het Parool* envisioned a far-ranging economic development program intended to raise the Indonesian standard of living. The Dutch would need to create, for instance, “a four-, five- or ten-year plan” mapping out a “systematic development scheme” for Indonesia, and then orient the trade and industry of the European Netherlands accordingly. Only in this manner, *Het Parool* explained, would “political freedom find its necessary social complement.”⁵² As contemporary readers might have noticed, the *Het Parool* group seemingly threw its support behind the prospects of a new Dutch commonwealth, all the while drawing on more established notions, such as the Netherlands’ purported moral obligation to repay its “debt of honor” owed after centuries of unabashed exploitation.

As they looked toward the creation of a new imperial structure and enhanced relations between motherland and colony, these resisters also echoed the now-familiar calls for a new attitude, which they described as “bitterly necessary.” In May 1943, Meijer, van Norden, de Groot, and van Heuven Goedhart repeated the call of their editorial predecessors, who shortly after Pearl Harbor summoned their fellow citizens to rid themselves of their superiority complex toward the Indonesian people. The Dutch must accept “change in a fundamentally democratic sense, in which the equality of the Indonesian is equal to that of the European and constitutes the basis of all mutual relations,” whether in the economic, cultural, or social spheres. The Dutch also needed to realize that a commonwealth would not weaken economic relations between the motherland and its new dominion. On the contrary, Indonesia would become a prosperous country by relying on the continued economic assistance provided by the motherland. In fact, as Indonesia developed and modernized, the technical, economic, and cultural assistance supplied by the European Netherlands would become even more important, thus ensuring that within the bonds of this commonwealth the relationship between the two would only continue to grow. For all of these reasons, *Het Parool* remained confident that their fellow citizens would honor the promises embodied in the queen’s wise speech: namely, the granting of dominion status to Indonesia, henceforth to become “an autonomous part of the Dutch Commonwealth of Nations.”⁵³ Like the queen herself, resisters Meijer, van Norden, de Groot, and van Heuven Goedhart evidently envisioned a federated system of “layered sovereignty,”

⁵² “Dominion Indonesië: ‘Vrije en gelijkwaardige Bondgenooten tusschen de Volkeren,’” *Het Parool*, May 28, 1943 (No. 54), 7.

⁵³ “Dominion Indonesië: ‘Vrije en gelijkwaardige Bondgenooten tusschen de Volkeren,’” *Het Parool*, May 28, 1943 (No. 54), 7.

with certain powers resting in separate political units – in this case, a new Indonesian state of sorts – and other powers remaining in the metropolitan center.⁵⁴ Presumably, the West Indies would be included in this new federated structure, but if either *Het Parool* or other groups expected these western territories to be granted the same degree of autonomy as Indonesia, they did not say as much. For centuries, the East Indies had served as the jewel in the Dutch imperial crown; after the war, an autonomous Indonesia would be the frontispiece for a Dutch Commonwealth of Nations.

Obviously, the queen's speech had raised more questions than it answered, and the resisters of *Het Parool* expected members of the general public to respond with skepticism and even fear: Perhaps the queen was moving too quickly, or the Netherlands stood to isolate itself from its allies if it departed from more traditional colonial practices. In an apparent attempt to fend off these types of concerns, these resisters emphasized that both the queen's speech and this potential Dutch commonwealth had been well-received by the Netherlands' most powerful ally, the United States. The Americans, *Het Parool* explained, were satisfied that the speech reflected the principles contained in the Atlantic Charter; the creation of a commonwealth would model the Americans' own behavior in the Philippines, which was increasingly granted political independence.⁵⁵ Then, in a rare episode of one-upmanship directed against their allies across the English Channel, the resisters of *Het Parool* noted that the British, by contrast, had been far less enthusiastic about such purported plans – and not surprisingly so, for British rule in India presented a powerful and even tragic antimodel for the Netherlands. Bluntly stated, were the Dutch to grant dominion status to Indonesia, it would remind England “of the painful fact that the position of British India is still not formalized, and that since the failure of Cripps' mission, the Indian National Congress has maintained its policy of non-cooperation.” The British may have been the first to devise the commonwealth structure, but their most prized overseas possession, India, remained solidly outside its borders. The Dutch would beat the British at their own game, and so the British were sour and jealous. As if such commentary was not adequately scathing, *Het Parool's* editors also explained where and how

⁵⁴ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper's recent work foregrounds this notion of “layered sovereignty” as a key aspect in imperial governance and power relations: *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). Their discussion of federative structures, as cited here, appears on page 10.

⁵⁵ *Het Parool* was not the only organization to paint American policy toward the Philippines in such broad strokes. In December 1941, for instance, the editors of *Vrij Nederland* rejected the notion, typically voiced by the Dutch Nazi Party and German propaganda, that the United States harbored imperialistic designs on the East Indies. *Vrij Nederland* explained to its readers that the United States was hardly imperialist, given its willingness to extend self-rule to the Philippines: “De ‘Bezetting’ van Surinam,” *Vrij Nederland*, December 1941 (Vol. 2 No. 7), 3.

the British imperialist project in India had failed: After the Revolutionary War in America, England had demonstrated good insight into “the white population in her overseas territories,” but had acted in a rather “untactical” and “non-intuitive” fashion toward nonwhite populations. The Dutch, however, could forge a different path by giving concrete form to the new relationship between Indonesia and the motherland, thus making the queen’s speech a true turning point for Dutch colonialism.⁵⁶

If *Het Parool* imagined a bright future for the Netherlands and Indonesia within the boundaries of the commonwealth, only *Vrij Nederland* dwelled on the particularities of this potential arrangement. Although acknowledging the legitimacy of the Indonesians’ claims and the inevitability of far-reaching colonial reform, editor van Randwijk did not rush to embrace the creation of a commonwealth, at least not now. Rather, he and *Vrij Nederland* problematized the structure itself, posing the question: “Dominion, or part of an indivisible kingdom?” The answer was not as simple as many had come to believe. For one, those calling for the granting of dominion status incorrectly pointed to the British model, when in fact they needed to look to their own constitution. Because Article 1 of the revised Dutch Constitution of 1922 had established the European Netherlands, the Dutch East Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao as equal parts of the kingdom, the framework for a revised imperial structure already existed but had yet to be implemented. In other words, the Dutch need not decide between imperial resurrection, as *Trouw* might have it, and the creation of an independent Indonesian nation-state, as the Dutch communists and certain Indonesian nationalists, would prefer. Rather, by formalizing the more mutual relationship specified in the 1922 constitution, the Netherlands could forge a novel “third way” with relatively little effort.⁵⁷

As van Randwijk considered the contours of a transformed Dutch-Indonesian relationship, he returned to both the queen’s December 7, 1942, speech as well as the plans offered by *Vrij Nederland* contributor P. J. Schmidt in April of the previous year.⁵⁸ Schmidt’s “reborn Dutch empire” schematic included an “Imperial Council” (Rijksraad) consisting of representatives from the four realms of Kingdom of the Netherlands. Van Randwijk suggested an “Imperial Government” (*Rijksregering*) and “Imperial Parliament” (*Rijksparlement*) to serve, respectively, as the empire’s new executive and legislative bodies.⁵⁹ Taken together, these two institutions would constitute

⁵⁶ “Dominion Indonesië: ‘Vrije en gelijkwaardige Bondgenooten tusschen de Volkeren,’ *Het Parool*, May 28, 1943 (No. 54), 7.

⁵⁷ “De Toekomst van ons Nederland: Indonesië en Nederland,” *Vrij Nederland*, July 30, 1943 (Vol. 3 No. 12), 4–5.

⁵⁸ “Nederland-Indië (Slot),” *Vrij Nederland*, 24 April 1942 (Vol. 2 No. 13), 7–8.

⁵⁹ Van Randwijk’s references to such institutions as the Rijksparlement might indicate his familiarity with Minister van Mook’s elaboration of the queen’s speech before American audiences, not the actual speech of December 1942. The queen did not mention these institutions

the basis for a new confederation, or *bondstaat*. Naturally, the postwar “Round Table Conference” convened by the queen would decide on these and other details, but for now, *Vrij Nederland* speculated how this system might function in practice. The four component parts of this federal state would be “fully and equally free to look after their own affairs,” and each would have the right to its own government, constitution, and parliament. These four areas would work to coordinate their interests with one another, but under no circumstances would this entail the subordination of one to another. Of course, circumstances might arise whereby the interests of one area might have to be subordinated to the interests of this larger federal state, but this too would be done in the spirit of cooperation and always with the greater good in mind. Further, in the interests of promoting political stability throughout this refashioned Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Dutch would also need to pursue an aggressive development policy directed toward the overseas territories, specifically Indonesia. By extension, the economic development of Indonesia would also allow “the civilizing work that has been laid upon the shoulders [of the Netherlands] to come to fruition.” After all, van Randwijk explained, modern Indonesian civilization may have absorbed certain Western elements, but “whether this civilization will remain oriented towards the Netherlands is dependent upon the economic and political growth” to be achieved by means of the changes described here.⁶⁰

These were not easy changes, to be sure, and they would not come easily to the European Netherlands. *Vrij Nederland* readily admitted that the new system would require the motherland to sacrifice its monopoly over the decision-making process in the interest of fostering political development in the overseas territories. Yet skeptics need not worry about postwar reform rendering superfluous the Dutch-Indonesian connection, according to van Randwijk. If anything, by seeing through to its logical conclusion the “ethical policy” privileging native development, the Netherlands could ensure an even stronger bond between the two groups of people. Even as he pitched this new political framework, van Randwijk continued to draw on older, more established colonial rationales and policies. Perhaps most obviously, he and his organization stressed the Netherlands’ continued “civilizing mission,” or *beschavingswerk*, toward Indonesia, a more traditional concept seemingly at odds with the newly popular notions of “equality,” “mutuality,” and “voluntary cooperation.” If *Het Parool* openly adopted the queen’s rhetoric of a partnership between two “free and equal” peoples and nations, *Vrij Nederland* emphasized imperial unity (*Rijkseenheid*) and the creation

by name, whereas van Mook did. L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 9, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979), 1064.

⁶⁰ “De Toekomst van ons Nederland: Indonesië en Nederland,” *Vrij Nederland*, July 30, 1943 (Vol. 3 No. 12), 4–5.

of “one strong Kingdom.” Van Randwijk’s failure to employ the newer terminology of mutuality and partnership is striking but hardly decisive. A former member of the left-wing and pacifist Christian Democratic Union (CDU), he would have described himself as progressive, anticapitalist, and anticolonialist. Yet even as he called on the more traditional language, he envisioned an entirely different type of Dutch-Indonesian relationship.⁶¹

By year’s end, *Vrij Nederland* readers would have little reason to doubt the sincerity or meaning of van Randwijk’s colonial stance. As the resistance movements in the occupied Netherlands optimistically – and prematurely – set their sights on liberation, *Vrij Nederland* joined *Het Parool* in calling for the radical refashioning of Dutch politics and society. The departure of fellow resisters with starkly different religious, political, and logistical agendas had now granted van Randwijk a new measure of intellectual freedom, which he did not hesitate to exploit fully. No less important, too, was van Randwijk’s increasing cooperation with a group of Indonesian nationalists engaged in anti-Nazi resistance in the occupied Netherlands. Over the course of 1943, he became close personal friends with Raden Mas Setyadjit Sugondo, or Setyadjit, as he was known, and this relationship in turn endowed *Vrij Nederland* with a more expansive, more sympathetic approach toward the Indonesian nationalist movement.⁶² In the process, *Vrij Nederland* assumed a new position at the forefront of these underground colonial discussions.

Born in Java of royal blood, the twenty-year-old Setyadjit arrived in the Netherlands in 1927 and studied at the Technical University in Delft. In 1933, he had assumed leadership of the Association of Indonesian Students in the Netherlands (*Perhimpunan Indonesia* or PI).⁶³ Originally founded in 1908 as a social organization for the scores of young Indonesians who came to live and study in the colonial metropole, PI became increasingly politicized during the course of the next few decades.⁶⁴ By early 1925, PI had

⁶¹ “De Toekomst van ons Nederland: Indonesië en Nederland,” *Vrij Nederland*, July 30, 1943 (Vol. 3 No. 12), 4–5.

⁶² For these and other details concerning van Randwijk’s relationship with Setyadjit, see Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk, *H.M. van Randwijk: een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 337–338.

⁶³ Biographical details concerning Setyadjit – alternately spelled as Sedyadjit and Setiadjit – and his involvement with PI can be found in Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 250, 258; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for Raden Mas Setyadjit Soegondo, accessible via “Personen” search at <http://www.parlement.com>. In contrast to these two sources, Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk note that Setyadjit assumed leadership of PI in 1937: *H.M. van Randwijk: een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 339.

⁶⁴ John Ingleson’s two studies of the early PI discuss this political evolution as seen during the course of 1920s: *Perhimpunan Indonesia and the Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1923–1928*. Monash papers on Southeast Asia, no. 4 (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast

recast itself as an unabashedly nationalist organization calling for unconditional, immediate independence for the Indies, to be achieved by distinctly noncooperationist methods as necessary. At first, the circumstances of German invasion and occupation did little to alter this position. Setyadjit, still standing at the helm of this organization in May 1940, was quick to proclaim that the flight of the country's leaders to London had substituted one colonial leader with another; the Dutch government and, by extension, the Dutch East Indies were now fully dependent on England.⁶⁵ Despite this initial wartime response, Setyadjit and PI soon adopted a more cooperative approach. Cut off from their homeland and ruled by a German oppressor whose worldview accorded little place for colonial subjects of color, this group of Indonesian nationalists began to throw themselves into clandestine work alongside their "native Dutch" neighbors. Their eyes remained on the prize of Indonesian independence, but for the time being they muted their more strident demands in order to combat the immediate threats in front of them.⁶⁶

When, in the summer of 1941, Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart formally disbanded all political organizations save the Dutch Nazi Party, Setyadjit and his colleagues helped shepherd PI into a new clandestine existence. With disparate branches and cells located throughout the country, the organization's central leadership core oversaw a wide range of resistance activities, including the publication of clandestine newspapers. *Madjallah* appeared during 1940 and 1941 but was soon replaced by a daily news bulletin, *Feiten*, which debuted in May 1943. One year later, the central PI leadership, which was based in the university city of Leiden, decided to come forth with yet another publication, *De Bevrijding*, or "The Liberation," which would serve as the organization's most professional and far-reaching newspaper. Issued approximately every week and reaching a maximum circulation of 20,000, *De Bevrijding* brought PI's message of anti-German resistance – and anti-Japanese resistance – to the Dutch masses. The resisters behind *De Bevrijding* did not avoid all nationalism-related topics, but such discussions assumed a distinctly secondary position, for *De Bevrijding* was intended to be a resistance paper first and foremost.

Asian Studies, Monash University, 1975), Chapters 1–2; and the more extensive *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927–1934* (Singapore: Published for the Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1979), also Chapters 1–2.

⁶⁵ As cited and discussed in Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 298–300.

⁶⁶ Writing a few years after the war, Soeripno, a former leader of the underground PI, detailed this change of heart and noted the extensive array of wartime activities undertaken by Indonesian students in Holland: Soeripno, "Students of the Indonesian Republic: In Defense of Freedom and Progress ..." December 1947, Jeanne S. Mintz Papers, United Nations Delegation Chronological File, Container 45, file 3 (1947 2/2), Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Clandestine PI activities in the occupied Netherlands were hardly confined to these publications, either. Consistently throughout the five-year occupation, these Indonesian men and women – often working side-by-side with Indonesians and Dutch resisters who remained unaffiliated with the PI organization – edited, produced, and distributed other clandestine materials. They also provided assistance to Jews and others who went into hiding from the Germans; served as spies for the Allied war effort and the government-in-exile; falsified official documents; and, as part of armed “National Action Groups,” staged violent assaults against persons and property alike. They formed paramilitary units ready to defeat the occupiers and maintain order at liberation, and, perhaps most strangely, served as grunt labor for the *Trouw* organization, which utilized young Indonesian weightlifters to carry the heavy metal plates used to print their paper.⁶⁷ Yet these Indonesian resisters comprised only a small fraction of the larger Indonesian community, let alone the Dutch population at large. Of the approximately eight hundred Indonesians living in the German-occupied Netherlands, only a few dozen appear to have been involved in PI’s clandestine work.⁶⁸ Within this small but extremely active group of Indonesian resisters, Setyadjit occupied an especially prominent position.

A member of PI’s underground leadership and a regular contributor to the organization’s publications, Setyadjit was also consistently involved with the larger Dutch resistance. Perhaps most notably, he remained a fixture on the editorial board of *De Vrije Katheder*, a politically leftist clandestine newspaper founded by university students in the fall of 1940. Acting in this capacity and arguing from his position as a cooperating nationalist, Setyadjit publicized the Indonesian cause for a wider audience of Dutch intellectuals. In the fall of 1943, for instance, he unequivocally stated that the colonial relationship between oppressor and subordinate needed to end, and that Indonesia should be granted full independence. However, he also assured his readers that independence need not entail a clean break between the Netherlands and its former colony. Independence meant that Indonesia, acting out of its own free will, could elect to maintain relations with the Netherlands. The centuries-old bond between the two territories would no

⁶⁷ Details appearing in this and the previous paragraph are drawn from Lydia Winkel, *De ondergrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 83–84, 255; and Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 305–312, 320–330.

⁶⁸ In a questionnaire completed for the Grand Council of the Resistance (GAC) in December 1945, PI leaders noted that upward of 130 members had belonged to PI during the war: File 3C, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit (GAC), Collection 184, NIOD, Amsterdam. Poeze et al. cite 60–110 resisters involved with PI-led clandestine activities but also note that the lower end of this range seems more plausible: *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 306.

longer benefit the Dutch alone, but rather the people of both territories, and Setyadjit expected that independence would actually strengthen the bonds between the two. After all, a modernizing and developing Indonesia would function as a natural market for Dutch goods, equipment, and expertise. Continued cooperation, then, remained in the best interest of both countries. The Dutch also need not fear political chaos because Indonesian independence would come in the form of such recognizable institutions as a fully functioning parliament. Sweeping reforms would seek to democratize the entire policy but would stem from previously introduced democratic institutions and traditional Indonesian practices, such as the *adat* law long familiar to Dutch “Indologists.” Further, the Indonesians were well prepared to guide these reforms themselves: They had already proven their administrative and political acumen – at least to the extent allowed by the Dutch authorities – and they simply needed to acquire further skills in these domains. The time had come, Setyadjit argued, for the Dutch to take the first step in clearing away those impediments resulting from the colonial relationship, “so that the prospect for the free and healthy development of Indonesia, on the path to independence, can begin.”⁶⁹ For any of this to happen, however, the Allied powers must win the war, a fact that Setyadjit and his fellow Indonesian resisters repeatedly acknowledged in both word and deed.

Setyadjit and *Vrij Nederland* editor van Randwijk were introduced in 1943 by mutual friends, fellow resisters active in Protestant circles and interested in the cause of colonial reform. The burgeoning friendship between the two men – and their wives – provided van Randwijk and *Vrij Nederland* a unique window into this segment of the Indonesian nationalist movement. Whereas other organizations articulated what they perceived to be Indonesian concerns and aspirations, *Vrij Nederland* could actually speak with some degree of authority in this regard. During the final year of the war, Setyadjit and other PI leaders became actively involved with other long-standing organizations, such as *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid*, as well as newly created umbrella groups, such as the Grand Council of the Resistance (GAC). Before the Indonesian resistance organizations were integrated into the larger underground scene, however, van Randwijk could claim a formative connection with an accomplished and well-respected Indonesian nationalist. When writing in *Vrij Nederland*, van Randwijk did not reveal his relationship with Setyadjit and the underground PI. He may have wanted to protect the Indonesian community in the Netherlands, lest

⁶⁹ A lengthy excerpt from this *De Vrije Katheder* piece, entitled simply “Indonesië-Nederland” and dated September 13, 1943, appears in Willem Schermerhorn, “Nederlandsche Indië of Indonesië. Illusie en werkelijkheid over Nederland- Indonesië,” in *Visioen en werkelijkheid: de illegale pers over de toekomst der samenleving*, eds. Bert Bakker, D. H. Couvée and Jan Kassies (Den Haag: Bert Bakker/Daamen, 1963), 150–151.

German suspicion fall on this highly visible segment of society.⁷⁰ Or perhaps he did not wish to reveal his hand, lest *Vrij Nederland* lose its preferential access to these Indonesian nationalists. We may also wonder whether a reading public aware of this Indonesian connection would have viewed *Vrij Nederland* with skepticism or even overt mistrust. The politically savvy van Randwijk might have realized that better a white Dutchman in the resistance call into question Dutch policy and practice than a dark-skinned colonial subject, of whom such criticism was to be expected. In any case, when van Randwijk, a longtime supporter in the cause of colonial reform, placed *Vrij Nederland* solidly on the side of the Dutch commonwealth, he did so with the support of his good friend and fellow resister Setyadjit.

Much had changed in the year following the Dutch loss of the East Indies. The tide of war, finally, seemed to turn in the Allies' favor, but those subjected to ever-mounting privations and persecutions in the occupied European Netherlands would have been hard-pressed to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Typically, with her radio broadcasts from London, Queen Wilhelmina sought to shine this light on her subjects: Victory stood before the noble Allies, and with it would come a glorious new world, marked by greater harmony, security, and prosperity for all. Although expressing the same optimistic tone and reiterating some of the same ideas she had already publicly articulated, the queen's speech of December 7, 1942, seemed different somehow. In retrospect, we can see why and how the queen acted out of various motives when she outlined the potential contours of the postwar empire, and we also know that her grand designs – even if only roughly sketched as mere “imaginings,” not as concrete blueprints – failed to materialize after the war. Those in the German-occupied Netherlands, however, could not know this, and understandably they took the speech at face value. With her references to a revitalized, reborn kingdom and a potential Dutch commonwealth, Queen Wilhelmina seemed to reveal a bold new course of action, especially at a time when other imperial powers steered a more cautious path. After issuing this pronouncement in late 1942, the queen said very little on this subject – at least publicly – for the remainder of the war, although individual cabinet members, such as Minister of Colonies van Mook and Minister of Foreign Affairs van Kleffens, continued to promote their own views in London, the United States, and elsewhere. The former supported democratic reforms in Indonesia and envisioned a new imperial superstructure, whereas the latter proclaimed the indivisibility of the

⁷⁰ However, as Poeze et al. point out, Indonesian workers – as opposed to students, nurses, sailors, and dockworkers – were not automatically suspect by the Germans, as most Indonesians maintained little contact with the Dutch and did not speak the language. As a result, they could provide useful cover for their countrymen's clandestine activities, whether or not they engaged in such activities themselves: *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 312.

kingdom and argued that the people and territories of the East Indies could not govern themselves. Judging by French and American responses to the speech, van Mook seemed to gain the upper hand, as representatives of both countries believed Queen Wilhelmina to have committed herself to a new Commonwealth of the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, in the occupied Netherlands, the queen's subjects extrapolated meaning and purposes from her speech. The leftist resisters went one step further, and they now charged themselves with actualizing the progressive reforms they believed to be embodied in the queen's speech. They did not invent many of the ideas they advanced in the pages of *Vrij Nederland*, *Het Parool*, and *De Waarheid*, but rather combined tried-and-tested imperial precepts with those of more recent origin. Just as they cited the Netherlands' historic "debt of honor" to develop the Indies, so too did they proclaim the merits of an imperial council intended to provide expert advice to ministers and colonial officials who in the past could act unilaterally. Even more importantly, Goedhart, van Randwijk, and de Groot called on their fellow citizens to adopt a new attitude, one informed by their own experiences under German occupation. They professed support for the moderate democratic reforms demanded by cooperative Indonesian nationalists, such as those calling for a truly representative Indonesian *Volksraad*, and they urged the rest of the nation to do the same. These resisters did not need the queen's December speech to convince them that colonial reform was both inevitable and desirable, but it did provide them with a workable framework on which to build. It provided them with a common language – that of commonwealth, dominion status, mutuality, voluntary cooperation – even if, as subsequent chapters will examine, these terms remained shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding. For better or worse, the queen's speech placed the commonwealth option on the table, where it could not be ignored or overlooked as a mere pipe dream proposed by radical but naïve colonial experts. Such had been the treatment meted out to the *Stuw* group's ideas a decade prior, when officials in Batavia forced the group to cease its work towards an "Indies commonwealth." Whether delivered out of opportunism or sheer conviction, the queen's December pronouncement lent colonial reform a gravitas it had been lacking until this point. As a result, even those groups who opposed the prospects of Indonesian autonomy – let alone independence – were forced to contend with the proposals laid out by the queen in this radio broadcast. The following chapter examines these group's attempts to reorient the nation's imperial agenda.

Countering the Commonwealth

The Center and Right Enter the Fray

The most extensive and insightful discussions of the Netherlands' colonial future occurred during the final phase of the war, a period beginning in approximately mid-1943 and continuing until May 1945, when the underground "opinion makers" charged themselves with preparing their fellow citizens for the transition to peacetime. Confident that they served as the nation's leading political analysts in this time of need, the leftist resisters explored such topics as the future of the country's traditional political parties and the relative merits of various supranational organizations. Their discussions to these ends centered on the notion of "renewal," which conceptualized a thorough revision of Dutch politics and society coupled with an extensive reevaluation of colonial policy. Relying on the blueprint they believed Queen Wilhelmina to have provided in the form of her December 7, 1942, speech, the resisters of *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland*, and *De Waarheid* fixated on the notions of "equality," "mutuality," and "voluntary acceptance." Such concepts, they argued, would constitute the foundations for a new – and stronger – Dutch-Indonesian relationship. Yet theirs were not the only voices to weigh in on these subjects. During these final two years of the war, the underground activists on the political left contended with new arrivals to the clandestine political scene, and the chorus singing the praises of colonial reform began to sound more like a cacophony. The leaders of two new leading organizations resolved to leave their own mark on these well-established clandestine discussions of empire, discussions that they felt had failed to take stock of existing and expected realities.

Je Maintiendrai, whose editorial board included prominent prewar politicians, intellectuals, and former Nederlandse Unie leaders, argued from a moderate, centrist position. For these resisters, the queen's speech represented the most recent expression of a colonial policy initiated years before the outbreak of war; it did not reveal a radical new policy. Similarly, the last of the five major publications to make its debut, the politically conservative and orthodox Protestant *Trouw*, saw the contents of the speech as neither

revolutionary nor natural; the queen, this group argued, was acting in the moment and looking to placate the anti-imperialist Americans. For these resisters, most of whom were members and leaders of the now-underground Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party, colonial reform remained out of the question. Convinced that the fate of the Netherlands hung in the balance, these more conservative resisters would spend the next two years refuting the dangerous notions put in circulation by their fellow resisters. The battle for the future of the Indies had begun.

JE MAINTIENDRAI AND THE RETURN OF THE POLITICAL
ESTABLISHMENT

Je Maintiendrai has been described as the “underground” Nederlandse Unie, and without question this new clandestine group reflected much organizational and ideological continuity with the now-defunct mass movement created during the first few months of the German occupation.¹ Most obviously, the two groups worked to unite the population under one large roof, thereby transcending the nation’s political, class, denominational, and regional differences. However, *Je Maintiendrai*’s significance extends beyond these obvious parallels. Uniquely, *Je Maintiendrai*’s editorial board and staff writers included the *crème de la crème* of the country’s prewar political and intellectual establishment, many of whom had spent the first few years of the war confined together in German detention centers. Well established, influential, and recognized by the German occupiers as such, the founders of *Je Maintiendrai* had every reason to expect that after the war they would again dominate the halls of government.

As were so many clandestine organizations, *Je Maintiendrai* was born of mergers and negotiations between smaller papers and groups, one of which included former Unie leaders who continued their work underground after the mass movement was banned by the Germans in December 1941. While continuing to espouse the Unie’s focus on political, social, and economic regeneration, this group also began to engage in other types of resistance work, such as the creation of a small clandestine newspaper titled *Bulletin*. Edited by two former Unie leaders, businessman J. E. W. Wüthrich and economist C. Vlot, *Bulletin* was a relatively minor publication until late 1942, when the two men decided to expand the purview of their work. To these ends, they entered into negotiations with another group of resisters, which since 1940 had published a clandestine paper under a variety of names, the most recent of which was *B.C.-Nieuws*. In January 1943, the new organization born of *Bulletin* and *B.C.-Nieuws* became *Je Maintiendrai*. Its

¹ For a discussion of the relationship between *Je Maintiendrai* and the Unie, see, for instance, Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 145–146.

recognizable title came from the emblem of the House of Orange, which bore this phrase; its meaning, "I will stand fast," referred to William the Silent's struggle against Spain. Indeed, for the first few months of its existence, *Je Maintiendrai* functioned primarily as a resistance paper, concerned more with promoting oppositional behavior among the Dutch than with political affairs and postwar planning. But in May 1943, as the paper's editorial board was reorganized to include Catholic journalist F. J. M. Oremus and student Kees Viehoff alongside Vlot and Wüthrich, *Je Maintiendrai* widened its focus.

In their editorial positions at *Je Maintiendrai*, Vlot and Wüthrich continued to maintain ties with other leading members of the now defunct *Nederlandse Unie*, which was no simple feat given the fact that many of these men had since been interned by the Germans in detention camps, such as Gestel, a requisitioned Catholic seminary in the southern town of Sint Michielsgestel. Detained with hundreds of other prominent Dutch citizens, including scores of the country's leading politicians, intellectuals, and civil servants, these *Unie* leaders continued the work of their former mass movement, albeit in isolation from the rest of the country. An unlikely courier service connected Vlot and Wüthrich with these detained *Unie* leaders, and in this manner *Je Maintiendrai* became the channel by which the various discussions and plans forged in these detention centers were imparted to the Dutch people. Both these Gestel hostages and the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* were especially concerned with the prospects of postwar "renewal," that much-discussed process of political, social, and economic revitalization. Unlike other organizations on the left, which conceived of "renewal" on both a national and global level, *Je Maintiendrai* privileged domestic reform: "*Doorbraak*," or the destruction of the various prewar "pillars" defining Dutch society, became their catchword, just as the *Unie* had sought to promote national solidarity over class conflict and parochialism. However, whereas the *Unie* had been extremely critical of the prewar parliamentary system and the traditional political parties, the "renewers" of *Je Maintiendrai* wished to infuse the old parliamentary system with new life. Later, during the final months of the German occupation, such ideas would find expression in the Dutch People's Movement (*Nederlandse Volks Beweging* or simply *NVB*), which was intended to bridge the various political parties and denominations. *Je Maintiendrai*, already solidly oriented toward the postwar period, would become the mouthpiece for the *NVB* as the war drew to a close.

Within only a few short months of its January 1943 debut, *Je Maintiendrai* had established itself as one of the country's leading papers, supplying both essential news and extensive commentary on domestic affairs.² Like its peer

² During the early days of its existence, the biweekly *Je Maintiendrai* was stenciled in the attic of the Peace Palace in The Hague, and later in Zwolle and Haarlem. Each stenciled edition was approximately fourteen pages – at least a few pages longer than the other leading

organizations, *Je Maintiendrai* was concerned with resistance above all else; as long as the Germans remained in their country, the Dutch were to continue to engage in both active and passive resistance. Their writings, which aimed to strike an objective, thoughtful tone, were informed by less accurate information than that obtained by *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland*. All the same, the underground politicians and political activists at *Je Maintiendrai* provided lengthy and even overly drawn-out analyses of those postwar concerns they considered most pressing. *Je Maintiendrai* eschewed any formal political or religious affiliation, and Catholics, Protestants, liberals, humanists, conservatives, and moderate social democrats all found representation within this new organization. The aggregate of these various perspectives equaled a fairly centrist position, although in certain matters, the group distinctly leaned to the right or left.³ Further, by seeking to facilitate inter-resistance cooperation, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* actively worked toward *doorbraak*, or rather what they understood to be *doorbraak*. For instance, editor Wüthrich organized the underground “Press Group” (*Perskern* or *Perscontact*), which in the spring of 1944 repeatedly assembled representatives of the various press groups for common meetings.⁴ Beginning

papers – and produced in print runs of approximately 5,500 copies. The first printed number appeared in July 1943 in an initial print run of 9,000 copies. From here, the paper continued to expand, with maximum circulation reaching 40,000 copies. In January 1945, *Je Maintiendrai* began to appear as a weekly national paper. Local editions, their content based on the text of the central Amsterdam version, continued to appear throughout the country. In June 1943, *Je Maintiendrai* also began to issue a twice-weekly news bulletin entitled *Vrije Nieuws Centrale*, later known simply as *V.O.D.* For these and other details, see Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongde pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 124–125; testimony provided by Kees Viehoff on October 23, 1951, contained in Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 434.

A complete collection of *Je Maintiendrai* is contained in the *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication number 270, NIOD, Amsterdam. Interestingly, *Je Maintiendrai*'s editors numbered each volume as if the paper had appeared since 1940. Thus, issues appearing in 1943, which should be labeled as “Volume 1,” are labeled as “Volume 3.” Here, I have cited these issues as they appear, not as they should read.

³ Perhaps the greatest testament to *Je Maintiendrai*'s success in establishing itself as a politically independent, nondenominational clandestine paper was the bewilderment it engendered among Dutch authorities in London. In his testimony before the postwar parliamentary inquiry charged with investigating the government's wartime conduct, editor Kees Viehoff claimed that his paper confounded the government-in-exile. At times, authorities in London thought *Je Maintiendrai* to be a paper produced by Catholic civil servants and at other times believed it to be socialist. Neither was true, Viehoff explained, although the paper's staff did include many Catholics: Viehoff, postwar testimony, Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 434.

⁴ As Lydia Winkel explains, both *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland* refused to participate in this Press Group, as their editors thought it unnecessary and dangerous to assemble such representatives in one place. Moreover, they saw their organizations as more than simply “press groups”: *De ongedrongde pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 29.

in early 1944, *Je Maintiendrai* also worked closely with *Christofoor*, a small progressive Catholic paper.

During its first year of existence, *Je Maintiendrai* took on a number of contributing staff writers, among them former Unie leaders such as J. G. Suurhoff. At the time of the German invasion, Suurhoff was a newly minted member of the SDAP's delegation in the second chamber of parliament. When Seyss-Inquart disbanded all parliamentary institutions in July of 1940, Suurhoff threw his efforts into the Nederlandse Unie and soon came to lead the Unie's Amsterdam branch. Twice he was arrested and imprisoned because his branch's storefront office had been deemed too "pro-Orange" by local Dutch Nazis and German authorities. When in April 1941 the organization's ruling triumvirate decided that Jews could no longer be "full members" of the Unie, Suurhoff resigned his position and membership but remained in contact with other leading Unie members. He was arrested yet again in May of 1942, this time as part of a German sweep directed against prominent Dutch citizens, including former Unie leaders, and he was interned at Gestel. With his release in June of the following year, he aligned himself with *Je Maintiendrai*, where he would work alongside former Unie associates and other recently released hostages.⁵

Yet other new additions to *Je Maintiendrai* claimed no prior affiliation with the Unie. These were either recently released Gestel hostages or those who had spent the previous years engaged in resistance activity. Before the war, Willem Verkade had served as the general secretary of the Liberal Protestant Youth Movement (*Vrijzinnig Christelijke Jeugdbeweging*) and editor of a number of left-leaning publications. Arrested on account of his resistance work but then released two months later, he would join *Je Maintiendrai* in May 1943. Willem Banning was well known in both religious and political circles. As a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church, academic theologian, editor of a weekly paper, and active SDAP member, Banning advocated what he termed "religious socialism": a principled but practicable synthesis of socialist, Christian, and humanist worldviews intended to create a more just society. Banning, too, had been detained in May 1942 and held in Gestel. With his release in December 1943, he allied himself with the work of *Je Maintiendrai*. Before the war, H. Brugmans, a scholar of French, had represented the SDAP in the second chamber of parliament. Also detained in May 1942 and held in Gestel, Brugmans was

⁵ Bob Reinalda, biographical entry for Jacobus Gerardus Suurhoff, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 8 (2001), 273–279, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/suurhoff.html>; A. A. de Jonge, "Suurhoff, Jacobus Gerardus Gerardus (1905–1967)", *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 2* (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1985), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn2/suurhof>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for J. G. Suurhoff, accessible via "Personen" search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

not released until April 1944, at which point he also began working for *Je Maintiendrai*. A longtime supporter of political renewal, he now used the clandestine paper as a vessel for this cause.⁶

Of those who joined the organization in the course of 1943, Willem Schermerhorn bears particular mention, as he would play a particularly active role in the decolonization of the Indies: Appointed by the queen to lead the country's first postwar government, Schermerhorn later served as the head of the Dutch commission sent to negotiate with the leaders of the newly declared Republic of Indonesia in 1946 and 1947. However, he had been far less involved in prewar politics than his other colleagues at *Je Maintiendrai*. In 1926, he joined the faculty of the Technical University at Delft as a professor of engineering, and from 1938 until the arrival of the Germans in May 1940, Schermerhorn served as the chairman of the Unity through Democracy (*Eenheid door Democratie*) organization. Created in response to the Dutch Nazi Party's strong showing in the country's provincial elections of 1935, Unity through Democracy, as its name implies, promoted democratic principles and practices as an alternative to fascism and communism. By virtue of these prewar activities, Schermerhorn had placed himself on the Germans' radar. In May 1942, he was arrested by the Germans and sent to Gestel, where he would spend the next year and a half. After his release in December 1943, he immediately threw himself into clandestine work. In addition to writing for *Je Maintiendrai*, Schermerhorn served on the advisory board of the LKP (Landelijke Knokploegen), the national association of armed National Action Groups that procured necessary documentation and other materials for those in hiding from the Germans. Later in the war, Schermerhorn would also assume a prominent role within both the larger inter-resistance Grand Council of the Resistance and its dedicated Indies Commission.⁷

⁶ Rob Hartmans, biographical entry for Willem Banning, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 6 (1995), 16–23, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/banning.html>; H. Zonneberg, “Banning, Willem (1888–1971),” *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 3 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1989), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn3/banning>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entries for W. Banning and H. Brugmans, accessible via “Personen” search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

⁷ These brief biographical sketches draw from the Liberation Issue of *Je Maintiendrai*, May 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 21) and Madelon de Keizer, *De gijzelaars van Sint Michielsgestel: Een elite-beraad in oorlogstijd* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A.W. Sijthoff, 1979), 162–163. For Schermerhorn specifically, see Mies Campfens, biographical entry for Willem Schermerhorn, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 6 (1995), 199–206, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/schermerhorn-w.html>; H. W. von der Dunk, “Schermerhorn, Willem (1894–1977),” *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 1 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1979), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn1/schermerhorn>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for W. Schermerhorn, accessible via “Personen” search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

Like its peer organizations, *Je Maintiendrai* experienced a series of devastating arrests, the first of which came in July 1943 with the apprehension of a group of distributors. Then, in early June 1944, another of the paper's leading distributors was apprehended on the train with a printing plate of the latest edition, which set in motion a series of arrests ultimately leading to *Je Maintiendrai*'s Utrecht headquarters. Here, German authorities seized a number of resisters, including founding editors Vlot and Wüthrich. All of those detained, minus Vlot and Wüthrich, were released on September 5, 1944, in anticipation of the Allies' imminent arrival and subsequent liberation of the occupied Netherlands. On October 26, 1944, these two editors were executed as part of a reprisal action directed against resistance activities in the city of Haarlem.⁸ The capture of these two leading figures triggered sweeping changes within the *Je Maintiendrai* organization. During the summer of 1944, the group's headquarters moved from Utrecht to Amsterdam, where Kees Viehoff, the sole remaining editor, was joined by two new editors and a handful of contributing writers, including P. J. Schmidt and Geert Ruygers.⁹

Schmidt, whether as a vocal presence in the SDAP or as the founder of the Independent Socialist Party, had long served as a leading if somewhat polarizing figure in socialist politics. In the early 1930s, he had supported the immediate, unequivocal independence of the East Indies, in direct opposition to SDAP leadership, which would accept independence only under certain conditions and not at the present moment. Ruygers, a former high school teacher, had held a prominent position in the *Brabantia Nostra* organization, which supported the creation of a corporative and Catholic "greater Netherlands" encompassing all territories and peoples seen as historically, linguistically, and culturally Dutch. From 1936 to 1940, Ruygers served as the editor in chief for the organization's journal, also titled *Brabantia Nostra*.¹⁰ Both Schmidt and Ruygers were also former Unie leaders. Schmidt had served on the General Secretariat of the Unie, holding this position until the organization's dissolution in December 1941, and Ruygers worked as the editor in chief for the organization's weekly paper, *De Unie*, from July 1940 until its final issue of September 1941. Schmidt was also no stranger to

⁸ Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 125. For further details about the *Je Maintiendrai* organization (including, as applicable, the date of death for its leading members), see also the questionnaire completed by its leaders for the Grand Council of the Resistance at war's end: File 3C, Grootte Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit (GAC), Collection 184, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁹ The fourth editor, F. J. M. Oremus, had remained in Utrecht when the organization moved to Amsterdam in the summer of 1944 and thus did not continue in his position on the editorial board of *Je Maintiendrai*.

¹⁰ J. L. G. Oudheusden, *Brabantia nostra: een gewestelijke beweging voor fierheid en "schooner" leven, 1935-1951*. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het Zuiden van Nederland, 84 (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1990), 81-84.

the underground political discussions in the occupied Netherlands: In April 1942, he had penned *Vrij Nederland's* first major piece dedicated to the Netherlands' imperial future. His departure from the *Vrij Nederland* organization does not seem to have been prompted by any kind of falling-out with its editors or staff; rather, sometime after contributing this colonial analysis, he simply parted ways with the organization. In August 1944, and after working with the *Je Maintiendrai* organization in various capacities during the course of the previous year, both Schmidt and Ruygers were promoted to the paper's editorial board.¹¹

Drawing on the expertise provided by this new group of writers and editors, *Je Maintiendrai* sought to lay the groundwork for postwar renewal, expected to come in the form of new, more inclusive political parties. Such parties would emerge from the Netherlands' great democratic traditions but at the same time bridge the long-standing divisions unnecessarily dividing the Dutch people. With the liberation of the southern part of the country in the fall of 1944, *Je Maintiendrai* put these plans into effect. The paper now began to appear in a "legal," or above-ground, format, and Schmidt, Suurhof, Schermerhorn, Banning, and Brugmans – among others – announced the creation of Dutch People's Movement (NVB).¹² However, much to their disappointment, neither this new party nor this process of renewal would make significant inroads during the immediate postwar period. As the NVB failed, so too did the *Je Maintiendrai* paper, which had been expected to serve as the official organ of this new mass movement. Following the NVB's poor electoral showing in 1946, the organization's leaders offloaded the paper as a cost-cutting measure.¹³ Within a year of liberation, the renewal-minded perspective of *Je Maintiendrai* had disappeared. Before this would happen, though, the organization aimed to reorient the nation's colonial policies in a more centrist direction.

MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME: *JE MAINTIENDRAI* LOOKS TO THE EMPIRE

In early August 1943, *Je Maintiendrai* entered the underground colonial discussions by urging calm, rational decision making: Pressing problems

¹¹ For biographical details on these two men, see Piet Hoekman, biographical entry for Petrus Johannes Schmidt, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 8 (2001), 241–248, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/schmidt-p.html>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for G. J. N. M. Ruygers, accessible via "Personen" search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

¹² Manifesto of the NVB, published as "Oproep van de Nederlandse Volksbeweging," *Je Maintiendrai*, Liberation Issue, May 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 21), 9.

¹³ For the fate of *Je Maintiendrai* as linked to that of the NVB, see Madelon de Keizer, *De gijzelaars van Sint Michielsgestel: Een elite-beraad in oorlogstijd* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A.W. Sijthoff, 1979), 175.

did not lend themselves to easy solutions, and the postwar relationship between the Netherlands and East Indies was a complex topic indeed. Against those other clandestine organizations and publications that had come to support the queen's plans contained in her December 1942 speech, *Je Maintiendrai* argued that these groups had yet to fully explore the precise form and nature of the relationship between the Netherlands and the Indies, nor had they devoted ample attention to the queen's commonwealth idea. This lack of attention could be a positive development, for it revealed that fellow resisters did not have enough information to render an informed judgment. Caution of this sort was to be applauded. Unfortunately, *Je Maintiendrai* explained, this lack of information could also endow authority where none was deserved. Because some of the so-called solutions being bandied about were simplified, misguided, and otherwise ill-founded, *Je Maintiendrai* wished to nuance and contextualize these colonial discussions. In other words, this group sought to set the record straight for the benefit of a misinformed nation. These resisters did not blame the clandestine press alone for this state of affairs, for the public at large had also adopted a "flippant attitude" that failed to account for the problematic nature of Indonesian "self-rule." According to *Je Maintiendrai*, prevailing sentiment seemed to say "The Indies? Oh yes, after the war, we will give them self-government, and it'll manage itself very well!" Certainly, self-rule was an attractive and simple solution, but hardly a real solution at all, *Je Maintiendrai* argued. The last few decades had seen the birth of a great number of new Indies political parties, both native and Dutch; some of these parties had constructive intentions, and others had more destructive ones. The presence of the latter not only pointed to the "very difficult" task entrusted to Dutch colonial authorities, but revealed that this task, this burden carried by the Netherlands, could not be ended anytime soon.¹⁴ Such was the view professed by the *Je Maintiendrai* organization: as long as the East Indies remained politically unstable and even volatile, the Dutch would continue to rule the colony just as they had for centuries.

In direct contrast with *Vrij Nederland* and *Het Parool*, which saw in the queen's speech evidence of a new progressive colonial policy, *Je Maintiendrai* perceived continuity and the natural evolution of policy over the course of decades. For these resisters, the supposedly "new" conceptions of cooperation and equality merely reflected the "logical consequence of Dutch administrative policy in the Indies since 1900," not any sudden appreciation for "the freedom struggle of the Indonesian nationalists." According to *Je Maintiendrai*, the Dutch had decided to institute such reforms long before the war, and the war now accelerated this timetable for reform. Should the Dutch simply "push through" complete self-government, however, they would perform a grave injustice to "the magnificent work that had been

¹⁴ "Indië," *Je Maintiendrai*, August 5, 1943 (Vol. 3. No. 3), 4.

accomplished in the Indies.” For these reasons, the Dutch must privilege granting “other forms of equality,” to be determined by mutual consultation and based on “what the Europeans and natives had accomplished in the past and wished to accomplish in the future.”¹⁵ In any case, the pace and scope of reform would be dictated by authorities in The Hague and Batavia, which would nonetheless take into account Indonesian desires and aspirations as they planned for the future of the Dutch empire. *Je Maintiendrai*’s perspective could be expected of an organization that included the largest collection of prewar politicians among its editorial board and staff writers. By emphasizing developments prior to 1940, these resisters validated their prior accomplishments as political thinkers and lawmakers. They seemed to believe that their prewar political activities had made them political experts, and that they alone knew which policies would best serve both Dutch colonial interests and the Indonesian people. Collectively, they advanced the position that gradual, Dutch-directed reform represented the only way forward.

Like other resisters concerned with the present situation in the Indies, the editors of *Je Maintiendrai* could only extrapolate from the limited information at their disposal in the German-occupied Netherlands: All resisters were forced to read between the lines of the precious snippets of news they received. Yet the reportage and interpretations offered by this group clearly diverged from those provided by the other leading organizations, so much so that *Je Maintiendrai*’s analysis of colonial affairs appeared to be rooted in particular prewar understandings of Dutch colonialism, not present wartime circumstances. For years now, *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid* had tried to rehabilitate the Indonesian nationalists in the eyes of their fellow citizens, who were conditioned to view these leaders and their cause with distrust and fear. Beginning in December 1941, Frans Goedhart and his fellow editors at *Het Parool* consistently called attention to the moderate nature of the Indonesian nationalist movement and the reasonable, well-deserved reforms requested by nationalist leaders.¹⁶ In sharp contrast, *Je Maintiendrai*’s August 1943 analysis of Indonesian nationalism acknowledged the existence of nationalist moderates but argued that the Indonesian nationalist movement continued to be dominated by communist extremists.

As explained by the underground politicians and intellectuals of *Je Maintiendrai*, the typical extremist had left native society to study in the West, but upon returning to his traditional Eastern society, became aimless and disoriented. Enticed by revolutionary slogans but unable to discern between theory and practice, these natives were driven to uncontrollable actions. Such actions were “sometimes paired with terror,” as seen with the

¹⁵ “Indië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, August 5, 1943 (Vol. 3. No. 3), 4.

¹⁶ “Naar grooter eenheid van ons rijk. De banden met Indonesië dienen versterkt te worden. Democratiseering van Indië’s staatsbestel is noodzakelijk,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 4–5.

communist-led revolts of 1925 and 1926. Unlike *Het Parool*, which regretted that extremists as well as law-abiding moderate nationalists had been subjected to the same harsh penal measures launched in the wake of these revolts, *Je Maintiendrai* lauded the colonial government's hard-line response (only adopted after "much hesitation"), as it had given Indonesian nationalism "a push in the right direction." The arrests not only helped destroy the PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party, but they had made the leaders of other nationalist parties realize the danger posed by these extremists: An increasing number of Indonesians came to understand that the path to political advancement lay not with agitation but with economic and cultural development, and as a result, they began to cooperate with the colonial government. The colonial government welcomed this new position, now electing to intervene in this "natural course of development" only as necessary to spur along the "maturation process." In other words, the Dutch gladly worked with Indonesian nationalists of the cooperating sort, providing these Indonesians with the proper balance of paternal guidance and hands-off detachment. Lending its support to this policy, the *Je Maintiendrai* organization trotted out familiar themes, proclaiming that "this lofty task, which the Dutch have accomplished in the Indies, is a difficult and often thankless one." Yet it was also a righteous, fruitful task too. Perhaps the greatest testament to the Netherlands' tremendous achievements was "the fact that now, under the Japanese occupation, no single nationalist leader is unfaithful to the Government." Indeed, as *Je Maintiendrai* proclaimed in August 1943, "the attitude of the nationalist leaders and their followers is the crown on our colonial policy!"¹⁷

Such grandiose rhetoric aside, these underground politicians and intellectuals meant what they said: For the remainder of the war, *Je Maintiendrai* maintained that nearly every single Indonesian refused to work with the Japanese occupiers. In early April 1945, for instance, the paper reported that in a recent press conference, the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor General of the Indies, Hubertus van Mook, had announced that of the 150,000 Indonesians recently liberated by the Allies, "only two had betrayed their countrymen."¹⁸ This seemingly momentous piece of reportage did, in fact, originate with recent events overseas. In the summer of 1944, Allied forces liberated Dutch New Guinea and a number of other islands located in the eastern reaches of the archipelago. Then, in the early months of 1945, van Mook visited these territories, and on his return to London, he spoke publicly of his experiences and observations. In a March 5 broadcast of "Radio Oranje," van Mook described the refugee situation and the far-reaching physical destruction he witnessed, as well the remarkable spirit of solidarity and cooperation between Dutchman and Indonesian in these

¹⁷ "Indische nationalisme," *Je Maintiendrai*, August 31, 1943 (Vol. 4. No. 44), 3-4.

¹⁸ "Twee verraders op de 150,000," *Je Maintiendrai*, April 1945, Issue 1 (Vol. 5 No. 17), 5.

liberated areas. However, neither this nor subsequent statements issued by the Lieutenant Governor General addressed this question of collaboration, let alone the exact number of Indonesian “collaborators.”¹⁹ Yet firmly convinced that the Indonesian people stood as one with the Dutch, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* passed on unverifiable claims corresponding with their understanding of Indonesian nationalism and wartime developments.²⁰

Not surprisingly, *Je Maintiendrai*'s sweeping claims and detailed analyses engendered their share of controversy. Following the publication of these discussions, the editors received a number of critical letters from readers disappointed in both the depth and scope of *Je Maintiendrai*'s analysis.²¹ In late September 1943, these editors acknowledged that their previous commentary had caused both misunderstanding and even irritation on the part of those who had misread it and, as a result, imputed to *Je Maintiendrai* claims it had not made. With their discussion of Indonesian nationalism, these resisters had tried to highlight certain developments they deemed most significant for an otherwise ill-informed public to know, but in the process they had also offended those readers already familiar with the East Indies. The *Je Maintiendrai* organization was especially concerned by Axis claims of a fierce struggle in the Indies between the Dutch “oppressor” and the Indonesian “freedom fighter,” and sought to provide readers with the

¹⁹ Van Mook's March 5 radio address (cited, in *Je Maintiendrai*, as delivered on March 6) was reprinted, in full, as “Radio Rede van Dr. H. J. van Mook, Luitenant-Generaal van Nederlandsche Indië” in the London version of *Vrij Nederland*, March 17, 1945, 215. An English-language discussion of Van Mook's visit to Dutch New Guinea and his subsequent speech also appeared in the Netherlands Information Bureau's fortnightly bulletin, the *Netherlands News*, published in New York: “Dr. Van Mook describes situation in the N.E.I.,” *Netherlands News*, March 15, 1945, 18–19. Neither these publications nor *The Times* of London or the *New York Times* mention Van Mook's discussion of Indonesian collaboration with this degree of specificity. On the contrary, as reported in these sources, van Mook's public statements endorsed the present and future prospects of Dutch-Indonesian cooperation.

²⁰ Nor was *Je Maintiendrai* the only organization to pass on such unsubstantiated claims. On March 25, 1945, a newspaper issued in liberated Limberg, the southernmost province in the European Netherlands, reported that “Dr. Van Mook has declared that among the 150,000 liberated Indonesians, only two traitors have been found”: *Maas- en Roerbode*, March 20, 1945 (Vol. 1 No. 46), 2. The nearly identical wording of these statements indicates that in all likelihood this “above-ground” newspaper and the still-underground *Je Maintiendrai* drew on the same source of information, probably a news bulletin of the sort feverishly produced by countless clandestine organizations during the final months of the war.

²¹ Amazingly, all of the major clandestine publications maintained underground networks allowing them to receive letters and financial contributions from the general public, yet my examination of German police records – such as those contained in the Polizeidienststellen in den Niederlanden, R70 NL collection of the Deutsches Reich Archiv (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde) – has revealed no instance whereby resisters of these leading publications were discovered or apprehended on account of these letter services. Rather, in their pursuit of resisters, German authorities commonly relied on the assistance of Dutch double agents as well as unsolicited information provided by everyday Dutch citizens.

truth: Namely, “only a small group of nationalists,” constituting an exception to the “dominant norm of productive cooperation between the colonial government and the nationalists,” had positioned itself against the Dutch. Despite whatever these critical letters alleged, the editors of *Je Maintiendrai* claimed that they never intended to portray the Indonesian nationalist movement in an “evil light.” Still other readers were apparently “disappointed that the article contained no perspective, no suggestions and directives for the future.” Against this charge, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* explained that this omission had been quite intentional, because, as they had already noted, the “provision of directives for the future is a very tricky task” requiring long and serious deliberation. This unwillingness to issue a clear pronouncement on this subject was not to be confused with disregard or lack of interest, and they urged their readers to exercise patience until they had sufficiently “worked through” this topic and could produce an appropriately future-oriented discussion.²²

If, at this point in time, the editorial board of *Je Maintiendrai* – newly expanded to include such figures as Ruygers, Schmidt, Suurhoff, and Verkade – hesitated to speculate about the political future of the East Indies, it displayed no such reticence when discussing the expected military battle for the archipelago. As early as October 1943, these resisters began to explore what they termed “our part in the liberation of Indonesia.” They rejected Germany’s repeated claims that, after March 1942, the Indies were lost to the Dutch forever, and they urged their readers to see these German claims for what they were: a feeble attempt to convince the Dutch that their nation could not stand on its own two feet without the East Indies and thereby to garner support for Nazi imperialist projects. Although acknowledging the Germans’ misguided intentions, *Je Maintiendrai* still found some merit in their claims. Indeed, indelible ties, both political and economic, connected the Netherlands and the East Indies. Without the East Indies, there could be “no resurrection of the Kingdom of the Netherlands,” or, put slightly differently, the reconquest of the East Indies was “an undeniable condition for the complete restoration of the empire.” For these reasons, the editors of *Je Maintiendrai* urged their fellow citizens to prepare for the battle ahead. Neither England nor America would present Indonesia to the Netherlands “as if on a serving platter.” Rather, the Dutch would have to fight for their colony, employing all of the military forces available to them and demonstrating the same bravery and sense of purpose seen during the previous battles against Germany and Japan in 1940 and 1942. Moreover, because Dutch sailors and pilots continued to make noble sacrifices for the Allied cause, the Netherlands clearly deserved to participate in upcoming Allied missions, the most pressing of which would be “the joint recapture of South East Asia from the Japanese.” The liberation of the motherland might

²² “Nascrift over ‘Indische Nationalisme,’” *Je Maintiendrai*, September 24, 1943 (Vol. 4 No. 5), 4.

appear imminent – at least according to *Je Maintiendrai* – but now was not the time for complacency. The Dutch could not afford to “rest on their laurels,” as the “most supreme effort” stood before them in the form of “the reconquest of South East Asia, and of the Dutch East Indies especially.”²³ Naturally, we know that the end of the war stood a distant two years on the horizon at this point, but these resisters anticipated a double liberation – the European Netherlands from its German occupiers and the East Indies from its Japanese occupiers – with every Allied battlefield victory.

As perhaps could be expected from an organization consisting largely of career politicians, *Je Maintiendrai* did not merely intellectualize the prospects of liberation. Rather, the organization embarked on extensive discussions examining how, precisely, the Dutch might liberate the East Indies. According to *Je Maintiendrai*, the Netherlands did not want for capable, battle-tested, and valiant men prepared to play their part in the battle for the Indies, but this did not mean that the nation was ready to fight the Japanese; Dutch military forces continued to suffer from antiquated command structures and training coupled with a shortage of modern equipment. To combat these issues, *Je Maintiendrai* proposed the creation of a unified army, a new Royal Dutch Army (*Koninklijk Nederlandsche Leger*). Before the war, the land forces of the Kingdom of the Netherlands had been divided into the Dutch Army (*Nederlandsche Leger*), charged with protecting the European Netherlands, and the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL), trained and stationed in the Dutch East Indies; neither Surinam nor Curaçao maintained their own armed forces. A new, unified army would defend all parts of the Dutch empire, and conscripted troops, regardless of where they were enlisted, would rotate among the various realms of the kingdom. Intended to ensure the long-term future of the kingdom, such changes would need to be implemented as soon as the country had been liberated from German rule. Conscripts and volunteers would have to be trained in the use of modern weapons, and all officers would need to undergo a highly-concentrated yet effective retraining. Time was of the essence if the Netherlands wished to send, and quickly, “a modern army of at least 100,000 men to South Asia.”²⁴ If *Je Maintiendrai* appeared slightly skeptical that the Dutch could muster an army this large and well trained, the organization did not doubt the Netherlands’ role and

²³ “Ons Aandeel in de Bevrijding van Indonesië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, October 1943, Issue 2 (Vol. 4. No. 7), 2. Here, the editors of *Je Maintiendrai* cited then Minister of Colonies van Mook, who, on September 12, 1943, had declared that “if the Netherlands wished to remain great,” the Dutch people, upon being liberated from the Germans, must be prepared to liberate the tens of thousands of their fellow citizens still in Japanese hands. Similarly, in a statement dated September 21, Prime Minister Gerbrandy had affirmed that the soon-to-be-liberated Dutch must convert their “new-found unity into political action” by participating in the coming liberation of the Dutch East Indies. Gerbrandy’s speech to this effect appeared in full in the London-issued *Vrij Nederland* dated October 2, 1943, 291.

²⁴ “Het Nieuwe Leger,” *Je Maintiendrai*, October 1943, Issue 2 (Vol. 4. No. 7), 5.

responsibility to retake the East Indies from its Japanese oppressor. One way or another, the Dutch would complete this mighty mission.

When, in the fall of 1943, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* first set their sights on this expected battle for the Dutch colony, they also revealed their organization's evolving political stance. Only a few months prior, these resisters hesitated to speculate as to the future relationship between the Netherlands and the East Indies, because such an important matter required clear-headed analysis based on solid information, neither of which were in abundance at the time. Yet when discussing the expected military engagement in the Indies, the self-same group of politicians and intellectuals began to voice their preference for a unified kingdom nonetheless allowing greater autonomy for its component parts. Explaining how this new imperial Royal Dutch Army would function, *Je Maintiendrai* noted, "on the one hand, emphasis must be placed upon the equal rights of the various realms of the Kingdom and on the ever-increasing creation and promotion of the national self-government of the Indonesian people in accordance with their level of maturity." Still, in all matters, whether military, political, economic, diplomatic, or cultural, the Kingdom of the Netherlands must act as one unit. More than ever, in fact, the kingdom must "appear to the outside to act as a self-contained entity." It must show the world that East and West are not irreconcilably opposed to one another but, on the contrary, should work together "in productive mutual cooperation, towards prosperity in each area."²⁵ If their leftist colleagues at other organizations openly welcomed the prospects of a Dutch commonwealth or another "layered sovereignty" arrangement, *Je Maintiendrai* editors Viehoff, Oremus, Vlot, and Wüthrich repeatedly returned to the notion of Rijkseenheid, or imperial unity. Postwar reforms needed to respect the territorial integrity of the empire, even if "equal rights" and "self-government" granted the various realms of the kingdom greater control over their internal affairs. Just as colonial reform constituted the natural consequence of decades' worth of careful deliberation and planning, so too must the Dutch empire reflect this natural unity. In fact, as *Je Maintiendrai* announced in December 1943, the "unbreakable unity" between the various territories constituted "the essential basis for the resurrection of the kingdom of the Netherlands!"²⁶ For this group of resisters, the coming battle for the Indies constituted an all-important first step on this path to imperial resurrection.

TROUW: THE NEW VOICE OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONSERVATISM

Whereas the *Je Maintiendrai* organization maintained an unaffiliated but largely centrist position, *Trouw* – its title translated as "Loyalty" or

²⁵ "Het Nieuwe Leger," *Je Maintiendrai*, October 1943, Issue 2 (Vol. 4. No. 7), 5. See, too, "Indonesie en het Nederlandsch geweten," *Je Maintiendrai*, Christmas 1943 Issue, 8–9.

²⁶ "Indonesie en het Nederlandsch geweten," *Je Maintiendrai*, Christmas 1943 Issue, 8–9.

“Faithfulness” – gladly assumed a position on the right of the clandestine political spectrum. Although also formally unaffiliated with any one political grouping or denomination, the *Trouw* organization nonetheless functioned as the unofficial voice of the now-underground Anti-Revolutionary Party. Founded in 1879 by preacher Abraham Kuyper, the Anti-Revolutionary Party (*Anti-Revolutionnaire Partij* or ARP) promoted the political and religious interests of the country’s orthodox Calvinist population. Here, the “anti-revolutionary” moniker signified Kuyper’s rejection of French Revolution ideals and legacies: specifically, secularism, liberalism, and an increased government presence within civil society. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Kuyper’s vision found expression in the form of Hendrik Colijn, who alternately served as party leader, cabinet member, and on-and-off-again prime minister. At the time of the war, the nation’s Orthodox Protestant community was not exceptionally large. According to the census of 1930, the last to be completed before the outbreak of war, 34.5 percent of the Dutch population self-identified as Dutch Reformed (*Nederlands Hervormd*), which was considered the more liberal of the major Calvinist denominations. Another 9.4 percent identified themselves as Reformed, or *Gereformeerd*, indicating their adherence to the more Orthodox Calvinism of Kuyper, Colijn, and the Anti-Revolutionary Party.²⁷ However, these pre-war religious affiliations did not entirely correspond with Protestant voting patterns. In the 1937 elections for the second chamber of Dutch parliament, the orthodox ARP garnered 16.4 percent of total votes cast, whereas other Protestant parties, both liberal and orthodox, netted an additional 9.7 percent of votes.²⁸ The ARP’s appeal clearly transcended its narrow religious base, and in the first decades of the century, Colijn and the ARP wielded no small measure of political influence and power.

Four months into the occupation, German authorities banned all public meetings of the ARP and the other orthodox Protestant party, the Christian Historical Union (*Christelijke Historische Unie* or CHU). In response, Colijn

²⁷ For 1930 census figures gathered by the Netherlands’ Central Bureau of Statistics, see G. A. Irwin and J. J. M. van Holsteyn, “Decline of the Structured Model of Electoral Competition,” in *Politics in the Netherlands: How Much Change?* eds. Hans Daalder and Galen A. Irwin (London: Frank Cass, 1989), Table 7, 34.

²⁸ These 1937 voting statistics are contained in Hans Daalder, “The Netherlands: Opposition in a Segmented Society,” in *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, ed. Robert A. Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), Appendix Tables 6.3 and 6.5 (pages 423, 425). For an English-language discussion of the origins and contours of twentieth-century Dutch politics, including the rise of political Calvinism, see Hans Daalder, “The Mould of Dutch Politics: Themes for Comparative Inquiry,” in *Politics in the Netherlands: How Much Change?* eds. Hans Daalder and Galen A. Irwin, 1–20. More extensive Dutch-language accounts include D. Th. Kuiper, “Het Nederlandse protestantisme in ontwikkelingsperspectief (1860–1940)” and J. de Buijn, “Partij of beginsel? De antirevolutionaire en christelijk-historische richting in de Nederlandse politiek,” in *Een land nog niet in kaart gebracht: Aspecten van het protestants-christelijk leven in Nederland in de jaren 1880–1940*, ed. J. de Bruin (Amsterdam: Passage, 1987), 1–25, 27–58.

reconstituted his party into smaller units under the authority of twelve and later seventeen designated “apostles,” who were to oversee smaller meeting groups of approximately twenty members apiece. The size of these smaller local groups was intentional, because, as Colijn and other ARP leaders were well aware, their number of participants fell short of constituting a “public meeting,” now disallowed by the occupation authorities. Employing this new grassroots approach to political organizing, the ARP was able to propagate its principles and policies among party faithful.²⁹ When, in July 1941, all other political parties except the Dutch Nazi Party and the Nederlandse Unie were banned, these ARP meetings continued underground. This approach constituted something of an about-face for Colijn, who in the summer of 1940 advocated cooperation with the German authorities. Shortly after issuing such appeals, however, Colijn adopted a less accommodating and occasionally confrontational stance toward the occupying forces. For these reasons, he was arrested in late June 1941 as part of a massive action directed against the ARP. The most prominent Anti-Revolutionary leader of his day would spend the next few years in various German holding centers and concentration camps. On September 16, 1944, and while detained in the Ilmenau camp near Erfurt, Germany, he suffered a fatal heart attack at the age of seventy-five. After Colijn’s arrest in 1941, ARP leaders and members maintained the underground network and organizational efforts he had set in motion during the early months of the occupation. Three years into the war, the country’s orthodox Protestants could finally claim their own clandestine press organization, staffed largely by devout Calvinists and charged with propagating the group’s political and religious agenda.

This is not to say that until this point Dutch Calvinists and other Orthodox Protestants shied away from resistance work and clandestine activity. Quite the contrary is true, for individual Protestant resisters were consistently involved in nearly every facet of resistance work long before *Trouw* made its debut. Further, *Trouw* owed its existence to a number of *Vrij Nederland* resisters who, citing an array of ideological as well as logistical differences in opinion, eventually severed their ties with that organization. Throughout the course of 1942, Wim Speelman and Henk Hos, the two young resisters jointly responsible for the physical production and distribution of *Vrij Nederland*, repeatedly clashed with editor Henk van Randwijk. Speelman and Hos wished for more authority over technical aspects of the paper, but van Randwijk and his coeditor Arie van Namen preferred a tighter, more centralized structure overseeing all parts of the production process. Van Randwijk also called on Speelman and Hos to focus their resistance efforts exclusively on *Vrij Nederland*, lest their continued involvement in other

²⁹ Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder note that this approach, although largely intended to maintain existing connections, won the ARP new members too: *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* (’s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 148.

illegal activities such as espionage endanger their colleagues at the clandestine paper. Speelman and Hos were hardly the only disgruntled members of the *Vrij Nederland* organization, for a mutiny was brewing among the paper's technical staff at this time too. The distributors working in the northern part of the country, most of whom were Calvinist, repeatedly made known their displeasure with the paper's seemingly socialist-leaning editorials and, specifically, van Randwijk's recent calls for the creation of a directed economy after the war. Citing their fundamental disagreement with these ideas, these distributors refused to deliver the paper.³⁰

As if such problems were not enough, the Germans captured and detained nearly the entire editorial board of *Vrij Nederland* in June 1942, but unaware of this fact, German authorities released their prisoners after four weeks. While imprisoned, coeditor Gesina van der Molen – a journalist by training, professor of law, and devout Calvinist – seriously reconsidered her role in the organization.³¹ As she explained after the war, she believed that *Vrij Nederland* had strayed from its origins as a Christian paper; it had become overtly politicized in a secular and politically leftist direction that made her uncomfortable.³² At approximately the same time, Speelman and Hos decided to leave *Vrij Nederland* and flee to England. In November 1942, they were apprehended while attempting to escape the country, foiled by a notorious Dutch infiltrator who had penetrated the entire network of clandestine press organizations. Hos would be executed in May 1944, but Speelman was able to escape from German custody. Having already decided not to return to *Vrij Nederland*, he reunited with van der Molen, who had since left her position as coeditor. The two now tapped into their various personal connections within the Calvinist and the larger Protestant

³⁰ Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 44–45; Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 282.

³¹ Van der Molen was no stranger to the ARP political scene, as her father represented the party in the second chamber for nearly twenty years. However, in the 1920s and 1930s, van der Molen was more involved in Protestant intellectual life than politics per se. After working as a journalist for various Christian newspapers, she enrolled as a law student at the (Calvinist) Free University of Amsterdam, where she developed an interest in international law. In 1937, she became the first woman to earn her doctorate at the Free University. Shortly thereafter, she joined the faculty there: H. J. van de Streek, "Molen, Gezina Hermina Johanna van der (1892–1978)," in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 4* (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1994), also available at <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/molen>. For her involvement with *Vrij Nederland*, including her departure from the organization, see Gert van Klinken, *Strijdbaar en Omstreden: Een biografie van de calvinistische verzetsvrouw Gezina van der Molen* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006), 161–172.

³² In her postwar testimony, van der Molen explained that van Randwijk was not a communist but "very pro-Russian" and "pro-communist": Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 300.

communities. No less importantly, Speelman also brought with him *Vrij Nederland's* extensive network of printers and distributors. At the end of January 1943, they came out with the first issue of their new paper, *Oranje-bode* (Messenger of Orange) The entire contents of this issue – consisting of poems, photographs, and shorter descriptive articles, with all text appearing in bright orange typeface – paid homage to the royal family. Approximately 15,000 copies of this hastily assembled paper were distributed throughout the country.³³

Meanwhile, van der Molen had secured the cooperation of two leading members of the underground ARP, Johannes Schouten and J. A. H. J. S. Bruins Slot. For nearly twenty years before the war, Schouten, widely expected to be Colijn's successor, had represented the party in the second chamber of parliament. With Colijn's arrest in June 1941, Schouten assumed control of the underground-ARP, that is, until he too was arrested one year later. Released in December 1942 after a six-month prison stay, Schouten immediately resumed his position at the head of the underground party. Bruins Slot, a regional leader of the underground ARP, was also considered one of the party's rising stars. He was a lawyer by training, a well-regarded published writer and scholar, and, until recently, the mayor of Adorp, a small town in the northeastern province of Groningen. Bruins Slot had expressed an interest in expanding the scope of the group's work. In fact, by the time Van der Molen approached them, Bruins Slot and Schouten had already discussed the possibility of creating a clandestine ARP paper.³⁴ In a meeting held on January 30, 1943, the group – also including journalist E. van Ruller, one of Colijn's designated "apostles" – decided to go forth with the creation of a clandestine paper that was Protestant in orientation but directed toward the broader public. After debating Schouten's suggestion that the paper function as the official organ of the underground ARP,³⁵ this group decided that a less

³³ As described by Lydia Winkel, who also lists, without explanation, two different circulation numbers – 8,000 and 15,000 – for this sole issue of *Oranje-bode: De ondergrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 187, 247.

³⁴ H. J. van de Streek, "Molen, Gezina Hermina Johanna van der (1892–1978)," *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 4 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1994), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/molen>; D.F.J. Bosscher, "Bruins Slot, Jan Albertus Hendrik Johan Sieuwert (1906–1972)," and "Schouten, Johannes (1883–1963)," *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 2 (Nijhoff: Den Haag: 1985), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn2/bruinsslot> and <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn2/schouten>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entries for J. Schouten and J. A. H. J. S. Bruins Slot, accessible via "Personen" search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

³⁵ *De Standaard* had long served as the ARP's official daily newspaper. In September 1941, this and all other existing above-ground publications were put under the nominal control of the "Commission on Press Reorganization," led by hated Dutch collaborationist journalist Max Blokzijl. *De Standaard* continued to appear as a "legal" paper until it was finally banned by the Germans in 1944.

formal association with the party presented fewer logistical difficulties and dangers for the group's underground workers. Speelman pledged his support and that of his considerable network of resisters, but only on the condition that he be allowed free reign over the entire production and distribution process. This condition was accepted by the soon-to-be editors, who were more concerned with controlling the actual content of the paper.³⁶

Trouw debuted on February 18, 1943, its elaborate masthead depicting Queen Wilhelmina, the names of her daughters, a large crown, and the sun dawning on the horizon, all surrounded by chain links containing the phrase *God is met ons* ("God is with us").³⁷ If this graphic representation of the organization's principles and priorities were not sufficiently clear, Van der Molen, Schouten, and Bruins Slot immediately explained their paper's *raison d'être*. *Trouw* called on the Dutch people to remain ever faithful in the face of German lawlessness: to remain faithful to their religious convictions and the eternal truth, and loyal to their fatherland, the Dutch spirit, the lawful Dutch government, and the queen. In this darkest of days, living under tyranny and experiencing great suffering, the Dutch could draw strength and succor from the nation's rich history, which included both victories and defeats, struggles and blessings, all bestowed on them by God. God in turn called on His faithful to fulfill their duty and resist Nazi heathendom in its various forms and guises. This unequivocal profession of faith appeared alongside an equally explicit call to action, which was penned by editor Bruins Slot.³⁸ Resistance, he explained, could not be undertaken for mere opportunistic or tactical reasons, but rather must be principled and total. Such resistance seemed to be founded on "loyalty to our government and to our fatherland," but in actuality its origins lay with "the historic Dutch state, the historic Dutch people, a state and a people with an origin rooted in spiritual struggle, and therefore a state and people with a spiritual calling." After

³⁶ Van der Molen, testimony before the postwar parliamentary inquiry on July 26, 1950: Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C. ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 300–301.

³⁷ A note appearing on the front page of this first paper alerted readers that, in actuality, this was issue number two, because the first issue of this paper had appeared as *Oranje-bode*. A complete collection of *Trouw* can be found as part of the *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication number 840, NIOD, Amsterdam. Reproductions of all wartime issues also appear in Dick Houwaart, ed., *Trouw, een ondergrondse krant* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1978), and in the "Illegale *Trouw*" section of the now-daily newspaper's Web site: <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4868/trouw/integration/nmc/frameset/illegaletrouw/illegaletrouw.dhtml>

³⁸ "Onze naam" and "De grond van ons verzet," *Trouw*, February 18, 1943 (Vol. 1. No. 2), 1–2, 2–3. R.S. Zimmerman-Wolf, author of a volume of reprinted clandestine press articles, attributes this first piece, "Onze naam," to Schouten and the second, "De grond van ons verzet," to Bruins Slot: *Het Woord als Wapen: Keur uit de Nederlandse Ondergrondse Pers 1940–1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 401, 405, with these articles reprinted, in full, on pages 183–189.

all, the present conflict was a “spiritual war,” a “war of religion” both offensive and defensive in nature. It was defensive because all believing Christians now waged war against the godless Nationalist Socialists and their attempts to force their brand of heathenism on the Christian nation and people of the Netherlands. It was an offensive struggle because the Christian church fought to ensure its position and relevance. Fortunately, the church had already won the second battle, for never again would the church return to “the catacombs.”³⁹ Bruins Slot intimated that the war, as horrific as it was, held out the possibility for believers to win converts to the one true faith, a responsibility not to be taken lightly in this tremendous hour of need.

For the next two-plus years, the resisters of *Trouw* continued to proclaim their faith in God, the Netherlands, and the House of Orange, all the while calling on their fellow Christians to translate their beliefs into concrete action against the German occupiers. Obviously, *Trouw* shared this focus on opposition and resistance with other leading press organizations, which similarly encouraged their respective readers to engage in sabotage and rescue, or at the very least, simple foot-dragging, overt obstruction, and outright refusal to heed German orders. Yet *Trouw*’s political views and, more specifically, the religious underpinning of these views distinguished this organization from its peers. Although *Vrij Nederland* and *Je Maintiendrai* frequently acknowledged the Christian foundations of Dutch society, only *Trouw* framed the present conflict in such explicitly religious terms. For these Calvinist resisters, this war against National Socialist Germany constituted a sheer struggle for survival, in which one group alone – the righteous, just, and God-fearing – would emerge intact. In April 1943, for instance, coeditor Bruins Slot described the war as “an attack on Christian freedom. Our resistance is a fight for Christian freedom.”⁴⁰ Further, as the organization explained in a letter sent to the government-in-exile the following month, *Trouw* opposed Soviet-style socialism as well as National Socialism, because both aimed to impose a godless and authoritarian worldview on a Christian society and people.⁴¹

In making such claims, *Trouw*’s leaders positioned themselves against their purported rival, *Vrij Nederland*. For Speelman and van der Molen especially, van Randwijk’s *Vrij Nederland* represented all that was wrong

³⁹ “De grond van ons verzet,” *Trouw*, February 18, 1943 (Vol. 1. No. 2), 2–3.

⁴⁰ “De les van dezen oorlog,” *Trouw*, April 8, 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 4), 6.

⁴¹ This statement of purpose was necessary because, as *Trouw*’s leaders explained, the government-in-exile was ill-informed about actual circumstances on the ground in the occupied Netherlands. These resisters were especially concerned that their lawful government in London had come to see the sentiments expressed in *Vrij Nederland* as indicative of those held by both the resistance and the nation at large. *Trouw*, letter to the government-in-exile, dated May 1943, reprinted in Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7A (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 199–200.

with Dutch society. Yet *Vrij Nederland* was hardly the most overtly leftist and secular of the country's most influential clandestine papers. Leaving aside *De Waarheid* on the complete opposite end of the political spectrum, we can see that *Het Parool* seemed most antithetical to *Trouw*. For instance, *Het Parool* consistently called for massive political, social, and economic changes, including state regulation of certain leading industries and the end to religiously affiliated political parties. Repeatedly, the resisters of *Trouw* rejected these and other reforms proposed by Frans Goedhart and company. Moreover, *Het Parool* was avowedly secular, whereas *Vrij Nederland* at least acknowledged the formative nature and enduring significance of Christianity in Dutch society. Yet because of Speelman's and van der Molen's previous problems with Henk van Randwijk of *Vrij Nederland*, the editorial board of *Trouw* remained resistant to such points of convergence and instead positioned its views against those of *Vrij Nederland*.

If *Vrij Nederland* and other leading organizations lauded the prospects of postwar "renewal" and called for far-reaching changes in the country's political system, *Trouw* aimed to resurrect the prewar system, albeit with certain noteworthy but limited additions, such as a new all-inclusive Protestant political party.⁴² These conservative resisters did not believe that postwar governments should implement "radical measures," for such changes would not only undermine the nation's parliamentary democracy, but also pave the way toward dangerous "state socialism." *Trouw* especially spurned government involvement in cultural and religious matters, as these were domains where "the people" should remain solidly in control. Perhaps most significantly, the resisters of *Trouw* rejected the "modern optimism" emanating from both the underground political scene and the government-in-exile. "Better world" thinking of this sort envisioned a drastically different, more harmonious postwar world forged out of the fires of oppression and destruction: according to its advocates, these wartime experiences would naturally generate "wiser" people and policies. *Trouw* scorned this optimistic worldview as groundless and dangerous – just as dangerous, actually, as the lie of the German "New Order." According to this group of Calvinist politicians, thinkers, and activists, the world would be better only if and when people acted on their Christian duty to make it so.⁴³

⁴² See, for instance, the leading piece, "Naar een protestantisch volkspartij," in which the organization – and specifically Bruins Slot, who penned this article – proposed the creation of a new Christian People's Party (*Christelijke Volkspartij*) that would combine the ARP and the other orthodox Protestant party, the Christian Historical Union (CHU), into one larger Protestant political party: *Trouw*, Mid-February 1945 (Vol. 3 No. 2), 1. For Bruins Slot's authorship of this proposal, see Hille de Vries, with Henk Biersteker and Ben van Kam, *Een ophitsend geschrift: de geschiedenis van een illegale blad* (Utrecht: Uitgeverij Amboboeken, 1968), 70–80.

⁴³ Letter to the government-in-exile, dated May 1943: Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7A. ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 199–200.

If convinced that their views were right, just, and scripturally sound, the resisters of *Trouw* were also convinced that they had public opinion on their side. In a statement sent to the government-in-exile in May 1943, the *Trouw* organization claimed the support of both the general public and “many leading figures” in the occupied Netherlands, although the organization neither named these leading figures nor explained how they had assessed their support.⁴⁴ However, if circulation figures can be considered evidence that the organization’s views resonated with broad segments of the population, *Trouw*’s claims of widespread popular support appear sound. Originally circulated in print runs numbering in the tens of thousands, the paper soon reached a regular national circulation of 145,000 copies per issue, with a new issue appearing roughly every three weeks. In contrast, its nemesis *Vrij Nederland* would reach a maximum circulation of 100,000 per week and *Het Parool* 100,000 per month at their respective peak capacities.⁴⁵

For the duration of the war, van der Molen, Bruins Slot, and van Ruller would continue to advance these messages as *Trouw*’s coeditors. Schouten would not. On April 2, 1943, this cofounder was arrested in conjunction with his work for another underground organization. Arrested but released once before, he would spend the next two years in various German prisons and concentration camps until his liberation from Mauthausen in May 1945. Schouten’s editorial post was filled not by any one individual but, rather by a handful of resisters who lent their voices and expertise to particular discussions and debates. The most prominent of these new arrivals were the Rutgers brothers, Victor and Abraham, both distinguished members of the prewar political establishment. Traveling within the same ARP circles, these men were a logical addition to *Trouw*’s existing editorial board – even more so because Victor Rutgers was Bruins Slot’s father-in-law.

⁴⁴ Letter to the government-in-exile, dated May 1943: Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7A (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 200.

⁴⁵ In 1950, Van der Molen explained that Schouten initially set target circulation at 50,000 copies per issue. With the dedicated help of Speelman’s technical staff, the paper was able to meet and far exceed this initial target. See Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7C (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 301. As historian Lydia Winkel explains, the editorial board’s decision to produce the paper on such a massive scale was informed by very real safety concerns. These resisters reasoned that the more copies in general circulation, the more readers would retain their copies as opposed to passing them on to (potentially untrustworthy) countrymen. The implication was that this moment of transfer from reader to reader presented the greatest risk to the resisters of the clandestine press. Thus, they hoped that by flooding the country with papers, they would further *Trouw*’s reputation as an important national publication while ensuring that they would be able to evade German detection and continue production: Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 254.

When tapped by then-Prime Minister Colijn for the post of Minister of Education, Arts, and Sciences in 1925, Victor Rutgers had represented the ARP in the second chamber of parliament for more than a decade. With the fall of this particular Colijn government a mere seven months later, Rutgers began his tenure as professor of law at the (Calvinist) Free University of Amsterdam. At the same time, he became increasingly involved in international affairs and, specifically, the new international organizations and meetings established in the wake of the League of Nations. In 1932, for instance, he led the Netherlands' delegation to the disarmament conference held that year. With the commencement of the German occupation, Rutgers assumed a leading role in the underground ARP. From June to December 1942, he led the underground party, and in September 1943, he officially joined the editorial board of *Trouw*. Even before this point, however, he had authored pieces for the organization. Most notably, in March 1943, he wrote *Trouw's* seminal analysis of the ethics of political assassinations: Speaking on behalf of the *Trouw* organization, he unequivocally rejected this new tactic as employed by the country's armed resistance against Dutch collaborators and German officials. Political murder, he argued, was not the administration of justice but a criminal act fostering a vigilante atmosphere and impeding the legal proceedings expected to be initiated at war's end.⁴⁶ One year later, in the spring of 1944, Victor Rutgers attempted to travel to London, where he would convey to the queen the work and impressions of the *Vaderlandsch Comité* (Fatherlands Committee), a clandestine assembly of prominent members of the country's prewar political parties, to which he also belonged. Arrested and released by the German authorities three times since the beginning of the occupation, the sixty-six-year-old Rutgers finally ran out of chances: On April 26, 1944, he and his travel mates were arrested on the beach while attempting this London crossing. They were tried and sentenced to imprisonment shortly thereafter. Victor Rutgers died on February 5, 1945, in a prison in Bochum, Germany.⁴⁷

Victor's younger brother, Abraham, also a prominent member of the ARP, followed a rather different career path. Trained as a botanist and zoologist, Abraham Rutgers worked for nearly twenty years in the East Indies, where

⁴⁶ This piece appeared as "Moord," *Trouw*, March 19, 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 3), 2-3. For Rutgers's authorship of this important statement, see R. S. Zimmerman-Wolf, ed. *Het Woord als Wapen: Keur uit de Nederlandse Ondergrondse Pers 1940-1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 196-198, 405; Lydia Winkel, *De ondergrondse pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 254; and W.F. de Gaay Fortman, "Rutgers, Victor Henri (1877-1945)," *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 2* (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1985), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn2/rutgers>.

⁴⁷ W. F. de Gaay Fortman, "Rutgers, Victor Henri (1877-1945)," *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 2* (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1985), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn2/rutgers>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for Victor Rutgers, accessible via "Personen" search at <http://www.parlement.com/>.

he held an array of governmental and nongovernmental positions. Most prominently, he led that colony's Department of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade from 1923 to 1928, and in May 1928, he was appointed Governor of Surinam, a position he would hold until September 1933.⁴⁸ At this point, he returned to the European Netherlands, where for the next three years he joined his brother Victor in the ARP delegation to the second chamber of parliament. In January 1936, Abraham was named to the Dutch *Raad van State*, a Council of State advising the queen, ministers, and parliament on matters of legislation and governance. In this capacity, he chaired the council's section focusing on economic cooperation between the Netherlands and the East Indies. Not surprisingly, when the Germans began rounding up as hostages prominent members of the country's political, intellectual, and financial establishments, Abraham Rutgers stood high on their list. Arrested in January 1941, he spent nearly two years in German detention centers, including that of St. Michielsgestel (Gestel). Upon his release in December 1942, Abraham, like his brother Victor, immersed himself in the clandestine work of the underground ARP and penned a number of pieces for *Trouw* before formally joining the editorial board in the spring of 1943. By virtue of his extensive experience in the colonies – something no other *Trouw* editor could claim – Abraham became the organization's colonial expert, single-handedly authoring the paper's "Indies Issue" of December 1943.⁴⁹

Newly enlarged by these prominent figures, the *Trouw* organization suffered its first major losses in September 1943, when a number of distributors were apprehended. Arrests continued for the remainder of the year, until approximately forty of the paper's workers had been detained. Yet despite these and other casualties, the paper continued to appear without interruption and in fact was able to expand the scope of its operations.⁵⁰ After September 1944, as the half-occupied, half-liberated country entered the

⁴⁸ In the West Indies, the highest-ranking Dutch administrator was the Governor, who, like the Governor General of the East Indies, was both appointed and dismissed by the queen.

⁴⁹ Lydia Winkel, *De ongedrongse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 253–254; W. F. de Gaay Fortman, "Rutgers, Abraham Arnold Lodewijk (1884–1966)," *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 3* (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1989), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn3/rutgersaal>; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for Victor Rutgers, accessible via "Personen" search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

⁵⁰ Cofounder Wim Speelman was arrested again in late January 1945, and although his false papers were impeccable, one of the German officers present at the printing shop remembered Speelman from his first *Vrij Nederland* arrest in November 1942. Speelman was thus detained and, along with a number of other resisters, shot on February 19, 1945, in reprisal for the recent sabotage of a rail line. Arrests and executions of other leading *Trouw* workers throughout the country continued into the final weeks of the occupation. In total, about 120 resisters from *Trouw* lost their lives during the course of the occupation.

final stage of the war, *Trouw* became the largest of the major publications, as measured by both total copies in circulation and the number of local editions produced throughout the country. In January 1945, approximately 350,000 copies of the various editions of *Trouw* appeared every day for a weekly total of about two million nationwide. To ensure consistency between the national and regional/local editions, *Trouw*'s editorial board circulated directives clarifying and reinforcing organizational policies. Regularly held "weekend meetings" (and, later, weekday meetings), which assembled the organization's resisters in a retreat-type setting, provided *Trouw* workers with spiritual sustenance and a sense of shared purpose while also ensuring that all resisters remained apprised of the ideas and policies expressed in the national edition of the paper.⁵¹

As the end of the war approached, *Trouw*'s editors planned to continue their work into the postwar period, as they were convinced that an overtly Christian paper had a vital role to play in the political vacuum expected to occur at the moment of German defeat. Originally, the group planned to cease publication at war's end and resurrect *De Standaard*, the long-standing daily paper of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. However, on September 7, 1944, "Radio Oranje" announced the terms of the government-in-exile's recent "Temporary Press Decision" (*Tijdelijk Persbesluit*): All "legal" papers appearing in the occupied Netherlands after January 1, 1943, would be banned once the country had been liberated, the intent being to purge the nation of purportedly "collaborationist" newspapers and personnel. The ARP's *De Standaard*, which remained in production until 1944 – although, admittedly, it now bore little resemblance to its prewar version – was one such paper. Thus on learning of the government's decision, van der Molen, Bruins Slot, and their fellow editors elected to continue production of *Trouw* instead. On November 1, 1944, "legal" *Trouw* debuted as a daily paper in the liberated southern city of Breda, then appearing in other cities as they too were liberated.⁵² Leading the paper's transition into its new postwar existence was cofounder Bruins Slot, who not only served as *Trouw*'s editor in chief for nearly three decades, but also represented the ARP in the second chamber from 1946 to 1963. To this day, *Trouw* continues to appear as a national daily paper.

⁵¹ These "weekend meetings" are described by Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 249; Hille de Vries with Henk Biersteker and Ben van Kam, *Een ophitsend geschrift: de geschiedenis van een illegal blad* (Utrecht: Uitgeverij Ambo, 1968), 50–55. For these circulation figures, see Winkel, *ibid.*, 252 and 254.

⁵² Hille de Vries with Henk Biersteker and Ben van Kam, *Een ophitsend geschrift: de geschiedenis van een illegal blad* (Utrecht: Uitgeverij Ambo, 1968), 105, 108–109; Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 255; and Hans van den Heuvel and Gerard Mulder, *Het Vrije Woord. De illegale pers in Nederland, 1940–1945*, ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), 113–114.

TROWW'S STRUGGLE FOR THE INDIES AND EMPIRE

In certain respects, *Trouw's* first discussions of the colonial situation mirrored those of *Je Maintiendrai*. Like their peers at *Je Maintiendrai*, the Calvinist resisters of *Trouw* lauded the coming resurrection or rebirth of the Kingdom of the Netherlands expected to follow on the heels of Allied victory, and they called on their fellow citizens to declare themselves willing to fight for this noble cause. *Trouw* repeatedly referred to the "reconquest" as opposed to the "liberation" of the East Indies, emphasizing that the Dutch, by virtue of their military contributions to the Allied war effort, had earned the right to spearhead this effort. Yet whereas the former politicians and intellectuals at the helm of *Je Maintiendrai* allowed for the possibility of increased autonomy for an East Indies within the boundaries of a newly reconstituted empire, the *Trouw* group refused to consider reforms granting the Indonesians a greater measure of self-government. *Trouw* would distinguish itself as the only leading clandestine press organization to support – and unabashedly so – a return to the prewar status quo in both the East Indies and the empire at large.

Trouw's first contribution to the country's colonial discourse appeared on April 8, 1943. Purportedly focusing on "The Future of Indonesia," this discussion in fact centered on the recent commentary of F. H. Visman, who in 1940 and 1941 had chaired the committee charged with investigating political sentiment in the Dutch East Indies. Since then, Visman had fled the colony for London, where he lent his voice and expertise to the colonial discussions ongoing in exile. With the declaration of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941, Visman penned a rosy appraisal of Dutch-Indonesian relations for the pages of the London-issued *Vrij Nederland* (not to be confused with the clandestine paper of the same name in the German-occupied Netherlands). Like other members of the Dutch government-in-exile, such as Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco van Kleffens, Visman viewed the Atlantic Charter as significant but not entirely relevant for the Netherlands and its overseas territories.⁵³ Long before the Atlantic Charter called for "unrestricted access of raw materials," the Netherlands – at least according to Visman – adhered to an "open door policy" regarding the Indies, a policy much appreciated by the Indonesian people. By contrast, he argued, the Japanese exploited the East Indies, which had turned the Indonesian people against them. Clearly, the people of the East Indies preferred the "progressive politics of the Dutch government." Restating his commission's findings from December 1941, Visman explained that even the "most dissident group" of Indonesians supporting a greater measure of self-government wished to maintain the colony's connection with the Netherlands. *Trouw* repeated all of these claims,

⁵³ "Indië en het Atlantische Handvest," appearing in the London version of *Vrij Nederland*, November 22, 1941, 533–534.

ending with Visman's confident reassurance that, "in the future, cooperation between the distant realms of the Kingdom of the Netherlands will be greater than ever, to the advantage of all involved."⁵⁴ Although centered on Visman's rendering of "the future of Indonesia," this initial report also reflected *Trouw's* own stance, as its editors would make explicitly clear over the next few years. Just as the queen and her ministers placed great stock in the optimistic findings of the Visman Commission, so too were the resisters of *Trouw* convinced of its conclusions. By this point in the war, the queen had repeatedly declared her intentions to examine the prospects of colonial reform, particularly as it concerned the larger imperial superstructure. Such public declarations of intent appeared to matter little to the *Trouw* group, which repeatedly emphasized the political, cultural, and economic unity of the Dutch empire. Moderate reforms might be granted within individual territories but only in the distant future, and autonomy remained out of the question because the peoples and territories of the Indies had yet to prove themselves up to the task of self-government. Certainly, other organizations and individuals, such as P. J. Schmidt of *Vrij Nederland* and then *Je Maintiendrai*, proclaimed the necessity of Rijkseenheid, or imperial unity, but none supported the restoration of the prewar status quo in the manner suggested by the resisters of *Trouw*.

A few months after noting Visman's commentary, editors Bruins Slot, van der Molen, and van Ruller explored what they termed "Our Struggle for the Indies" and, more specifically, the various faulty ideas circulated in London and the United States. For one, *Trouw* had heard the claim that after liberating the East Indies from the Japanese, the Americans and British would "give back" the colony to the Netherlands, as if the Allies could return a territory that was never theirs in the first place! *Trouw* also rejected the idea, as proposed by "men such as Wendell Wilkie" (of recent *One World* fame), that the Indies be placed under the trusteeship of the world community.⁵⁵ Instead, the editors of *Trouw* argued that the Dutch had the "right" to fight for and administer their own colony. The people of the German-occupied Netherlands needed to realize the duty that awaited them after their own liberation, and male citizens should be ready to volunteer for the newly reconstituted Dutch military, even if, as the editors of *Trouw* acknowledged, "a completely modern, mechanized army cannot be created out of nowhere" after years of brutal foreign occupation. However, such logistical problems could be surmounted, because the Netherlands had no shortage of brave men, and these men could be mobilized into "a crack team for the Indies." Once in position, these noble fighters would ensure "that the first

⁵⁴ "De toekomst van Indonesië," *Trouw*, April 8, 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 4), 6.

⁵⁵ In his book *One World*, first published in April 1943, Wendell Wilkie clarified both the theories informing and his plans for international cooperation in the postwar period (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943).

parachutists who fall out of the air over the Indies are *Dutch* men; that the *first* shock troops who come ashore in the Indies belong to *Dutch* units; that the *first* ships, submarines, and airplanes that come to the Indies are units of the *Dutch* merchant marine fleet and air force.” *Trouw* accepted the need for British and American involvement in these military actions, for the Netherlands simply could not organize an effective fighting force at this particular moment in time. Still, the Dutch had to be first in line to defeat the Japanese in the East Indies, just as they would be the first in line to defeat the Germans at home. Simply put, only the Dutch should – and would – resurrect their empire.⁵⁶ For this reason, even the most hesitant, war-weary, or career-minded Dutchman had to stand ready to answer the government’s call to liberate the Indies. In a direct and impassioned plea, *Trouw* summoned its readers to think of their countrymen, suffering in camps and subjected to the whims of the “Mongols”: “Fight for the liberation of your brother, your sister, your cousin, your kin, for people of your own kind,” armed with the knowledge that those who died in the line of duty would be assured of their nation’s gratitude.⁵⁷ Certainly, a heady task awaited the Dutch, but the empire was worth it.

If initially preoccupied with the military aspects of this coming battle for the Indies, *Trouw* did not entirely ignore its political implications. In the summer of 1943, the Calvinist resisters of *Trouw* reaffirmed the indivisible nature of the Kingdom of the Netherlands while refusing to “delve deeply into the legal basis of the connection between the Netherlands and the Indies.” This refusal was not for lack of attention. Rather, *Trouw* saw no reason to reconsider this relationship at this point in time, because “the political development of the Indies is still not yet sufficiently advanced, and, in particular, the political and sociological structure of the Indies is still not developed enough for the Indies to be considered, naturally, as an equal partner of the Netherlands in a commonwealth.” Consequently, autonomy remained out of the question, and any talk of “equality” between the Netherlands and the East Indies must be considered merely “an equality in the making.”⁵⁸ Further, *Trouw* maintained that colonial reform could be considered only insofar as it respected the inviolable nature of the Dutch-Indonesian relationship. Put simply, a Dutch commonwealth remained an inconceivable option for these conservative Calvinist resisters. Yet by late 1943, this commonwealth idea had so pervaded these underground discussions

⁵⁶ Emphases in original. “Onze strijd om Indië,” *Trouw*, July 20, 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 8), 2.

⁵⁷ “De Vrijmaking van Indië,” *Trouw*, mid-November 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 13), 2. This particular issue appeared in two similar but not identical versions, both of which contained this article about the liberation of the Indies. This appeal for Dutchmen to fight for their families appears in only one of these two versions and reads as follows: “Ge moegt vechten voort de bevrijding van Uw broer, Uw zuster, Uw neef, Uw verwanten, voor menschen van Uw eigen volk.”

⁵⁸ “Onze strijd om Indië,” *Trouw*, July 20, 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 8), 1.

and even popular consciousness that the *Trouw* organization could not simply wish it away, as much as it might like to. Further, sheer avoidance of the issue might only lend it further credence among the population at large.⁵⁹ *Trouw* increasingly adopted a more aggressively antireformist position, explaining in great detail and with evident conviction why the prewar imperial status quo was to be reestablished after the war. Whereas its initial discussions of the colonial situation drew on the public statements recently issued by the queen and her ministers, *Trouw's* later analyses took aim at the work of other clandestine groups, whose notions of colonial reform they considered to be irresponsible, naïve, and even dangerous.

Both *Je Maintiendrai* and *Trouw* debuted during the tumultuous year of 1943, which in retrospect we know to have been past the halfway point of the war. Yet the end of the Nazi New Order came slowly and painfully, and those living in the German-occupied Netherlands would experience another two years of round-ups, deportations, and physical privations. At this halfway point, two different trajectories of imperial thinking began to manifest themselves. If the first trajectory – led by leftist organizations and well under way by 1943 – focused on reform, mutuality, and commonwealth, the second trajectory sought a moratorium on all such discussions. Speaking from their position as political conservatives and orthodox Protestants, the resisters of *Trouw* refused to consider colonial reform as a matter of principle. In contrast, *Je Maintiendrai* adopted an antireformist position more by default than by conviction. For this group of career politicians and intellectuals, the present situation remained too complicated and too uncertain to issue a precise call for action at this point. Only after the fog of war had lifted in both metropole and colony could the Dutch appraise the possibility of colonial reform in a rational, well-informed manner. *Je Maintiendrai* did not reject the prospects of a Dutch commonwealth per se but, like *Trouw*, objected to political amateurism and excessive idealism. Colonial reform needed to be evolutionary, not revolutionary, as some underground political voices would have it, and for the political “old hands” of *Je Maintiendrai*, the queen’s December 1942 speech provided proof positive that the Netherlands continued along a properly moderate and incremental path. By extension, *Je Maintiendrai* stressed the Netherlands’ pressing duty to liberate the East Indies from Japan: The sooner the Dutch returned to the colony, the sooner they could determine which of these proposed changes, if any, were to be implemented. Already in the pipeline for decades, colonial reform could wait. Liberation could not.

⁵⁹ According to Andrew Shennan, such was the case at the Brazzaville Conference the following year, where conference participants who would have preferred to avoid “the crucial issue of the empire’s place within the future constitution” only served to draw attention to this issue: Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940–1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 148.

“After Our Liberation, That of Indonesia”

Preparing for Battle

Even before Allied forces arrived in the Netherlands, the Dutch people could sense the beginning of the end was near. On September 5, 1944, a day later known as “Mad Tuesday,” jubilant crowds flooded the country’s streets to greet the liberators they falsely believed were entering the country, while thousands of Dutch Nazis and their families fled eastward in order to avoid a much-feared “day of reckoning.” Less than two weeks later, the Allies landed in the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen, and the government-in-exile, hoping to prevent the transport of German reinforcements to the region, ordered Dutch railway workers to go on strike. Operation Market Garden was under way. During the month of September, the Allies did in fact liberate a number of southern Dutch cities, such as Maastricht and Eindhoven, and by early November they had liberated roughly the southern third of the country. However, by mid-September, the Allied advance through the Netherlands ground to a halt, and the populous north and northwest regions of the country were subjected to eight more months of German rule under rapidly deteriorating conditions. The country’s 30,000 railway workers, who continued their strike even after the failure of Market Garden, needed to go into hiding to escape arrest.¹ They would join 300,000 others already living underground – Jews, students, former Dutch soldiers, young men looking to escape the ever-expanding labor draft.

In response to both the initial strike and the railway men’s refusal to return to work, Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart instituted a six-week embargo of foodstuffs and coal supplies to the occupied northwestern sector of the country. This action, coupled with the unseasonably cold weather, would set in motion the notorious “Hunger Winter” of 1944 and 1945,

¹ These railway workers were provided a compelling incentive to keep their distance from the railways: Working with the so-called bank of the resistance in the occupied Netherlands, the National Assistance Fund (*Nationale Steunfonds* or NSF) of the government-in-exile ensured that these striking workers would continue to receive at least partial salaries.

resulting in approximately 16,000 deaths during this final winter of the war.² Earlier this year, Seyss-Inquart had declared martial law and made any disturbance of public order – whether major or minor – punishable by death.³ Now, with the Allies closing in, he granted both Hanns Rauter, the Commissioner General for Police and Security Affairs (HSSpF), and Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Christiansen, the Commander of the Armed Forces in the Netherlands, the authority to exercise summary justice against those accused of resistance activity. Suspected resisters were not the only Dutch citizens to incur such punishment, for thousands of innocent people – often in the wrong place at the wrong time – were either shot in reprisal actions or deported to Germany for forced labor. If, before this point, only certain segments of the population had been subjected to persecution and substandard living conditions, now nearly everyone living in the occupied areas felt the effects of war and occupation.

During this final and chaotic stage of the war, the leading organizations of the clandestine press – all of which were based in the still-occupied northern cities – continued the type of work they had done for the past few years. They demanded their countrymen engage in resistance against the German authorities; reported on the latest national and international news and developments; and delivered detailed commentaries and analyses on those subjects they expected to dominate peacetime society. On the whole, they remained isolated from developments in other countries. When Dutch resisters learned of activities in other nations, such as the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 and anti-*milice* actions in France, they reported them in the pages of their papers, albeit for the purposes of encouraging resistance in the Netherlands. Even if a Europe-wide resistance council had existed – which it did not – it would have been hard-pressed to distract the Dutch organizations from more immediate tasks, which, as of 1943, included planning for the nation’s postwar future. With the end of the war seemingly within reach, the “Indies question,” with its complex combination of short- and long-term considerations, began to assume heightened significance. No matter their political beliefs and affiliations, these resisters were convinced that their respective plans would benefit Dutch and Indonesians alike, and all assumed that their work to these ends would inform official policy once a lawful government had been reinstalled in the Netherlands. Time was of the essence. Not only did the Third Reich appear to be teetering on the brink of disaster, but Allied forces had finally gained

² Gerard Trienekens, *Voedsel en honger in oorlogstijd 1940–1945* (Utrecht/Amsterdam: Kosmos-Z&K Uitgevers, 1995), 98–101.

³ “Erlass des Reichskommissars für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete über den Ausnahmezustand/Decreet van den Rijkscommissaris voor het bezette Nederlandsche gebied betreffende den uitzonderingstoestand” (Vo. 15/1944), dated Mei 12, 1944, *Verordnungsblatt* Mei 13, 1944.

a solid foothold in Southeast Asia. By July 1944, New Guinea was in Allied hands, liberated by a joint force including troops from America, Australia, and the reconstituted Dutch East Indies army. Then, on September 19, 1944, the government-in-exile announced a provisional government for the Dutch East Indies under Minister of Colonies Hubertus van Mook, who would now assume the roles of Lieutenant Governor General and Acting Governor General.⁴ Temporarily housed near Brisbane, Australia, this provisional government would reinstall itself in the East Indies as soon as circumstances allowed.⁵

Watching these developments from afar, Dutch resisters steeled themselves for their own liberation from the Germans, to be followed in short order by the liberation of Indonesia. Nearly all of the leading press groups in the occupied Netherlands expected these coming liberations to constitute a critical turning point in Dutch history, a time to effect long-desired political, economic, and social reform. They were determined not to let the moment pass, lest they lose the opportunity to influence this series of events, both at home and abroad. Just as they anticipated that the postwar world would be led by the victorious Allied powers, they also expected that smaller nations and empires, such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, would assume a prominent role in any potential European and global organizations to grow out of the war. So too did most of these resisters recognize the war's formative influence on Dutch-Indonesian relations, and they expected the liberation of both countries to bring lasting, positive change. Only the politically conservative and Calvinist resisters of *Trouw* refused to consider the war a turning point for either the larger Dutch empire or its individual colonies. According to *Trouw*, the war had brought tremendous destruction, but it would also usher in a glorious imperial resurrection. The Kingdom of the Netherlands would emerge from the war more united and cohesive than ever, and never again would the Dutch metropole be separated from its most vital territories. Regardless of whether they supported domestic renewal or colonial reform, however, all of the leading clandestine press organizations agreed that the liberation of the European Netherlands was to be followed in short order by the liberation of Indonesia, and just as the Allied forces would help free the Dutch from their German oppressors, so too would the Dutch travel halfway around the world to liberate the Indonesians from the Japanese. The Netherlands owed a new military "debt of honor" toward

⁴ Van Mook's somewhat odd title stemmed from the fact that the Governor General of the Indies at the time of the Japanese invasion, A. W. L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, remained in position but had been imprisoned by the Japanese since March 1942.

⁵ News of the royal decree establishing this provisional government, the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA), appeared as "Voorloopige Nederlandsch-Indische Regeering," London *Vrij Nederland*, September 30, 1944, 305; and "Provisional Government for the Indies," *Netherlands News*, October 1, 1944 (Vol. 10 No. 6), 258-259.

the people and territories of the East Indies, and the resistance needed to ready their fellow citizens for this most noble of tasks that awaited them.

THE GLORIES OF LIBERATION, THE TRAGEDY OF COLONIALISM

For all of the leading organizations save *Trouw*, the military liberation of Indonesia could not be divorced from its political implications. Accordingly, these clandestine groups took pains to situate this upcoming military mission within its larger historical and political context. Their readers needed to realize that this expected operation was only the first step in a much larger process of colonial reform and, by extension, the creation of an entirely new relationship between the European Netherlands and its overseas territories. At this point in the war, *Vrij Nederland* – once royalist and Protestant, but now leftist and more secular – distinguished itself as a colonial authority of sorts. Early converts to the cause of the Dutch commonwealth, van Randwijk and his second in command, Arie van Namen, made their case for a refashioned Dutch-Indonesian relationship and, in the process, took aim at the ideas advanced by the *Trouw* organization. In general, *Vrij Nederland* had few kind words to say about those who opposed colonial reform, so with their sudden popularity and prominence, the Calvinist conservatives of *Trouw* appeared a natural target. However, for van Randwijk, who had lost an editor, distributors, and dozens of other staff members to *Trouw*, this animosity was both political and personal. The feeling was mutual, for *Trouw*'s editors clearly positioned their organization and ideologies against those advanced by *Vrij Nederland*. First set in motion during 1943, the latent tensions between the two groups would spill over into the postwar period, when the two parties would face off yet again, this time concerning the fate of the newly declared Republic of Indonesia.

When, in July of 1943, *Trouw* called on the Dutch to reestablish their colonial presence in the Indies, *Vrij Nederland* wasted little time responding. Van Randwijk and van Namen took particular issue with *Trouw*'s reference to the "reconquest" of the colony. "What shall we do?" they asked of their readers in late August 1943: "Should the Netherlands liberate and 'reconquer' the Indies, or 'win them back for the Netherlands' such as another illegal paper writes? Or should we see the upcoming war against the Japanese as a war of liberation and not as a 'war of conquest'?" For *Vrij Nederland*, the answer was clear: only the true liberation of Indonesia would help end "colonial dominance" and bring equal status to the East Indies. By contrast, the resisters of *Trouw* wished for nothing of the sort. Liberation, no matter how achieved, would not serve as a prelude to autonomy, self-government, or equal status. *Vrij Nederland* argued that Indonesians and the Dutch needed to fight together and oust the Japanese. For one, such cooperation would prove the Netherlands' commitment to granting equality. Furthermore, by helping the Dutch in their fight against the Japanese, the

Indonesian people would prove themselves worthy and able to act on the sentiments expressed by the queen in her pivotal December 1942 speech.⁶ In other words, Van Randwijk and *Vrij Nederland* considered the coming battle for the Indies a unique opportunity for both parties to lay the foundation for a more reciprocal, equitable relationship.

Shortly after *Vrij Nederland* explicated this dual political-military task, *Het Parool* also set its sights on *Trouw* and those who would return the Indies to its prewar status. As it did so, the *Het Parool* organization acted with a newfound sense of urgency stemming from both the accelerated pace of wartime developments and the recent reappearance of cofounder Frans Goedhart. In September 1943, Goedhart returned to *Het Parool* after twenty months in German custody, having escaped his captors while en route to his long-delayed execution. The following month, the organization announced the triumphant reemergence of the original “Pieter ‘t Hoen” with an extensive front-page analysis dedicated to the coming battle for the Indies, and none too soon, according to *Het Parool*. For two years now – before the Japanese occupation, before Pearl Harbor even – the *Het Parool* organization had warned that the war would forever alter Dutch-Indonesian relations, and it urged readers to prepare themselves for the great changes in store after liberation. Now that this liberation appeared possible at any moment, the Dutch needed to finally pay attention. Most pressing, they needed to realize that the war had triggered far-reaching psychological changes in “the East.” After all, with the Japanese victories over the Netherlands and other European colonial powers, “the white has been thrown from his pedestal,” an image that the Japanese fully exploited and reinforced through their propaganda. The resisters of *Het Parool* did not mean to imply that the native population of Indonesia was universally pro-Japanese, for only a small group could be classified as such. At the same time – and contrary to the more optimistic but faulty claims of other groups, such as *Je Maintiendrai* – the Indonesian people were not overwhelmingly pro-Dutch either. If anything, the Indonesian people continued to harbor feelings of mistrust against the Dutch government, and even “personal friendships and cooperative efforts” between the Dutch and Indonesians could not compensate for this mistrust. Above all else, the Dutch needed to realize that their relationship with Indonesia “was not one-sided but mutual,” and that they could lay the foundation for this new relationship by liberating Indonesia from its Japanese oppressor.⁷

⁶ “Nogmaals: Nederland en Indonesië in Nieuwe Banen,” *Vrij Nederland*, August 28, 1943 (Vol. 4 No. 1), 5–7.

⁷ “Na onze bevrijding die van Indonesië: Nederland bezinne zich op zijn taak,” *Het Parool*, October 30, 1943 (No. 60), 1–2, and for a more extensive discussion of this October 1943 piece, see Madelon de Keizer, *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetsblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever, 1991), 313–317.

Like *Vrij Nederland*, *Het Parool* placed great stock in the precise manner of this liberation. The organization refused to entertain the possibility of the Dutch army barreling into the Indies as modern *conquistadors* and reclaiming the territory as their own. Rather, the Netherlands would fight to alleviate the suffering of its Indonesian allies, who had been forced to languish under the yoke of a cruel and capricious oppressor, even more barbarian than Nazi Germany. Accordingly, Goedhart and his fellow *Het Parool* editors envisioned the deployment of a volunteer army tens of thousands strong, with conscripts supplementing the ranks of the volunteers as needed. In any case, the Dutch needed to amass an army quickly and easily: If they proved unable to mobilize, the British and Americans would think that they did not care about Indonesia, and Allied forces would take the lead in liberating the territory. And what Dutch person wished to say that the Indies had been liberated solely by the “great Allied powers”?⁸

This kind of jingoism revealed that old imperial habits died a slow death, even for the forward-looking *Het Parool*. For centuries, Dutch foreign policy had operated from the assumption that the vast resources and strategic position of the East Indies granted the small European Netherlands a seat at the table alongside nations with far larger armies, populations, and land masses. Defeat and occupation at Germany’s hands had showed the folly of this belief, as did the Japanese occupation of the kingdom’s most prized territory. In more recent days, however, Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco van Kleffens resurrected this “small nations” argument in the form of a lengthy *Times* of London exchange appearing in the spring of 1943. With both this initial salvo and his subsequent public statements, interviews, and lectures, van Kleffens objected to a postwar world dominated solely by four great powers. After all, the minister argued, the Netherlands had a population of nine million in Europe and seventy million in Asia, and what right had “two, three, or four greater Powers to decide the fate of these multitudes?”⁹ Across the channel, the resisters of *Het Parool* picked up this “small nations” banner and appealed to their fellow citizens: The Netherlands might be a small imperial nation, it might be devastated by war and occupation, but this could not detract from this most pressing of missions. The Dutch must liberate these millions of subjugated, suffering Indonesians.¹⁰

⁸ “Ook Indonesië snakt naar bevrijding: Straks vrijwilligers naar den Oost!” *Het Parool*, October 1944 (No. 71), 2–3.

⁹ See, for instance, van Kleffens’s initial letter to this effect, containing this statement about the population of the Netherlands: “Great and Small Nations”: *The Times*, Letters to the Editor, March 25, 1943, 5. In July of that year, *Het Parool* expressed its support for the minister’s stance – although the paper did not refer to van Kleffens by name – and argued that the Netherlands should negotiate its postwar position between the great powers by seeking closer cooperation with both continental Europe and the Atlantic powers: “Een nieuwe buitenlandsche politiek,” *Het Parool*, July 30, 1943 (No. 56), 12–13.

¹⁰ “Om de bevrijding van Indonesië. Hoe denkt ons volk over dit zeer belangrijke vraagstuk?” *Het Parool*, January 9, 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 80), 3.

Like *Vrij Nederland*, *Het Parool* considered this coming liberation a military and political matter, not least because history had shown that attempts to separate the two were bound to fail. After World War I, or so this group of resisters explained, European nations had refused to consider military and political considerations as two sides of the same coin, and to fatal consequences – namely, the outbreak of yet another world war. Then, during the interwar period, European powers had refused to grant political reforms in their overseas territories. Not surprisingly the native people of these territories had failed to support Allied military efforts in 1941 and 1942.¹¹ These were not new messages, but no one was listening, *Het Parool* claimed. Such past failings aside, the Dutch could still make things right in their own empire, that is, if they kept in mind why they were going to fight in their colony. Contrary to the claims of certain unnamed but presumably *Trouw*-affiliated individuals, the Netherlands would not go to Indonesia in order to “prevent the Americans” from seizing the archipelago. This would have been “imperialism of the worst sort,” and in no way, shape, or form was it acceptable for a Dutch soldier fight with this motive. Rather, the Dutch were to fight for the well-being of the Indonesian people. Just as they resisted the Germans in the name of freedom and democracy, so too would the Dutch people fight for these same principles in the Pacific.¹²

As of May 1943 – and in Goedhart’s absence – *Het Parool* signaled its support for the commonwealth: Indonesia was to become a “sort of Dominion” or “a state with self-government, connected to the Netherlands by historic and economic bonds, rather than legal ones.” This group envisioned the mutual benefits to be gained with this structure: Not only would it raise the Indonesians’ standard of living and promote political freedom, but it would strengthen existing economic bonds between motherland and overseas territories. After all, the Indonesian people would need Dutch “technical, economic, and cultural help” as they became self-sufficient and prosperous.¹³ If such vague but optimistic commentary provided few indications as to how a Dutch commonwealth might function in practice, the resisters of *Het Parool* provided more concrete directives in the fall of 1943. They raised a series of questions and topics expected to inform a new postwar “Indonesian policy,” questions that struck at the very heart of the colonial relationship, as understood by this clandestine grouping of political leftists three years into the German occupation. First, how could Indonesia exercise autonomy over its own affairs? That is, how could the promises held out by

¹¹ See, for instance, “Dominion Indonesië: ‘Vrije en gelijkwaardige Bondgenooten tusschen de Volkeren,’” *Het Parool*, May 28, 1943 (No. 54), 7.

¹² “Na onze bevrijding die van Indonesië: Nederland bezinne zich op zijn taak,” *Het Parool*, October 30, 1943 (No. 60), 1.

¹³ “Dominion Indonesië: ‘Vrije en gelijkwaardige Bondgenooten tusschen de Volkeren,’” *Het Parool*, May 28, 1943 (No. 54), 7.

the queen in her December 1942 speech find expression in clear directives, to be carried out by different branches of government? These directives, *Het Parool* surmised, would also constitute the framework for the round table conference, to be attended by representatives from all four realms of the kingdom and charged with deciding the future of the Dutch empire. Second, which measures, to be implemented immediately after the expulsion of the Japanese, could best guarantee the equal standing of this and other overseas territories? Last, what political circumstances should prevail in the meantime, that is, before autonomy could be fully implemented?

These men did not pretend to know the answers to all of these questions, and like the career politicians of *Je Maintiendrai*, they sought well-reasoned, well-researched colonial policy accounting for actually existing circumstances on the ground. For instance, Goedhart and his colleagues acknowledged that given the widely divergent economic and cultural levels seen throughout the archipelago, dominion status might not be appropriate for all parts of Indonesia. Instead, “experts” might need to decide which forms of autonomy would be appropriate for the different areas of Indonesia.¹⁴ Here, *Het Parool*, although envisioning a radically different future for the Netherlands and Indonesia, drew on more established ideas and practices, such as the long-standing reliance on “Indologists,” Indies specialists who would formulate and assess colonial policy. In tempering its support for dominion status, *Het Parool* also acknowledged a critical letter received by the organization after it had declared its support for the proposed structure earlier this year. Not only did this letter writer argue that the uneven economic, cultural, and psychological development in the various areas of the Dutch East Indies precluded the establishment of one homogenous unit, but the writer also claimed that so-called dominions tended to be autonomous in name only, as seen with the British dominions.¹⁵ Apparently taking such commentary to heart, *Het Parool* nonetheless argued that Indonesia needed autonomy – no matter what it was termed, even if not applied equally to all territories of the Indies. Above all else, so argued these resisters, the Dutch needed to rid themselves of the “colonial thinking” of old. If they did not, the granting of dominion status or any other new arrangement would ring hollow. The Dutch needed to institute lasting, well-reasoned reform, not simply slap a new name on an old and outdated structure.¹⁶

Yet the more the resisters of *Het Parool* attempted to explain how this reformed empire might function, the more they struggled to do so. Like so many of their underground colleagues and fellow citizens, they continued to

¹⁴ “Na onze bevrijding die van Indonesië: Nederland bezinne zich op zijn taak,” *Het Parool*, October 30, 1943 (No. 60), 1–2.

¹⁵ As discussed by Madelon de Keizer, *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetsblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever, 1991), 588 fn. 211.

¹⁶ “Na onze bevrijding die van Indonesië: Nederland bezinne zich op zijn taak,” *Het Parool*, October 30, 1943 (No. 60), 2.

see the Dutch-Indonesian relationship as natural, mutually beneficial, and bound to continue well into the future. As a result, *Het Parool's* colonial plans frequently merged older practices and ideas with newer innovations and arrangements. In September 1943, for instance, *Het Parool* proposed a new and more meaningful "League of Nations," to consist of six regional groups organized according to common needs, geographical proximity, and level of development. The European Netherlands would belong to Group IV, which would include Europe as well as French and Spanish North, West, and equatorial Africa. The West Indies would belong to Group I, encompassing North, South, and Central America, and Indonesia, along with China, Japan, British India, Australia, and New Zealand, would belong to Group III, the East Asian group. *Het Parool* argued that such groups, although reflecting traditional structures and relationships, would also allow delegates from imperial "motherlands" to find representation in their colonies' respective groups: Dutch, French, British, and American representatives would be included alongside their Indonesian, Indochinese, Indian, and Filipino peers in the East Asia Group, whereas Spanish and Portuguese representatives would take their place in the Americas Group. However, *Het Parool* did not extend the same offer to "native" representatives of, say, British India and Dutch Indonesia, which were expected to remain outside of the Europe grouping. With this proposal, the *Het Parool* organization appeared to call into question its commitment to a more mutual, equal relationship between colonizer and colonized. Yet for *Het Parool* resisters, this arrangement made complete sense, particularly as it drew on the precedent established by the British empire: The strong bond between England and its dominions "naturally" rested on "mutual consent," and England looked as much toward the overseas areas as it did toward Europe. *Het Parool* claimed that the Kingdom of the Netherlands needed to strive for a similar type of relationship with its overseas colonies, just as the new international body described here would direct the old imperialist impulse in more enlightened directions. Under this new world order, continental and regional cooperation would become the order of the day, and Europe's traditional overseas colonies would find a greater participatory voice. In the process, such reforms would help forge a new "continental and international consciousness."¹⁷

Once the end of the war seemed imminent in the fall of 1944, Goedhart and *Het Parool* abandoned such towering rhetoric in favor of a more strident approach. With the queen and her government-in-exile actively planning their return to the European Netherlands, the leading clandestine groups – and, indeed, more marginal organizations as well – sought to convert their wartime accomplishments into political capital. *Het Parool* now sought to present its program of political, social, and economic renewal as

¹⁷ "Hoe fundeeren wij de wereld op een veiliger grondslag? Een concrete plan ter overdenking," *Het Parool*, September 10, 1943 (No. 57), 4–6.

exceptionally necessary, wise, and popular. Colonial reform was but one facet of this far-reaching agenda intended to rebuild, restore, and regenerate the Netherlands, launching the country and its former colonies into a prosperous, harmonious postwar future. In the hyper-charged atmosphere of these final months, *Het Parool* declared open season against its perceived political rivals, such as *Trouw*, which claimed that the Indies could not handle increased autonomy and that the Netherlands simply would not be able to survive without a fully dependent Asian colony. For Goedhart and his fellow editors, their conservative opponents’ objections were ill-founded, reactionary, and even “hateful.”¹⁸ Thankfully, however, these critics had also become increasingly irrelevant, at least according to *Het Parool*. Before the war, Dutch conservatives may have been influential power brokers with preferential access to the halls of government, but now they found themselves arguing from a minority position. Even the queen had shown her commitment to forging a new path, free from the grip of these once-mighty conservatives. As proof of these changed times, *Het Parool* cited the queen’s appointment of accomplished “underground journalist” Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart to her cabinet in July 1944. Van Heuven Goedhart was one of *Het Parool*’s own: Joining the organization in late 1942, he had served alongside coeditor Cees de Groot in Frans Goedhart’s absence. With the German authorities close on his heels, Heuven Goedhart traveled to London in the spring of 1944, where he planned to advise the queen and her ministers about conditions and popular sentiment in the occupied Netherlands. He accomplished much more than this. In July of 1944, he was appointed Minister of Justice, a position he would hold until February of the following year. *Het Parool* explained that, with van Heuven Goedhart’s appointment and service in this capacity, the queen had shown her willingness to understand the views harbored by “broad circles of the Dutch people.”¹⁹ Indeed, Goedhart and his fellow resisters believed that the vast majority of the Dutch people supported their plans for a revised Dutch-Indonesian relationship. Even if certain segments of the population proved susceptible to the hateful, ignorant rhetoric of the conservatives, the queen stood on the side of change and progress, and for *Het Parool*, this appeared decisive. After all, it would be Queen Wilhelmina, not the members of the public, who would craft postwar policy toward the Dutch colonies.

As they refocused popular attention on these coming reforms, the progressive leftists of *Het Parool* did not call for the creation of new nation-states out of the traditional European empires. Rather, *Het Parool* sought to recast the framework of metropolitan-colonial relationships, forging a

¹⁸ “Na Duitschland: Japan. De bevrijding van Indonesië,” *Het Parool*, November 28, 1944 (No. 75), 3.

¹⁹ “Bij het bezoek van H.M. de Koningin,” *Het Parool*, April 3, 1945 (No. 92), 2–3, with this discussion of Indonesia and van Heuven Goedhart’s appointment appearing on page 3.

true partnership between equals instead of the “parasitic” dependency of old.²⁰ These resisters were committed to the political and economic modernization of Indonesia, and, importantly, they remained convinced that the Indonesians would welcome Dutch efforts to these ends. As Goedhart and his colleagues also began to work with Setyadjit and his group of Indonesian resisters,²¹ they found confirmation of these views: The Indonesians, recognizing the benefits to be accrued by maintaining ties with their former colonial rulers, wished to cooperate with the Dutch to forge a more harmonious, prosperous future for the kingdom and its peoples. Admittedly, in the past, the Indonesian people had reaped few of the rewards promised them by the Dutch colonizers, but this need not be the case any longer, *Het Parool* argued. For this new relationship to succeed, both parties needed to see the fruits of their cooperative labor. Goedhart and his colleagues saw no reason why this could not happen – and soon.

As *Het Parool* championed the need for mutuality and harmonious cooperation, *Vrij Nederland* also adopted a less equivocating stance. Before 1944, *Vrij Nederland*, although clearly supportive of colonial reform, refused to commit to a Dutch commonwealth. Now, and after months of close cooperation with Indonesian nationalist Setyadjit and other Indonesian resisters, Henk van Randwijk and Arie van Namen placed themselves and their organization solidly behind the proposed structure. In March 1944, they issued a thirty-page special “Indies Issue” of *Vrij Nederland*, allegedly so well-received that they produced a second and expanded issue the following month. Tens of thousands of copies of these clandestine tomes would be put into circulation in the occupied Netherlands.²² With this special issue, *Vrij Nederland* revisited some familiar terrain. It reminded readers of their national duty to liberate the millions of Indonesians suffering and struggling “for the same

²⁰ “Na Duitschland: Japan. De bevrijding van Indonesië,” *Het Parool*, November 28, 1944 (No. 75), 3; “Illegaliteit zal meespreken. Als straks de Regeering gevormd wordt,” *Het Parool*, November 7, 1944 (No. 72), 1; “Hoe wordt onze positie in de wereld? Nauwe samenwerking met onze burens is noodig,” *Het Parool*, November 14, 1944 (No. 73), 1; “Indonesië en wij,” *Het Parool*, March 27, 1945 (No. 91), 2.

²¹ For a brief discussion of this relationship, see Madelon de Keizer, *Het Parool 1940–1945: Verzetsblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel Uitgever, 1991), 313.

²² Editorial comments to this effect introduce this second issue, published in April 1944: *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (“Indies Issue”), April 1944, 1–2. According to Lydia Winkel, 40,000 to 50,000 copies of these Indies Issues were put into circulation during the first half of 1944: *De ondegrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 285. Even by the standards of a dedicated special edition – typically twice as many pages as a regular issue of the paper in question – both versions of this Indies Issue were especially long. The first print of *Vrij Nederland*’s “Third Extra Issue,” as this Indies Issue was formally titled, numbered thirty pages, whereas the following month’s reprinted version numbered thirty-nine pages; this second version also contained drawings, photographs, and maps absent from the first version. The page numbers and quotations cited in this chapter refer to this second expanded version.

cause, the cause of democracy, freedom, and justice.” Further, against those nationalist fanatics champing at the bit to recapture the Indies like colonial *conquistadors* of old, *Vrij Nederland* argued that although the Indies would be liberated with weapons, a lasting peace could only be assured by less militaristic means. Yet with this extensive analysis, *Vrij Nederland* also issued a colonial primer of sorts: Here, Van Randwijk and van Namen not only provided a roadmap for the empire’s future but examined the highly fraught history of the Dutch-Indonesian relationship.

Above all else, Van Randwijk and van Namen proposed a new “free cooperation” between the Dutch and Indonesian peoples, founded on the “mutual respect, on a common democratic conviction and a unity of interest” evident during the past three hundred years. Fortunately, the Dutch did not have to grope their way in the darkness as they worked toward these goals, because their wise queen, who had correctly read the signs of the time, was lighting the way. With her famed December 7, 1942, speech – described by *Vrij Nederland* as a “document of truly historical greatness” – Queen Wilhelmina had recognized the monumental changes in store for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. She realized that if the Netherlands’ “alliance” with Indonesia was to continue, the Dutch would need to effect democratic change, as rooted in conceptions of equality, mutual respect, and full partnership.²³ In other words, the Netherlands could only preserve its relationship with Indonesia by loosening the ties that bound them together.

The Dutch had little time to waste, as great changes were already under way in the region. Or, as *Vrij Nederland* explained in no uncertain terms, “the political awakening of the people of East Asia is a process that has been going on for a half a century and that forces us, whether we want to or not, to draw our conclusions.” The colonial peoples throughout the world were making “demands that even the most powerful nations,” such as the Netherlands, could not ignore. They were not especially radical demands, either: The Indonesian nationalists worked toward a democratic system, a system enjoyed by their own colonial rulers in Europe. Like Dutch resisters who fought their German occupiers, these Indonesian nationalists struggled for freedom, self-determination, justice, and human rights, a battle they continued to wage under the Japanese. Consequently, the Dutch needed to approach the Indonesian nationalist movement with the same seriousness it accorded the anti-Nazi struggle.²⁴ Those who refused to adjust their attitudes did so at their own peril, for the situation in British India aptly demonstrated “how things can be destroyed beyond repair when a government hesitates to do what is right, where right should be done.” Two years prior, in August 1942, *Vrij Nederland* had lent its support to Britain’s hard-line policy, which included the use of military force, against dangerous, subversive

²³ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 1–5.

²⁴ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 21–25.

Indian nationalists. Now, however, van Randwijk and van Namen explicitly rejected British policies, which in their view were based on a fatal misreading of the tide of history.²⁵ For *Vrij Nederland*, events in India, although striking, were hardly atypical. Rather, they revealed the problematic and even disturbing nature of European colonialism.

Vrij Nederland's attempts to explore the meaning and implications of colonial rule were unprecedented. Until this point, the leading clandestine groups had refrained from abstract general discussions, focusing instead on the tangible and concrete – specific Indonesian demands that had gone unheeded and specific postwar reforms that might improve upon the Dutch-Indonesian relationship. By and large, these resisters did not reflect on questions of race or racial differences; they did not question why, hundreds of years earlier, Europeans ventured to and settled territories overseas. As a worldview, set of practices, and way of life, imperialism remained an incontrovertible fact for underground organizations, although resisters on the political left and center believed its worst effects could be alleviated with sound, well-conceived policies. Always preoccupied with the here-and-now, the various resistance organizations in the occupied Netherlands became even more so during the final two years of the war. Time was of the essence, particularly if they wished to avoid the dreaded power vacuum expected at the moment of German defeat. In this atmosphere, topics deemed too abstract or of a purely theoretical nature were understandably pushed to the side. Or, as aptly stated by P. J. Schmidt of *Je Maintiendrai* in the summer of 1944, now was the time for actual plans, not theories and abstractions.²⁶ It was all the more remarkable, then, that approximately one year before the country's liberation from its German occupiers, *Vrij Nederland* provided the most extensive theoretical discussion of colonialism seen during the course of the five-year occupation.

According to editors van Randwijk and van Namen, an examination of the fundamental and unavoidable “tragedy of colonialism” was necessary because of “the extreme one-sidedness with which the average Dutch citizen [was] informed about modern Indonesia”; as a result of this, he was incapable of “thinking and speaking about Indonesia in other than colonial terms.” However, *Vrij Nederland* did not abandon all hope, because if the same person were able to acquire a “deeper insight into the structure of Indonesian society,” he would begin to understand the “tragedy that is the foundation of every colonial relationship.” Simply put, colonialism was rooted in domination. Thus, as much as the Dutch repeatedly invited the

²⁵ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 5. The organization's earlier discussion of British policy vis-à-vis the Indian National Congress appeared as “Buitenlandsch Overzicht,” *Vrij Nederland*, August 19, 1942 (Vol. 3 No. 1), 5–6.

²⁶ *Ons Gemeenebest (Je Maintiendrai)*, July 1944, contained in the “Illegale Brochures, 1940–1945” collection held at the NIOD, Amsterdam. His commentary to this effect appears on page 19.

"aware, independently thinking Indonesians" to work with them, they also needed to realize that "true cooperation between the Dutch and the nationalistically aware Indonesians is *eo ipso* impossible within the framework of the colonial relationship." Further, as the Dutch should surely realize from their own experiences under German rule, competing notions such as "cooperation and domination, synthesis and tutorship" were "psychologically incompatible."²⁷ Ethical policy was dead, the victim of Dutch misconceptions and Indonesian mistrust. The Netherlands had no choice but to seek a new path. Further, and without stating so directly, van Randwijk and van Namen implied that the noncooperating nationalists such as Sukarno and his ilk had already gained the upper hand in Indonesia, and the Dutch had only themselves to blame for what had become an untenable situation.

According to *Vrij Nederland*, the Netherlands confronted two options. One, they could employ force and violence in order to maintain their position as a world power. Such was the solution preferred by those Dutchmen who, secure in their convictions that they had the Indonesians' best interests at heart, refused to engage in honest conversation with their colonial subjects. The Netherlands, however, faced a second course of action. While acknowledging the ambiguity inherent in the colonial relationship, the Dutch could also work to realize the ideas put forth by the queen in December 1942. That is, they could replace the traditional, tragic colonial relationship with a "moving forward, voluntarily, and with complete intellectual and material equality, a going-forth within a greater relationship, in which the Dutch as well as the Indonesian people would be able to fulfill their own tasks." *Vrij Nederland* thus proposed a postwar *Realpolitik* founded on two perhaps contradictory premises: At some in point in time, the Netherlands and Indonesia would permanently separate, but if both peoples elected to do so, the two territories could maintain their ages-old relationship.²⁸ A commonwealth, as conceived by *Vrij Nederland*, acknowledged both of these two premises but privileged the second. For this group of resisters, a complete and immediate parting of ways would harm Dutch and Indonesians alike, whereas the creation of a commonwealth would benefit both parties. The Dutch, for their part, could oversee the transition from colonial rule to Indonesian autonomy. They would continue to manage the many companies, industries, and farms they had established in Indonesia over the course of centuries, but at the same time they would train the Indonesian people to take over these and other enterprises. The Indonesians, at long last, stood to gain control over the means of production while drawing on the educational programs, technical support, and access to credit and capital that the Dutch would provide. The objective remained the final transfer

²⁷ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 3, 6–8.

²⁸ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 9–10.

of these funds, programs, and enterprises to the Indonesians, although *Vrij Nederland* did not specify a precise timetable for this handover.²⁹

For *Vrij Nederland*, Indonesia was to become an autonomous territory. Of this there could be no doubt. To those claiming that “Indonesia” did not exist outside of centralized Dutch control, or that the Indonesians were not ready or able to govern themselves, *Vrij Nederland* asserted that these skeptics had been asking the wrong questions. Instead of questioning whether the Indonesian people were “ready” for autonomy, they should have asked “do the Indonesian people have the necessary characteristics to develop further, in a modern direction, and can it be expected that, in the future, this development will produce the necessary forces to govern the country in such a way that will do honor to Indonesia?” The answer to this more appropriate question was a resounding yes. One need only look to the nationalist movement as evidence, for in the past few decades, the Indonesian people had revealed the skills necessary to lead their own country – courage, energy, self-awareness, and a sense of responsibility. Furthermore, argued *Vrij Nederland*, even if the Indonesian people were as “politically immature” as their critics maintained, then it only stood to reason that they should be granted a greater participatory role in government, not a lesser role. Only with such experience would the Indonesian people be able to prove themselves ready and capable of administering their own country. Maturity required “free development,” not further constraints.³⁰

Although arguing the case for Indonesian autonomy, van Randwijk and van Namen stopped short of endorsing full independence, and not because they seemed unable to imagine this possibility. Rather, they did not believe that the Indonesian people would elect to sever all ties with their former colonial rulers. *Vrij Nederland*, like *Het Parool*, remained confident that the Indonesian people would support the postwar creation of a Dutch commonwealth. After all, they had much to gain from this new arrangement, which would provide a safety net of sorts for Indonesia: The Indonesian people would learn how to administer the country and preside over the massive task of modernization, but they would do so with the knowledge that if they failed or otherwise needed assistance, they could still turn to their historic partners, the Dutch, who would help them get back on their feet. Of course, neither the government-in-exile, the Dutch resisters, nor their Indonesian colleagues in the occupied Netherlands could predict how wartime events would alter the Dutch-Indonesian relationship, and the editors of *Vrij Nederland* readily admitted that their discussion of Indonesian needs and desires was necessarily tentative. Still, like their colleagues at *Het Parool*, they remained optimistic that the Dutch and Indonesian people would have reason to cooperate long into the postwar period.

²⁹ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 33, 36–37.

³⁰ *Vrij Nederland*, Third Extra Issue (Indies Issue), April 1944, 9, 14–16, 18–20.

Joint wartime ventures between Dutch and Indonesian resisters – to say nothing of the close friendships that developed between them – thus served as a double-edged sword for these Dutch leftists. On the one hand, these wartime activities personalized the anti-imperialist cause for individuals like Randwijk, who had long considered himself anti-imperialist but until this point could claim few connections to the East Indies. Van Randwijk was neither trained as an “Indologist,” nor had he or other close family members lived or worked overseas. Although sympathetic to the Indonesian nationalist cause, he did not necessarily encounter Indonesians in his daily life. The same could be said for scores of politicians, journalists, and thinkers, such as P. J. Schmidt, an alternating mainstream and revolutionary socialist. Far-removed from the overseas territories and the queen’s colonized subjects, they thought about the colonies purely in the abstract form. They were hardly the first to do so. As described by Berteke Waaldijk and Susan Legêne, earlier supporters of the Netherlands’ “ethical policy” typically separated Indonesian culture from the political emancipation movement, just as they tended to view individual Indonesians outside of their respective political contexts. In Dutch eyes, Indonesians became depoliticized, even as the nationalist movement gained strength and support.³¹ Wartime bonds forged between Dutch and Indonesian bridged this divide between the abstract and actual, and with important consequences for both parties. Dutch resisters, highly attuned to the presence of a foreign occupier on their own soil, were now provided an entrée into the world of Indonesian political activism, and Indonesian resisters gained sympathetic and influential interlocutors to convey their cause to a wider Dutch public.

However, contrary to whatever these Dutch resisters might have believed, Indonesian resisters in the German-occupied Netherlands no longer represented the larger Indonesian nationalist movement. Setyadjit and his PI-affiliated resisters were cooperating nationalists, even if their organization originally professed a far less accommodating stance. During the wartime years, Setyadjit and PI did not abandon the cause of Indonesian independence, but rather adopted different means of conveying their agenda. Like their fellow nationalists in Indonesia, such as Soetardjo and Thamrin, they sought self-government through the creation of democratic institutions and greater participatory powers for Indonesians. Like their Dutch colleagues, these nationalists believed that Indonesia need not cut off all ties with the Netherlands, and they placed great stock in the queen’s purported promises of reform. No less importantly, they expected that at war’s end they would return to their homeland and take the reins of an autonomous Indonesia.

³¹ Berteke Waaldijk and Susan Legêne, “Ethische politiek in Nederland: Cultureel burgerschap tussen overheersing, opvoeding en afscheid,” in *Het Koloniale Beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië 1890–1950*, eds. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2009), 187–216, page 203 especially.

However, as Indonesians living in the German-occupied Netherlands, these nationalists were isolated from overseas developments. They could not know that the Japanese occupation had splintered the traditional nationalist movement and that Sukarno's newfound prominence would preclude their own involvement in postwar politics. Wartime Indonesia no longer resembled the Indonesia of their youth, but neither they nor their Dutch colleagues could know how drastically different it had become. As a result, Dutch resisters publicized one particular variant of Indonesian nationalism, born of wartime solidarity between two peoples but forged in complete isolation from the colony itself.

AUTONOMY, PARTNERSHIP, AND A COMMUNIST CHANGE OF HEART

The underground communists of *De Waarheid* cultivated ties with Indonesian resisters during the latter part of the German occupation, but these interactions do not appear to have been as decisive for this organization. Instead, *De Waarheid* remained committed to its own ideological program as conceived in the late 1930s and honed during the early wartime years under the leadership of Paul de Groot. For the underground communist party, "liberation" signified more than simply military action in the Indies. Rather, de Groot and his successor, A. J. Koejemans, conceived of a multidimensional process in both metropole and colony. The Netherlands would be freed of its German occupiers, and Indonesia would be freed of its Japanese oppressors. Duly liberated, the Dutch and Indonesians would seek to establish an independent national community in the former colony. In the process, the Dutch too would throw off their own chains, because, after all, "No people is free if it oppresses another people!"³² The Dutch, then, had as much to gain by Indonesian independence as did the Indonesians themselves. First, however, the Dutch, Indonesians, and the Allied forces would need to defeat the Japanese fascists.

Like his peers at *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland*, Koejemans rebuked those who spoke of the need "to reconquer the Indies," as if "the period of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia is only a short episode in the centuries-old drama of colonial oppression and exploitation, that, in another form, will simply continue, or else winning the war will have meant nothing to them." These misinformed people might say that they wished to win the peace, but in actuality, they sought only to reap the profits to be gained from Indonesian petroleum, sugar, and rubber. What better way to obtain these than by reconquering the Indies? Modern-day *conquistadors* claimed

³² "Nederlandse-Indië na de oorlog," *De Waarheid*, May 1, 1943, 5.

thousands of fighting-age men assembled into a "colonial expeditionary army" would restore Dutch rule and therefore protect the capitalistic interests of these profiteers. *De Waarheid* urged the Dutch people to resist such dangerous thinking, lest they sacrifice the same democratic principles for which they now fought their German occupiers. Along these lines, the communists fully endorsed the use of an all-volunteer army to liberate Indonesia: They reasoned that a conscript army would be more likely to profess this haughty and dangerous attitude, whereas volunteers would appreciate the true reasons for this military mission. *De Waarheid* remained certain that the Indonesian masses, united behind the leaders of the nationalist movement, would lead this coming military battle, but they also knew that the Indonesian people would need military partners. Like *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland*, which envisioned Dutch and Indonesians fighting side by side to oust the Japanese oppressor, Koejemans and the communists anticipated successful military and political outcomes to result from such joint effort: After this battle, Indonesia would no longer serve as a subordinate colony, but rather as a valued partner well on the path to autonomy. If victory over Japan constituted the first step on this path, the next would come in the form of a round table conference, assembling representatives from both the Netherlands and Indonesia and charged with deciding the future relationship between the two territories and people.³³

For *De Waarheid*, these developments were to be welcomed, not feared. Koejemans had already made this point quite explicitly when, in November 1943, he flatly rejected the decades-old notion of "Indies lost, disaster born," instead arguing that the Dutch economy only stood to gain by Indonesian autonomy. Under autonomy, the Indonesians would take control over their means of production and reap the fruits of their own labor. As their level of prosperity rose, so too would their purchasing power, which in turn would lead to a greater demand for Dutch goods and services, as well as additional jobs for Dutch workers. In other words, both parties stood to gain, for "an Indonesia that is free of its colonial bonds will expect that the Netherlands will help with its material and moral resurrection."³⁴ A few months later, Koejemans drove home this point, now arguing that an autonomous, prosperous Indonesia would facilitate a more equitable redistribution of wealth in the Netherlands. Before, capitalist profiteers reaped the most profits from their colonial enterprises, but now the entire Dutch people would benefit. The implications of these statements were clear: Just as in the colonial days of old, the fates of both the Netherlands and Indonesia would remain interconnected. The critical difference, of course, was that the new postwar

³³ "Naar Indonesië?" *De Waarheid*, January 21, 1944 (Vol. 4 No. 9), 1-2; "Vijf urgent punten uit ons Volksprogramma," *De Waarheid*, April 26, 1944, 9-10.

³⁴ "Nederland en Indonesië," *De Waarheid*, November 17, 1943 (Vol. 4), 5-7.

relationship would no longer be founded on the “chains of force and violence,” but rather on solidarity, mutuality, and common interests.

Still, as much as editor Koejemans and the underground Dutch communists desired this “going forth together” with the former colony, they accepted that this was not their choice to make. Because autonomy came with free will, the Indonesians alone needed to decide whether or not they wished to “go forth” with the Netherlands. Moreover, just as a newly autonomous Indonesia could elect to maintain its relationship with its former colonial masters, so too could it decide to sever these bonds. Such was the prerogative of a free Indonesian people.³⁵ *De Waarheid* remained confident that an autonomous Indonesia would elect to maintain its relationship with its former colonial ruler, but the Dutch people also needed to prepare themselves for a different outcome. Koejemans was especially eager to administer a necessary dose of reality to those fellow citizens minimizing the effects of the Japanese occupation, who claimed that the Indonesians viewed the Japanese as oppressors, not liberators, and that they easily saw through such empty Japanese slogans as “Asia for the Asiatics.” *De Waarheid* deemed this view overly optimistic, ill-founded, and dangerous. The Dutch needed to realize that the Indonesian nationalist movement encompassed various streams in Indonesian society, and that some of these groups had worked with their Japanese occupiers, if only to further their own cause. And why wouldn’t they? The Dutch government had never recognized their movement or ideals, whereas the Japanese had allowed the Indonesians to serve as provincial administrators, for instance. Still, *De Waarheid* was convinced that the vast majority of the Indonesian nationalist movement – itself born out of democratic principles – remained committed to the cause of democracy, not fascism; the Indonesians knew that independence would not come at the hands of brutal Japanese fascists. Only after the Dutch accepted the democratic nature of the Indonesian nationalist cause could the two peoples move forward together, acting in the spirit of mutual cooperation.³⁶

Seen in light of the communists’ historic support for Indonesian interests and political autonomy especially, the underground CPN’s emphasis on the voluntary nature of this new Dutch-Indonesian relationship could be expected. During the earlier part of the century, the Dutch communists had called for immediate, unqualified Indonesian independence under the banner “Indonesia free from Holland!” – the same slogan employed by certain segments of the Indonesian nationalist movement. The party’s Popular Front-era position continued to support independence, but also recognized that an independent Indonesia would serve as an easy target for fascist Germany and Japan. In the late 1930s, the CPN recommended that the Netherlands

³⁵ “Naar Indonesië?” *De Waarheid*, January 21, 1944 (Vol. 4 No. 9), 1; “Is Indonesië al ‘rijp’ voor zelfstandigheid?” *De Waarheid*, February 5, 1944, 3–4.

³⁶ “Japan en Indonesië,” March 21, 1944 (Vol. 4. No. 19), 4–5.

both strengthen its military defenses of the colony and grant democratic reforms of the type specified in the Soetardjo Petition of 1936. However, as the Germans and Soviets reached an uneasy rapprochement in 1939 and as the Netherlands became an occupied country, Paul de Groot and the now-underground CPN reverted to its previous "Independence now!" position, proclaiming that the "Orange imperialists" needed to end their oppression of Indonesia no matter the consequences. Under Koejemans's leadership during the final stage of the war, the Dutch communists reinvented themselves yet again. For the first time, they appeared willing to consider the possibility that the Dutch might remain in Indonesia for the foreseeable future. In January 1944, *De Waarheid* speculated that the Dutch, working alongside the Indonesian people, might oversee the colony's transition to a fully autonomous, democratic nation.³⁷ The Netherlands would not simply exit the colony, but rather ensure that the Indonesians were fully equipped to handle the realities of self-government. So too did the underground CPN come around to the prospects of a Dutch commonwealth. Writing in the pages of *De Waarheid* and other clandestine publications, Koejemans neither explicitly endorsed nor rejected this proposed structure. However, in meetings and planning sessions with other underground organizations, he signaled his support.

A subtle shift for any other organization, this change in policy nonetheless represented a more fundamental adjustment for Koejemans and the underground CPN. If the party believed immediate, unconditional independence to be feasible or that Indonesia was destined to become a workers' state, it did not reveal as much. Seemingly at odds with its previous anti-imperialism, this more tempered approach was nonetheless consistent with a very specific wartime agenda. From its inception in November 1940, *De Waarheid* aimed to stimulate resistance, not necessarily to win converts to the Communist Party. Certainly, the organization continued to advocate a "free, socialist Netherlands," but *De Waarheid* functioned as a resistance paper above all else. In other tangible ways too, the communists sought to prove that their paramount goal was the liberation of the Netherlands from Nazi Germany. Most notably, the underground CPN entered into close working relationships with an array of other clandestine organizations from across the political spectrum. The communists, for instance, assumed a leading role within the paramilitary and politically diverse Council of Resistance (*Raad van Verzet*), created in April 1943. Coupled with the toning-down of their ideology and rhetoric, these cooperative efforts earned the party respect and even begrudging acceptance from broad segments of the Dutch underground and the population at large. The Dutch Communist Party, so it seemed, stood poised to become a more mainstream party at war's end.

³⁷ "Naar Indonesië?" *De Waarheid*, January 21, 1944 (Vol. 4 No. 9), 1.

With the end of the war in sight, Koejemans dialed back his party's anti-imperialist rhetoric. Perhaps he realized that its previous position had been untenable, as implied by Hansje Galesloot and Susan Legêne, the authors of a nuanced study of the wartime CPN. According to Galesloot and Legêne, the Dutch communists worried that a newly independent Indonesia would be too vulnerable to defend itself against the Americans and British, both of whom were expected to dominate the Pacific Rim area after the war. As a result, the underground Dutch Communist Party came to support the creation of a Dutch commonwealth including both the Netherlands and Indonesia, that is, as long as membership in this union was both voluntary and mutually acceptable.³⁸ Importantly, too, Koejemans and the underground CPN seemed to suspect that pro-imperial groups like *Trouw* would dictate the terms of postwar colonial policy, and that in this environment, the communists would need to move to the center if they wished to maintain any influence at all. By aligning with the reform-minded but more moderate leftists of *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland*, the underground CPN could create a united front of sorts against *Trouw* and its dangerous imperialist projects. As would soon become obvious, the communists had ample reason for concern, for the conservative resisters of *Trouw* would prove their most formidable adversaries in the colonial arena.

JE MAINTIENDRAI: FROM LIBERATION TO
"THE COMMONWEALTH"

Since its debut in early 1943, *Je Maintiendrai* had voiced support for colonial reform, albeit in a manner intended to preserve the long-standing and absolutely vital connections between the European Netherlands and the East Indies. The intellectuals, career politicians, and former Nederlandse Unie leaders standing at the helm of this organization urged the Dutch to think "imperially," not "imperialistically," recognizing that Indonesia "did not belong to [them]," but instead constituted "a part of them."³⁹ For this group of resisters,⁴⁰ immediate and unconditional autonomy was out of the

³⁸ Importantly, too, Galesloot and Legêne note that after the founding of the Cominform in 1948, the Dutch Communist Party embarked on a process of "self-criticism." As a result, party leaders rejected their organization's more conciliatory wartime position as "opportunistic" and "bourgeois-nationalist." Correspondingly, the party now reverted to its prewar, pre-Popular Front position calling for immediate and unequivocal Indonesian independence. See Hansje Galesloot and Susan Legêne, *Partij in het verzet: De CPN in de tweede wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus, 1986), 245–250.

³⁹ "Indonesie en het Nederlandsch geweten," *Je Maintiendrai*, Christmas 1943 Issue, 8–9.

⁴⁰ Between May 1943 and August 1944, P. J. Schmidt, Geert Ruygers, J. G. Suurhoff, Willem Verkade, Willem Banning, H. Brugmans and Willem Schermerhorn joined the editorial staff of *Je Maintiendrai*, taking their places alongside cofounding editors C. Vlot, J. E. W. Wüthrich, and Kees Viehoff. In August of 1944, German authorities apprehended Vlot and Wüthrich; both were later executed.

question, lest such a course of action undermine the great work accomplished by the Dutch in their overseas colony.⁴¹ Like *De Waarheid*, the *Je Maintiendrai* organization neither supported nor rejected the prospects of a Dutch commonwealth, but for starkly different reasons. Whereas the communists could stand behind a commonwealth if the Indonesians preferred this arrangement, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* cited present circumstances.

Such a tremendously important political matter required careful, informed analysis and rational decision making, neither of which was possible with both territories under foreign occupation. So, with Allied armies clearly on the offensive, the resisters at *Je Maintiendrai* focused on the military dimension of the battle for the Indies. Citing at great length the speeches and public statements delivered by Dutch authorities in London and elsewhere, these resisters lauded the nation’s noble calling to fight the Japanese, and they urged their countrymen to volunteer for service.⁴² Great was the need for able-bodied fighters, according to *Je Maintiendrai*. In October 1943, the organization proposed a liberation force of approximately 100,000 Dutchmen. Nine months later, these resisters raised their expectations, for surely a nation of 9 million inhabitants would be able to deploy a 900,000-strong army, followed by an additional 100,000 men once circumstances in Europe allowed.⁴³

Like their counterparts at the distinctly more leftist *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland*, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* emphasized the characteristics of this military mission, because, after all, the Netherlands’ future relationship with Indonesia as well as the Netherlands’ global position hinged on this effort. Accordingly, the Dutch would not participate in the war against Japan under “the imperialist slogan ‘the reconquest of the colonies,’” but under the banner of “the liberation of Indonesia.”⁴⁴ In November 1944, for instance, *Je Maintiendrai* aimed to rally popular support and, specifically, “tens of thousands” of volunteers for this upcoming struggle. The editors reiterated that, contrary to what certain people continued to believe, tens of thousands of Dutch men would be sent to Indonesia not as imperialist conquerors, but as liberators. However, whereas *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland* took aim at the political conservatives of *Trouw* and other purported fanatics calling for such imperial conquest, *Je Maintiendrai* targeted leftist claims

⁴¹ See, for instance, “Indië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, August 5, 1943 (Vol. 3. No. 3), 4.

⁴² See, for instance, “Rede van Luitenant-Admiraal J. Th. Furstner, Minister van Marine,” *Je Maintiendrai*, March 1944, Issue 2 (Vol. 4 No. 14), 4, and “Minister van Mook,” *Je Maintiendrai*, April 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 4 No. 15), 5.

⁴³ “Het Nieuwe Leger,” *Je Maintiendrai*, October 1943, Issue 2 (Vol. 4. No.7), 5; “Hoe zal Nederland deelnemen aan de Bevrijding van Nederlandsch-Indië?,” *Je Maintiendrai*, July 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 5 No. 1), 2.

⁴⁴ “De Buitenlandsche Politiek en het Nederlandsche Gemeenebest,” *Je Maintiendrai*, April 1944, Issue 2 (Vol. 4 No. 16), 2–3, with these comments about “liberation” versus “reconquest” appearing in the concluding paragraphs on page 3.

that “no man and no cent” should be employed to liberate Indonesia, lest the mission allow Dutch capitalists to resume their long-standing exploitation of Indonesia. In November 1944, *Je Maintiendrai* dismissed such nonsensical objections by explaining that, as per the queen’s speech of December 7, 1942, the empire was to be established “on the firm basis of full equality.” The Dutch would bear arms to liberate their equals, thereby paving the way for political reform, because as “even the most doctrinaire Marxist should know, no social freedom, no form of socialism is possible if there is no national freedom.” For these reasons, all Dutch citizens, including even the socialist and communist faithful, must dedicate themselves to the fight against Japan and work to liberate the tyrannized Indonesian people.⁴⁵ *Je Maintiendrai*’s criticisms, however, painted a misleading picture of anticolonial sentiment at the time. By November 1944, the underground CPN stood firmly behind the coming military action in Indonesia as long as Dutch volunteers, not conscripts, led the charge. If individual communists or groups of more doctrinaire Marxists objected to military involvement, they did so independently of the CPN. All the same – and again foreshadowing the types of political divisions and conflicts to be seen after the war – the resisters of centrist *Je Maintiendrai* cast the left in an oppositional, even antagonistic role.

As such commentary might imply, the Allied advance in Europe prompted *Je Maintiendrai* to carve out a more decisive colonial stance. Once the voice of careful, moderate colonial reform, *Je Maintiendrai* not only placed itself in the commonwealth camp, but it did so with evident enthusiasm and high expectations for the future of Dutch-Indonesian relations. Beginning in the spring of 1944, the organization highlighted the notions of “mutuality” and “equality,” even going so far as to declare the Netherlands’ “moral urgency” to recognize the mutual nature of their relationship with the Indonesians and to cooperate with them “on the basis of full equality.” By achieving harmonious unity with one another, the two groups would be able to dissolve the “colonial antithesis” that had long separated European rulers and their native subjects. This was a complex task, certainly, and one that required sustained cooperation from both Dutch and Indonesians, or rather, certain segments of Dutch and Indonesian society. Specifically, the “upper strata of Indonesians and Dutchmen” would need to work toward raising the consciousness of the largely undeveloped Indonesian masses. The editors of *Je Maintiendrai* did not specify, but presumably the former group would consist of moderate, cooperative, Western-educated Indonesians, whereas the latter would include leading politicians like themselves, trained “Indologists,” and other respected Indies experts. According to *Je Maintiendrai*, inter-elite solidarity would constitute the foundation for a new relationship, which in

⁴⁵ “Bevrijding van Indonesië!” *Je Maintiendrai*, November 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 5, No. 4), 2.

turn would guarantee that both Indonesia and the West Indies would be accorded a position equal to that of the European Netherlands.⁴⁶

Simultaneously, and without explaining its change of heart, *Je Maintiendrai* began to refer to a Dutch commonwealth as if the structure already existed and should be called by its proper title, “the Commonwealth.” In April 1944, the organization told the nation to expect new postwar policies accounting for the changed relationship between the Netherlands and “the overseas parts of the Commonwealth”: According to the queen’s speech of December 7, 1942, all four parts of the kingdom – the European Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, and Curaçao – would constitute autonomous, equal parts of a strong, unified commonwealth. Under this new arrangement, the words “colonial” and “colonial politics” would cease to have meaning. The Netherlands would no longer be a nation of “nine million Dutchmen,” but would now constitute a 70-million-person-strong commonwealth able to command a powerful presence in the world community.⁴⁷ To those who would doubt the potential strength and capacity of this new commonwealth, the editors of *Je Maintiendrai* pointed to the British, who, by dividing their empire into various autonomous domains, had endowed their empire with an “inner strength” that only further enhanced its position on the world stage. Like *De Waarheid*, the *Je Maintiendrai* organization anticipated that an autonomous Indonesia would produce a stronger Kingdom of the Netherlands,⁴⁸ but whereas underground CPN leader Koejemans spoke of tangible benefits, such as markets and employment for Dutch workers, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* focused on the prestige and power the Netherlands stood to gain. In any case, the Dutch simply had nothing to fear from a commonwealth.

The organization’s most ringing endorsement of this new imperial structure appeared in the guise of a twenty-seven-page-long analysis, appearing in brochure form in July 1944. *Ons Gemeenebest*, or “Our Commonwealth,” was the work of *Je Maintiendrai* staff writer and soon-to-be coeditor P. J. Schmidt,⁴⁹ who two years earlier had penned *Vrij Nederland*’s first

⁴⁶ Although ending with this call for parity between the European Netherlands, Indonesia, and the West Indies, this particular analysis did not examine the position of the West Indies. As was typically the case for *Je Maintiendrai* and other organizations, the West Indies elicited only passing mentions of this sort. “Nederland-Indonesië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, March 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 4, No. 13), 4–5, 8.

⁴⁷ “De Buitenlandsche Politiek en het Nederlandsche Gemeenebest,” *Je Maintiendrai*, April 1944, Issue 2 (Vol. 4 No. 16), 2–3.

⁴⁸ “Buitenlandsche overzicht: Het Britsche ‘Empire,’” *Je Maintiendrai*, May 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 4 No. 17), 7.

⁴⁹ According to Lydia Winkel, Schmidt and colleagues at *Je Maintiendrai* intended *Ons Gemeenebest* to serve as the first of a series of brochures on the subject, but the liberation of the southern part of the country in September 1944 and the ensuing Railway Strike sidelined these plans. However, the contents of Schmidt’s dedicated commonwealth brochure were later included in his book-length analysis of Dutch foreign policy, titled *Buitenlandse*

detailed colonial analysis describing a “reborn” but still highly cohesive Dutch empire. By the summer of 1944, Schmidt had become *Je Maintiendrai*’s resident colonial expert, and his *Ons Gemeenebest* was intended to refocus the nation’s attention away from the controversial and much-discussed topic of postwar “renewal.” The nation needed to set its sights overseas, and it needed to do so with one voice. After all, as he explained, “our calling towards Indonesia, Surinam, and Curaçao needs the harmonious cooperation of our entire people.” Further, he urged his fellow citizens to realize that because of “its position at the most important crossroads in Europe and in the Pacific, and with its bases in the West Indies, the Dutch Commonwealth, with its new foreign policy, has become a factor of importance in the center of world politics.”⁵⁰ For Schmidt, this commonwealth represented the best and indeed only option available in these changed times. It was a *fait accompli*, and a good one at that.

Since its debut the previous year, *Je Maintiendrai* agreed that in theory colonial reform was necessary, but its leaders urged moderation and careful consideration before the Netherlands committed itself to any one course of action. According to this line of thinking, the queen’s December 7, 1942, speech did not constitute a radical directive for the future, but rather represented the most recent manifestation of a successful process already in motion; the same could also be said of the Atlantic Charter of 1941. To some extent, Schmidt agreed. The Atlantic Charter and the queen’s speech, although both indicative of the “new times,” gave concrete form to the long-standing process of “evolution and historical growth.” Further, the Atlantic Charter was founded on the principle of equality between peoples, a concept informing the Dutch constitutional revision of 1922 granting equal status to all four parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. However, for Schmidt, these recent developments also revealed a new trajectory. Most obviously, the 1922 constitutional revision may have established the equality of these four parts of the Kingdom, but it had yet to be actualized in any meaningful way. With his *Ons Gemeenebest*, Schmidt called on the queen, possessing the “best of intentions,” to put into effect the equal relationship laid out in both 1922 and 1942. He was confident that the Dutch and Indonesians were ready for such far-reaching changes, because wartime experiences strengthened feelings of solidarity between the two peoples and bolstered both Dutch and Indonesian desires for autonomy.⁵¹ Now, the government would need to provide the opportunity and the venue to express these newfound feelings. The ball rested in the kingdom’s court, so to speak.

politiek van Nederland (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1945). See Winkel, *De ongedrongse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 126, 179.

⁵⁰ *Ons Gemeenebest* (*Je Maintiendrai*), 1–2, 3–4.

⁵¹ *Ons Gemeenebest* (*Je Maintiendrai*), 19–20.

If his parent organization dismissed the significance of an Indonesian nationalist movement thought to be dominated by radical extremists, Schmidt sought to help the Dutch understand recent Indonesian history. Only with such understanding could the two peoples forge a harmonious future together, according to Schmidt. Contrary to perceptions in the European Netherlands, the Indonesian nationalist movement encompassed Indonesia's many religious and ethnic groupings; it worked for universal goals, not solely the promotion of Islam, as typically alleged. On the oft-debated question of whether the Indonesian nationalist movement truly represented the desires and interests of the larger Indonesian population, Schmidt noted that the nationalist movement enjoyed a far wider reach among native society than typically assumed by the Dutch. He drove home this message by means of an analogy: In the German-occupied Netherlands, only a small percentage of the general population actively participated in the organized resistance against the Germans, but didn't resisters still enjoy both overt and covert support from members of the general public? Didn't these resisters "represent" the Dutch people? The same could be said about Indonesia, where the nationalists articulated the "ideas slumbering in the hearts" of simple common folk. As further evidence for his claims, Schmidt urged his readers to look to the example provided by the Indian National Congress in British India, which although a small segment of a total population of 300 million, had won a majority in nine of eleven recent provincial elections.⁵² In other words, these nationalist movements and leaders operated not on the fringes but in the very heart of native society, as the Netherlands and other imperial powers needed to realize.

Because these historical developments had contemporary implications, *Ons Gemeenebest* surveyed the present "political character" of the Indonesian nationalist movement. According to Schmidt, Indonesian nationalism was not static, but evolutionary and flexible, espousing different ideologies at particular moments in time. For instance, during the inter-war period, prominent nationalist leaders and organizations had called for unqualified Indonesian independence and, as such, adhered to a policy of noncooperation with Dutch authorities. Yet when war and the Japanese in particular threatened to overtake the Indies, the nationalists softened this hard-line approach, he explained. During the period of 1939 to 1941, non-cooperationist tactics gave way to a pronounced spirit of cooperation, with the nationalists ultimately declaring their willingness to form a united front with the Dutch against the Japanese aggressor.⁵³ As this about-face clearly demonstrated, the Indonesian nationalists were hardly the intransigent obstructionists their Dutch detractors had portrayed them to be. Further, when the Japanese did attack, the Indonesians fought alongside the Dutch,

⁵² *Ons Gemeenebest (Je Maintiendrai)*, 11, 13-15.

⁵³ *Ons Gemeenebest (Je Maintiendrai)*, 13, 15-16.

and they continued to do so to this day. For Schmidt, these and other war-time experiences had only heightened the feelings of solidarity between the two peoples and territories. Alternately, so he explained, “both parts of our commonwealth were growing together rather quickly.” What better way to give expression to these new sentiments than to help oust the Japanese oppressors? After all, it was only with this liberation of Indonesia could the Netherlands begin to “give shape to the Queen’s words of December 7, 1942!”⁵⁴

With such claims, Schmidt’s analysis revealed a new course for the *Je Maintiendrai* organization. Gone were earlier declarations that, by virtue of its centuries-old connections with the Indies, the Netherlands was entitled to recapture the Indies and ensure its position with the Dutch empire. Now, the career politicians and intellectuals standing at the helm of *Je Maintiendrai* openly proclaimed the merits of a Dutch commonwealth. As conceived by these resisters, this structure would be unified and strong yet diverse and decentralized, rooted in historical traditions but progressive and constantly evolving. Organized along these lines, a commonwealth would also allow the Netherlands to resume its position on the world stage. Or, as the editors of *Je Maintiendrai* implored their readers in July 1944: If “the Greater Netherlands, the greatest of the small powers, nay, a great power itself, with a population of eighty million souls,” was to assume a leading role in a new postwar order, then the Dutch needed to prove they were “deadly serious” when they said that they felt “at one with the Indies” and that the Indies were an indivisible part of the Netherlands. The upcoming military mission to the archipelago constituted the first opportunity for the Dutch to act out their intentions in these regards.⁵⁵

Yet the politicians, intellectuals, and activists at *Je Maintiendrai* were also firmly convinced that the Indonesian people wished to maintain their historic relationship with the Netherlands, and for this reason, they expected their former colonial subjects to prefer the commonwealth option as well. In fact, of the five leading press organizations, only *Je Maintiendrai* reiterated the Indonesians’ steadfast loyalty to the Dutch government, with a mere handful of Indonesian “traitors” choosing to work with the Japanese. Even Schmidt’s *Ons Gemeenebest* did not consider the possibility that the Netherlands’ Indonesian partners might reject the various schemes hatched in the metropole. For Schmidt and other commonwealth supporters, this new structure was to be a voluntary one, meaning all parties must willingly enter into this arrangement. Moreover, as Schmidt hastened to explain,

⁵⁴ *Ons Gemeenebest (Je Maintiendrai)*, 16–18, 24.

⁵⁵ “Hoe zal Nederland deelnemen aan de Bevrijding van Nederlandsch-Indie?” *Je Maintiendrai*, July 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 5 No. 1), 1–2. Oddly, only three months before the appearance of this particular discussion, *Je Maintiendrai* cited 70 million inhabitants of the new Dutch commonwealth: “De Buitenlandsche Politiek en het Nederlandsche Gemeenebest,” *Je Maintiendrai*, April 1944, Issue 2 (Vol. 4 No. 16), 2–3.

the commonwealth’s voluntary nature would work both ways: Procedures should be in place to enable one party voluntarily to opt out of this union should irresolvable difficulties arise.⁵⁶ Still, Schmidt and his colleagues at *Je Maintiendrai* seemed unable to imagine a complete parting of ways between these two inextricably linked peoples and territories. Until war’s end, the organization continued to proclaim that both the Indonesian nationalists and the greater masses of Indonesian people stood as one with the Dutch.⁵⁷ Bound together by history and shared experiences, the Dutch and Indonesians would evict the Japanese and work toward a stronger, more unified commonwealth. The editors of *Je Maintiendrai* – including the Netherlands’ first postwar prime minister, Willem Schermerhorn – envisioned no other way forward.

TROUW’S CALLING: RETURN, RESTORE, RESURRECT

With its appearance in February 1943, the Calvinist, politically conservative *Trouw* quickly established itself as the leading proponent of imperial resurrection. Gesina van der Molen, J. Bruins Slot, and colleagues lauded the restoration of the mighty Kingdom of the Netherlands, which would bring the Dutch continued prosperity, stability, and international prestige.⁵⁸ Such restoration could only come on the heels of military action. In late 1943, *Trouw* replaced its original language of “reconquest” or “reconquering” with that of “liberation” (*bevrijding*) and “release” (*vrijmaking*). Yet these rhetorical adjustments did not imply that the organization doubted the righteousness of its overseas mandate. On the contrary, the Netherlands was duty-bound to fulfill its overseas mission, no matter what it was termed. *Trouw* continued to implore its readers to heed their call to arms in the Indies, a territory that belonged to the Dutch and would be liberated by Dutch forces. Should the Dutch falter in this national duty, then another nation, such as Great Britain or the United States, could arrive first and either seize the colony for itself or, more disturbingly, place the colony under international guardianship.⁵⁹ As it planned for this most noble of military acts, *Trouw* anticipated that volunteers would constitute the first wave of fighters, with

⁵⁶ *Ons Gemeenebest (Je Maintiendrai)*, 20–21.

⁵⁷ See, for example, “De Toestand in Nederlandsche-Indië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, April 1944, Issue 2 (Vol. 4 No. 16), 5–6, and “Bevrijding van Indonesië!” *Je Maintiendrai*, November 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 5 No. 4), 2.

⁵⁸ *Trouw*’s original editors included Gesina van der Molen, J. A. H. J. S. Bruins Slot, E. van Ruller, and Johannes Schouten. After Schouten’s arrest in April 1943, the editorial board was expanded to include, among others, brothers Abraham and Victor Rutgers. Arrested in April 1944 while trying to escape to London, Victor would later die in a German prison.

⁵⁹ “Ons strijd om Indië,” *Trouw*, July 20, 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 8), 2; “De Vrijmaking van Indië,” *Trouw*, Mid-November 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 13), 2; “Indië roept,” *Trouw*, mid-July 1944 (Vol. 2 No. 7), 2–3.

conscripted forces to follow. Mandatory service would ensure that no one shirked this most important duty, and a call for volunteers would best suit those for whom the Indies meant something, “those who understand that, for the Netherlands, the Indies are a calling, that we bear a debt of honor towards the Indies.”⁶⁰ Acknowledging that this calling might transcend gender roles and expectations, *Trouw* later encouraged women to volunteer for these armed forces as well. Should shortages occur in “specifically female professions” – such as nursing or other military auxiliary services – then women should also be called up to serve in the military.⁶¹ *Trouw* might have been the most politically, religiously, and socially conservative of its peers, but the importance of this Indies mission trumped all other considerations. The more hands on deck and the larger the forces sent overseas, the sooner the Kingdom of the Netherlands could be restored.

While preparing for this coming battle, *Trouw* countered the claims of organizations such as *De Waarheid* and *Het Parool*, which argued that military liberation must be accompanied by far-reaching political measures. For Gesina van der Molen, J. Bruins Slot, and their fellow editors, such idle talk of Indonesian autonomy detracted from the most pressing task at hand: The East Indies needed to be freed of its Japanese oppressor and returned to its status as a Dutch colony. *Trouw* hammered home this position in the form of a dedicated “Indies Issue” appearing in late December 1943.⁶² *Trouw* was not the only organization to issue a special “Indies edition,” but it was the first: *Vrij Nederland*’s Indies issue appeared in spring 1944, and *Je Maintiendrai*’s appeared in July 1944. More important, however, *Trouw* broke ground by producing the first and only instance of a major clandestine publication specifically intended for “export.” After producing a Dutch-language version, *Trouw* editors translated this issue into English and sent this slightly revised English-language version to London via the underground Swiss Connection (Zwitserse Weg) courier network, which since mid-1942 had relayed information between the European Netherlands and the government-in-exile.⁶³ Presumably, *Trouw*’s editors aimed for an

⁶⁰ “Naar Indië,” *Trouw*, September 26, 1944 (Vol. 2 No. 14), 3.

⁶¹ “Onze strijdmacht en de bevrijding van Indië,” *Trouw*, mid-January 1945 (Vol. 3 No. 1), 4.

⁶² Approximately 50,000 copies of this special issue (Vol. 1 No. 14) were produced and put into circulation. Copies of both the Dutch- and English-language special editions are included with the regular editions of *Trouw* (publication number 840) found in *Illegale Pers Collectie 556* of NIOD, Amsterdam. Complete copies of both versions are also included in Dick Houwaart’s edited volume, *Trouw: een ondergrondse krant: Heruitgave van all Trouw-nummers uit de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1978) and are included on the Web site for “Illegale *Trouw*”: http://www.trouw.nl/deverdieping/article203446.ece/Illegale_Trouw. Unless otherwise noted, all citations here refer to the Dutch-language version of this Indies Issue.

⁶³ Lydia Winkel, *De ondergrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 253–254.

American, not British, audience: If only to protect their own global interests, the British could be expected to rally behind Dutch "imperial resurrection," but the Americans were perceived as solidly, if also naïvely, anti-imperialist. By appealing directly to them, the resisters of *Trouw* hoped to win over or at least temporarily silence their American critics.

Trouw's Indies Issue was penned exclusively by editor Abraham Rutgers, the only member of the organization to have worked or spent significant time in the colonies. In the 1920s, he held various administrative posts in the East Indies, and then, beginning in 1928, served as governor of Surinam, a position he held for five years. After his return to the European Netherlands in the fall of 1933, he represented the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party in parliament, and as a member of the Council of State, he advised the queen on economic matters concerning the Netherlands and the East Indies. Writing in this "Indies Issue" of December 1943, Rutgers reiterated *Trouw*'s stated position that the Dutch East Indies would not be "given back to the Netherlands" by its wartime allies. Rather, Dutch forces, the first Allied military units to arrive in the archipelago, would recapture the prized territory. Accordingly, the Dutch needed to ready themselves for the great mission that awaited them, and they especially needed to understand why, exactly, they would be sent overseas so soon after their own liberation from the Germans.⁶⁴ The Dutch also needed to appreciate the "Indies lost, disaster born" prophesy warning of economic and political ruin should the Dutch lose its overseas territories. Foolish ideas – such as the granting of dominion status to the Indies – were making their way through Dutch society, and *Trouw* was determined to set the record straight.

Rutgers bemoaned popular but faulty interpretations of the queen's December 7, 1942, speech, which saw in Her Majesty's words evidence of equal legal status, dominion status, or even independence for the Indies. Some even spoke of "federation" and an "Imperial Council" assembling representatives from the Netherlands and the overseas territories. Rutgers rested blame solidly on the shoulders of other clandestine organizations, which failed to explain what would happen to "the ties of one united Kingdom" should such grandiose and dangerous schemes come to fruition.⁶⁵ Further, according to Rutgers and *Trouw*, a Dutch commonwealth premised on four equal parts or domains remained inconceivable as long as the Indonesian natives were unprepared – *onrijp*, literally, "unripe" – to govern themselves. Although acknowledging the growth of Indonesian political self-consciousness, Rutgers nonetheless doubted its progress and reach among native society. Put bluntly, "A child wanting to be grown up by that fact alone does not possess the ability of an adult. In the same way, it is

⁶⁴ *Trouw*, Indies Issue, December 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 14), English version, 12–13. This commentary appears in the English-language version only.

⁶⁵ *Trouw*, Indies Issue, December 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 14), 6.

possible for a population to have a political self-consciousness not proportionate to its political abilities.” In other words, the Indonesians could fancy themselves as politically savvy as they wished, but they remained unable to manage the day-to-day affairs of their country. As proof of such claims, Rutgers pointed to the fact that the Dutch government still provided the overwhelming majority of the “capital, energy, and culture” of the East Indies and, as such, served as the glue holding together this disparate collection of territories. Until native society had reached a higher state of political, economic, cultural, and spiritual development, the Dutch would grant neither autonomy, independence, nor dominion status.⁶⁶ By implication, then, the Dutch alone would decide when their colonial subjects had achieved a sufficient level of development, and the Indonesians would work toward a moving target, uncertain when and even if they would be able to fulfill these unnamed conditions.

Of course, *Trouw* hardly invented the imagery of Indonesians as immature children subject to wise and benevolent supervision by their Dutch parents. Rutgers and his fellow resisters operated squarely within the Netherlands’ “ethical policy” tradition, which advocated a more enlightened, even altruistic style of rule in the Indies. Yet during the wartime years, *Trouw* occupied a singular position: No other leading group granted the Dutch so much authority over the native population, and none infantilized the larger masses of Indonesian people or the nationalist movement to the same extent. *Je Maintiendrai* and *Vrij Nederland* may have reiterated the Netherlands’ continued debt toward the Indies, but they envisioned future relations based on mutuality and equality, in accordance with the queen’s words to this effect. Going further than this, the resisters of *De Waarheid* and *Het Parool* summoned the Dutch to abandon their traditional superiority complex toward the Indonesian people, who were not as immature as the colonizers liked to believe. With the Netherlands entering its fourth year of occupation, *Trouw* emerged as an anomaly. Against those voices heralding the prospects of a Dutch commonwealth and dominion status for “Indonesia,” *Trouw*’s resident colonial expert sketched a more recognizable future: The Netherlands was to continue along a path first forged decades ago, when it brought its prized East Indies “out of the colonial sphere.” For Rutgers, the constitutional revision of 1922 designating the East and West Indies as “overseas territories” had eradicated the old “colonial idea” whereby these territories constituted mere Dutch possessions. So, just as it removed the “colonial stigma” by integrating these territories into the kingdom, the Dutch government would rise to the occasion yet again. After all, as Rutgers boasted, the Netherlands’ “statesmanship in solving colonial problems is not only known all over the world, but justly renowned.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *Trouw*, Indies Issue, December 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 14), 6–7, 10.

⁶⁷ *Trouw*, Indies Issue, December 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 14), 7, 9.

After the liberation of the European Netherlands, the newly returned government faced a two-fold task. It would oust the Japanese aggressors and gain control of the East Indies, and then it would work "to create conditions favorable to the maturation of the political abilities of the native population." Translated into concrete policy, this would mean that "all natives capable of government service" would be appointed to such positions immediately. The various local councils of the East Indies, including the Volksraad, were to be granted greater authority over internal affairs, that is, as long as their work in these regards did not detract "in any way from the Kingdom's unity, which stands above everything." For *Trouw*, imperial unity, or Rijkseenheid, continued to guide colonial policy, but it did not prevent the Dutch from granting certain democratic reforms. Such reforms would focus on education and practical training, and would need to be implemented gradually, lest greater responsibility overwhelm the native people. Above all else, however, all inhabitants of the kingdom, whether in Europe or the overseas territories, needed to recognize that they belonged to a unified "Greater Netherlands."⁶⁸ No matter the reforms, imperial unity needed to be preserved at all costs.

Rutgers's commentary about the future of the empire revealed yet another pivotal difference between *Trouw* and its fellow clandestine groups: The Calvinist resisters of *Trouw* framed Dutch colonialism as a divine Christian mandate, directly ordained by God as an expression of His will. Accordingly, the Netherlands' calling toward the East Indies was not only political, economic, and cultural, but spiritual as well.⁶⁹ As Rutgers explained, the Dutch had introduced Western culture to the natives, and in the process had also burdened them with "the tremendous problems of modern times." Because many "young natives" of the East Indies had lost their spiritual bearings, the Dutch bore the responsibility "to lead the people of the East Indies through the darkness of these times." Presumably, Rutgers spoke on behalf of both *Trouw* and the Calvinist faithful in the Netherlands when he proclaimed "we are firmly convinced, that we can only do this by bringing them into contact with the Gospel." In simplest terms, "the natives also need the Gospel, and we shall have to tell them so." The realities of war, occupation, and even democratic reform could not change this fact, and so even as they suffered under German occupation, the Dutch people needed to ready themselves for the monumental task that lay ahead of them as Christians.⁷⁰ In the pages of *Trouw*, Rutgers's

⁶⁸ *Trouw*, Indies Issue, December 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 14), 8, 10-11.

⁶⁹ See, for instance, the brochure entitled *Onze roeping jegens Indië* – "Our Calling Towards the Indies" – issued by *Trouw* in late 1944. Here, the organization explained that of all the great work performed by the Dutch in the Indies, the spiritual work was most important: "Illegale Brochures, 1940-1945" collection, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁷⁰ *Trouw*, Indies Issue, December 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 14), 2-3.

fellow editors reiterated this holy calling to liberate the Indies from Japan and bring freedom to all members of the kingdom. They firmly rejected the assumption that “one would need to grant certain political demands, i.e., those demanded by Indonesian politics, before going to fight there.” Instead, the Dutch people were to act according to the biblical command, “Fear God, honor the King” (or, in this case, the queen): Just as they would heed Queen Wilhelmina’s call to fight the Japanese, they would heed their religious calling as Christians. They would travel the world to preach “in both word and deed, now and later.”⁷¹ Political reform not only threatened to undermine the foundations of an indivisible kingdom, but would also prevent the Dutch from carrying out these Christian duties.

For the duration of the war, and in case their extensive “Indies Issue” failed to articulate their colonial position, the resisters of *Trouw* continued to proclaim both the justice of their cause and the folly of their political rivals. In June 1944, for instance, coeditor J. A. H. J. S. Bruins Slot unequivocally dismissed the prospects of an independent Indonesia. Autonomy, he argued, would entail a permanent rupture of ties between the Netherlands and the Indies, not to mention the destruction of the Netherlands’ many accomplishments achieved over the course of centuries. Further, according to Bruins Slot, the Indies remained only a nation-in-the-making, as its people were unable to manage a modern democracy and its many demands. He had no choice but to reject the creation of a Dutch commonwealth and the overarching “imperial government” it would create. Furthermore, because this new imperial government was expected to coexist alongside the governments of both the European Netherlands and the individual colonies, a commonwealth arrangement would foster confusion and irresponsibility among government agencies and representatives. Bruins Slot recommended that instead of complicating the empire with unnecessary and potentially destructive new institutions, the Netherlands should restore the *status quo ante*. Just as it always had, colonial authority would rest in the capable hands of the Governor General and Minister of Colonies. These traditional authorities, not some vague new imperial body, would ensure that the development of the Indies – already long under way, and with no end in sight – continue unabated.⁷²

In theory, dogmatism of this sort should have rendered impossible any productive dialogue between these conservative Calvinist resisters and their

⁷¹ “De Koninklijk Strijdmacht,” *Trouw*, mid-January 1945 (Vol. 4. No. 1), 3–4, with these comments included in the section “Onze strijdmacht en de bevrijding van Indië” on page 4.

⁷² *Onze politiek in de toekomst*, “Illegale Brochures, 1940–1945” collection, NIOD, Amsterdam, with accompanying bibliographic information citing Bruins Slot as the author of this topical brochure. His discussion of “the relationship of the Netherlands to its overseas territories” appears on pages 10–12.

secular, leftist counterparts at *De Waarheid*, *Het Parool*, and *Vrij Nederland*. Whether debating the necessity of postwar renewal or the political status of the East Indies/Indonesia, the very future of the Netherlands was at stake, and no group of resisters was prepared to cede its position. In general, *Trouw* wished to see the return of the prewar status quo but allowed for certain modifications, such as the creation of a unified Christian political party and the implementation of limited reforms in the East Indies, albeit at a time yet to be determined. For this group of resisters, the present global conflict constituted a single moment in the longer course of Dutch history. It did not signal the moment for political leaders to push through reckless social experiments or overhaul the political structure of the kingdom. By contrast, *Vrij Nederland* and *Je Maintiendrai* emphasized that the Dutch and Indonesian people would emerge from the war with a heightened sense of solidarity, forged by their mutual experiences of suffering and resistance.⁷³ Further, as *Vrij Nederland* and *Het Parool* repeatedly noted, the Dutch people’s fight for freedom at home had made them better appreciate the Indonesian nationalist movement. Put slightly differently, communist *De Waarheid* proclaimed that the war was a battle for democratic ideals, waged in both the Netherlands and Indonesia by valiant fighters who lived and died for freedom.⁷⁴ For these resistance organizations, more so than for *Trouw*, the war needed to mean something.

As Allied forces advanced on the European Netherlands, like-minded organizations gravitated toward one another, confident that a united front lent their position additional gravitas. We know, of course, that at this point liberation was hardly as imminent as the Dutch believed it to be. The Germans would not be driven from the European Netherlands until early May 1945, and Japanese forces would remain in control of Indonesia until their country’s surrender three months later. By the end of 1943, however, the battle lines had been drawn. *Trouw* manned the political right against the leftist front of *De Waarheid*, *Het Parool*, and *Vrij Nederland*. Once occupying the broad political center, *Je Maintiendrai* now began to trend leftward in anticipation of a new broad-based political movement, the Dutch People’s Movement (NVB), which was expected to gather all “renewers” under one national umbrella. Together, these renewers roundly rejected *Trouw*’s political and religious orthodoxy as irrelevant, detrimental vestiges

⁷³ See, for instance, “Nogmaals: Nederland en Indonesië in Nieuwe Banen,” *Vrij Nederland*, August 28, 1943 (Vol. 4 No. 1), 5–7, and “Hoe zal Nederland deelnemen aan de Bevrijding van Nederlandsche-Indië?” *Je Maintiendrai*, First Edition of July 1944 (Vol. 5 No. 61), 1–2.

⁷⁴ “De Toekomst van ons Nederland,” *Vrij Nederland*, July 30, 1943 (Vol. 3 No. 12), 4–5; “Naar Indonesië?” *De Waarheid*, January 21, 1944 (Vol. 4 No. 9), 1–2; and *Het Parool*’s early statement to these ends, appearing as “Naar grooter eenheid van ons rijk. De banden met Indonesië dienen versterkt te worden. Democratiseering van Indië’s staatsbestel is noodzakelijk,” *Het Parool*, December 27, 1941 (No. 31), 5.

of an antiquated worldview. Responding in kind, the resisters of *Trouw* condemned renewal and reform as naïve heresy, sure to inflict irreparable damage on the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands. Yet remarkably, the final months and weeks of German occupation saw these otherwise contentious groups achieve consensus – halting and superficial perhaps, but consensus nonetheless.

Wartime Consensus and Postwar Pressures

While those living in the northern half of the Netherlands suffered though one final and especially brutal winter under German occupation, the queen and her ministers in London planned their return. In early September 1944, the government-in-exile decreed that areas liberated by the Allies in the southern part of the country would be brought under the jurisdiction of the new Dutch Military Authority (*Militair Gezag* or NMA/MG). As conceptualized in London, this Military Authority would serve as the liaison between the Dutch government-in-exile and local Allied commanders, and at the same time would constitute an interim military administration until the government-in-exile was able to return. Hoping to reestablish Dutch rule as quickly as possible, Anglo-American forces granted this Dutch Military Authority great room to maneuver on the condition that its work not interfere with Allied military objectives. All did not proceed according to plan, however. Within months, the queen, her ministers, the Dutch Military Authority, and former resisters in the liberated southern parts of the country all found themselves jockeying for political control. Particularly contentious were the purge actions directed against politicians, business leaders, journalists, and other individuals accused of collaborating with the German occupiers. On the whole, resisters in liberated areas sought further involvement in these purges because they considered them too lenient and haphazard. In these and other matters, the queen tended to align herself with the “heroes of the resistance.” This position brought her into direct conflict with members of her cabinet, established political figures who admired the resistance movements but did not necessarily support the far-reaching political, social, and economic policies some of them had proposed.¹

¹ N. David J. Barnouw, “Dutch Exiles in London,” in *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940–1945*, ed. Martin Conway and José Gotovich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 229–246, with Barnouw’s discussion of these conflicts – and his use of the term “heroes of the resistance” – appearing on pages 236–237.

Given such tensions between the liberated areas and London on the one hand and the queen and her ministers on the other, the fall of the government-in-exile in late February 1945 came as little surprise. The new government of February 23 – Prime Minister Pieter Gerbrandy’s second wartime government – adopted a more hard-line position toward these purges, a stance that bridged some of the divide between London officials and former resisters in the liberated regions.² Gerbrandy’s new government also signaled the departure of Minister of Colonies Hubertus van Mook. Appointed Lieutenant Governor General and Acting Governor General for the East Indies a few months prior, van Mook wished to avoid the clear conflict of interest presented by his simultaneous service in both the East Indies and the cabinet.³ With van Mook’s departure, the Ministry of Colonies itself also came to an end. Van Mook’s successor, professor J. I. J. M. Schmutzer, now assumed the title “Minister of Overseas Territories,” a slight change in nomenclature nonetheless signaling a government willing to consider at least token colonial reform. One month after the Dutch government-in-exile instituted this name change, the French followed suit, perhaps because, as Martin Shipway argues, the French sought to “match or surpass the British and Dutch declarations concerning the future of their empires.”⁴ As of March 1945, the French “Ministère des Colonies” became the “Ministère des Territoires d’Outre-mer.” Even with such relatively minor changes, the European empires appeared to be forging a new path, and contemporary observers would have had reason to believe that after the conclusion of wartime hostilities, rhetorical maneuvers would give way to substantial legal, political, and socioeconomic reforms.

Indeed, by early 1945, the queen and her ministers had become convinced that the majority of Dutch people supported and even expected significant postwar colonial reform, an impression apparently gleaned by

² Expansive analyses of these developments, including the demilitarization of armed resistance groups in the liberated southern parts of the country, can be found in the following works written by Peter Romijn: *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd: Besturen tijdens de Duitse bezetting* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2006), 601–632; *Snel, Streng en Rechtvaardig: De afrekening met de “foute” Nederlands 1945–1955*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Olympus, 2002), 49–60; “Did Soldiers Become Governors? Liberators, Resistance, and the Reconstruction of Local Government in the Liberated Netherlands, 1944–1945,” in *World War II in Europe: the Final Year*, ed. Charles F. Brouwer (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 265–287; “The Synthesis of the Political Order and the Resistance Movement in the Netherlands in 1945,” in *The End of the War in Europe*, ed. Gill Bennett (London: HMSO, 1996), 139–147. See, too, Pieter Lagrou’s comparative study, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), with his discussion of these Dutch developments appearing on pages 59–67.

³ “Ongevenschte Crisis,” *London Vrij Nederland*, February 17, 1945, 65; “Het Nieuwe Cabinet,” *London Vrij Nederland*, March 3, 1945, 130–131.

⁴ Martin Shipway, *The Road to War: France and Vietnam, 1944–1947* (Providence, Rhode Island: Berghahn Books, 1996), 28.

London's reading of the Dutch clandestine press. In February 1944, for instance, the London version of *Vrij Nederland*, a weekly newspaper issued by the information service of the government-in-exile, reported the "strong consensus of opinion" evident among the various underground newspapers, all of which agreed with "the point of view as expressed some time ago by Her Majesty the Queen in one of her radio broadcasts." Specifically, these organizations unanimously supported "the proposition that the mutual relationship between the Homeland and the Indies must be based on coordination instead of subordination." To be fair, the papers cited in this particular discussion – *Vrij Nederland*, *Je Maintiendrai*, *Het Parool*, and the communist-leaning student paper, *De Vrije Katheder* – all proclaimed the need for colonial reform founded on the principles of mutuality and equality. On this count, London's *Vrij Nederland* was correct. Importantly, however, it had failed to examine or even mention *Trouw*, whose editors certainly did not agree with these much-touted notions of mutuality and coordination.⁵

Lacking this part of the picture, the government-in-exile could not possibly understand the totality of colonial thinking in the occupied metropole. Further, the strength of *Trouw*'s convictions and its credibility among conservative Protestants made the organization a force to be reckoned with – again, apparently unbeknownst to London. By early 1944, the government-in-exile should have known of *Trouw*, if only because in May of the previous year, *Trouw*'s editors sent to London their statement of purpose, informing the government that *Vrij Nederland* and other like-minded groups did not speak for the Dutch resistance or the population at large.⁶ The queen and her ministers may have intentionally downplayed or disregarded *Trouw*'s dissenting opinions, because, as American observers had reason to note, the government-in-exile firmly believed that both the resistance and the Dutch public favored colonial reform. The Americans apparently believed this too. In February 1945, the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS) noted that "even in the conservative underground press in Holland frequent expression is given the idea that Indonesia is not a Dutch colony, but part of an empire and entitled to equal justice." As a consequence, "public opinion within Holland itself may oblige the Government to fulfill its promise

⁵ "De geheime pers over INDIË" (emphasis in original), London *Vrij Nederland*, February 19, 1944, 104–105. An abridged version of this piece also appeared, in English translation, as "Summary of Articles on the Netherlands Indies in the Dutch Secret Press '*Vrij Nederland*' (Free Netherlands), London, February 19, 1944" in the Netherlands Information Bureau's *The Netherlands Commonwealth and the Future: Important Statements of H.M. Queen Wilhelmina on Post-War Aims* (New York: The Netherlands Information Bureau, 1945), 29–30.

⁶ Letter to the government-in-exile, dated May 1943: Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, *Verslag houdende de Uitkomsten van het Onderzoek*, Deel 7A. ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1955), 199–200.

to reorganize the Kingdom.”⁷ Again, *Trouw*, which believed nothing of the sort, did not figure into this assessment.

Out of touch with developments in the occupied metropole, members of the government-in-exile worried that their people might expect too much too soon. After all, the kingdom could not be remade overnight. With this disconnect looming large, then Minister of Colonies van Mook took to the “Radio Oranje” airwaves on June 15, 1944, and reminded his Dutch listeners that a task more pressing than political reform confronted the Netherlands. Having just returned from a five-month voyage to the United States, India, Australia, and Dutch New Guinea, van Mook refocused attention on the coming mission to liberate the Indies from its Japanese oppressors. He assured his audience in the occupied Netherlands that small but dedicated groups of Dutchmen and Indonesians, such as those he had met in New Guinea and Australia, were actively preparing for the final military showdown with Japan. Further, from their base in Australia, Dutch colonial authorities, cheated by history of the opportunity to “make the Netherlands Indies militarily strong before the world was visited by this trial,” were preparing to reestablish the government of the Netherlands East Indies. Van Mook explicitly acknowledged the work of the resistance, explaining that the Dutch underground press had shown the government-in-exile – “almost daily,” in fact – that “active interest in this far-away part of our Kingdom has grown, and rapidly so.” Now, the Dutch needed to translate this interest into action, even as they continued to suffer under the brutal German occupation. They must be prepared to regroup and steel themselves for this coming battle, as the stakes could not be higher: Only after the Netherlands had “discharged the duty which history imposes upon her towards her fellow countrymen and the Kingdom’s subjects in the Far East” could she recover “the place which she sought to occupy in the world in accordance with her character and her capabilities.”⁸ With this public appeal, van Mook urged strength, clarity of purpose, and above all, patience, for there could be no talk of colonial reform until all parts of the kingdom had been freed from their foreign oppressors. Liberation had to come first, a point that *Je Maintiendrai* and *Trouw* repeated ad infinitum.

PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC OPINION: THE INDIES MISSION AND BEYOND

Whereas van Mook appealed directly to the Dutch people in his efforts to rally support for this expected military effort, Queen Wilhelmina enlisted

⁷ “Dutch Attitudes Towards the Future of the N.E.I. [Netherlands East Indies],” Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Division, dated February 2, 1945, general collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁸ “Nederland en de bevrijding van INDONESIA” (emphasis in original), London *Vrij Nederland*, June 24, 1944, 686. An English translation of the speech appeared in *Netherlands News*, July 1, 1944, 334–335.

the active cooperation of the Dutch resistance. In June 1944, the queen and Prime Minister Gerbrandy requested via telegram that the various resistance groups operating in the occupied Netherlands coordinate themselves into one larger organization that would advise the government-in-exile in the absence of an elected Dutch parliament.⁹ In response to London's urgent request, clandestine groups from across the political spectrum and specializing in a range of activities banded together to form the Grand Council of the Resistance, or *Groote Advies Commissie der Illegaliteit* (GAC, as it became known). Working with the government-in-exile as closely as circumstances allowed, the GAC charged itself with a number of interrelated tasks during these final months of the war. First, the organization aimed to reestablish and represent Dutch political authority in the absence of the official government. To these ends, the GAC worked with both Dutch and Allied military forces located in the liberated southern part of the country. Second, the GAC used Dutch courier networks in Europe to convey vital information to the government-in-exile, which in turn used the GAC to communicate its messages to the Dutch population at large. By serving as a go-between during this critical transition period, the GAC sought to prevent the dreaded vacuum of power expected to follow in the wake of German defeat, and at the same time help lay the ground for the queen's triumphant return to the liberated territories. Not every resistance group in the occupied Netherlands belonged to the GAC; at least initially, small, lesser-known, and strictly regional resistance groups were excluded. Those that did belong, however, found themselves participating in a kind of underground government. For years, individual resistance groups sought to prepare the nation for liberation and the challenges of the postwar world. Now, they came together to influence the events of liberation and help guide the nation in this most critical of times.

Large gatherings of clandestine workers posed a serious security risk, especially as the Germans appeared to be accelerating their antiresistance efforts in a last-ditch push. For this reason, the GAC's member organizations decided to govern by means of a *Contact-Commissie* or Contact Group. Only the five members of the Contact Group would meet in person, and they in turn would report back to the other organizations. Members of this Contact Group were chosen from among the various groups that came to be included in the GAC, and although editors of underground newspapers were well represented in both the larger GAC organization and the smaller Contact Group, they dominated neither. The chair of the Contact Group, Willem Drees, represented the *Vaderlandsch Comité*, an underground association of former politicians created in early 1944 in order to advise the government-in-exile. The approximately twenty other organizations initially included in the GAC organized themselves into three distinct groupings,

⁹ Typed text of telegram, dated June 8, 1944, contained in Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

“right,” “left,” and “center.” These designations corresponded loosely with the political leanings of their member organizations. J. Bruins Slot from *Trouw* represented the right section, which included such groups as *Trouw*, the LKP, and the National Organization for Assistance to Those in Hiding (Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers, known simply as LO). J. Meijer from *Het Parool* represented the left section, which included his own organization plus *Vrij Nederland*, *De Waarheid*, *Je Maintiendrai*, and a number of other smaller groups. Although certainly not a perfect system, it seemed to present fewer problems than one organized by areas of specialty. The latter arrangement would have meant that a single clandestine press representative would have had to speak for both *De Waarheid* and *Trouw* – a difficult task indeed, considering the ideological chasm that divided these two groups of resisters. The GAC needed to mitigate sources of conflict, lest such tensions detract from the organization’s ability to maintain order and prepare for the return of lawful government.¹⁰

As if the GAC did not already have its hands full with its ambitious mandate, the queen twice telegraphed the GAC in September 1944 with a request for the group to create a special subcommittee devoted solely to the subject of the Indies. Queen Wilhelmina envisioned a massive propaganda campaign, led by the clandestine press and intended to prepare the nation for its tremendously important overseas mission. Specifically, the resistance needed to spread the message that immediately after their own liberation from the Germans, the Dutch would need to liberate the Indies. This operation demanded no small number of fighters, and the government could not wait until its return to organize these volunteers or to call up conscripts. The queen called on the resistance to encourage young men to volunteer for service, as volunteers would be accorded preferential assignments. Importantly, she also specified that any written materials released by this new group were to speak of this coming mission “in the tone of liberation, and not, repeat NOT, in the tone of reconquest,” as only the former was compatible with the views she had expressed in her December 1942 speech. Lastly, she requested that those underground organizations already concerned with the liberation of the Indies work within the context of this newly established propaganda campaign.¹¹ For more than a year, clandestine press groups had promoted

¹⁰ Document labeled “C.C.I.,” dated July 4, 1944, Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam; and H.W. Sandberg, *Witboek over de geschiedenis van het georganiseerde verzet voor en na de bevrijding* (Amsterdam: N.V. Amsterdamsche Boek- en Courantmaatschappij, 1950), 22–23, 263–264. After liberation, Sandberg became the GAC’s secretary, a position he held until the dissolution of the organization in 1946.

¹¹ A typed transcript of these two telegrams (entitled “Telegrammen, ontvangen op 18 en 21 Sept.”), reproduced alongside the GAC’s response thereto (signed by “De contact-commissie C.C.”), is contained in Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1B, NIOD, Amsterdam.

these self-same messages, but they did so now with the queen's blessing. They would become the official spokespeople for the Indies campaign, or so they had reason to believe.

Shortly after learning of the queen's request, the GAC's Contact Group informed London that it had created a small Indies subcommittee concerned with the liberation of the Indies but that avoided explicitly political matters. As September 1944 drew to a close, the resisters of the GAC further refined both the mandate and structure of the group henceforth to be known as the "Indies Propaganda Commission": Its primary task would be the creation of an explanatory report assessing the best means of waging this propaganda campaign and informing the GAC's Contact Group as it allocated resources for this recruitment effort. Of course, the GAC had few resources on hand other than its ability to propagandize this coming military mission in the pages of the clandestine newspapers or via existing resistance channels. Yet this is precisely what the queen desired at this moment in time, and the GAC eagerly obliged. This Indies Commission, as it was more typically known, consisted of seven members: a "well-known professor" as chair of the group; "an Indonesian"; a "student-Indologist" (i.e., a young "Indies expert" trained in Europe and expected to serve in the colony); plus one representative apiece from *Trouw*, *Je Maintiendrai*, *Vrij Nederland*, and *De Waarheid*. The chair of this commission also reserved the right to call on four appointed "secretary-experts" as needed.¹² For obvious security reasons, the commission was careful not to reveal the names of these members as it set about its work. However, at some point in the fall of 1944, *Je Maintiendrai* staff writer Willem Schermerhorn – he was presumably the "well-known professor" of record – assumed leadership of the Indies Commission, whereas Setyadjit, representing the Association of Indonesian Students in the Netherlands (PI), served as the Indonesian member of the commission.¹³ Setyadjit's involvement in this group lent a necessary Indonesian voice to these discussions, but his participation also confirmed Dutch resisters' views that all nationalists thought and acted as Setyadjit. He sought Indonesian autonomy by means of negotiation and cooperation, thus, by extension, all Indonesian nationalists could be expected to act the same way. Such

¹² "Kort verslag van de vergadering der C.C. op 27 Sept. 1944" and "Kort verslag van de vergadering der C.C. op 29 Sept. 1944": Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

¹³ GAC-Indies Commission correspondence, dated May–June 1945, Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 12A, NIOD, Amsterdam; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel 10b, Tweede Helft ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1982), 954–955; H. W. Sandberg, *Witboek over de geschiedenis van het georganiseerde verzet voor en na de bevrijding* (Amsterdam: N.V. Amsterdamsche Boek- en Courantmaatschappij, 1950), 263–264.

expectations were mutual, too. Setyadjit had every reason to trust that his leftist Dutch colleagues would steer postwar policy toward reform, and that when they sat down to negotiate with Indonesian authorities such as himself, they would do so in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

As Setyadjit and the other members of the Indies Commission focused attention on the Netherlands' coming military mission to the Indies, recruitment efforts for the Indies campaign proceeded apace in London, the West Indies, Australia, and the newly liberated areas of the European Netherlands. By mid-October 1944, the southern city of Nijmegen announced it had enlisted a thousand volunteers for the new Dutch-Indonesian army, an achievement proudly noted by both *Trouw* and *Je Maintiendrai* in the still-occupied northern part of the country.¹⁴ With an eye toward these developments, the GAC Contact Group clarified the Indies Commission's limited purview. Meeting on September 30, only one day after announcing the creation of this Indies subcommittee, the Contact Group addressed the "apparent misunderstanding concerning the mandate of the Propaganda Commission for the liberation of the Indies." The Indies Commission was intended "to receive advice concerning the feasibility of a propaganda campaign" concerning but one topic alone: "the voluntary enlistment and conscription of men to serve outside the Netherlands, in connection with the liberation of the Dutch East Indies." Apparently, news of the commission's creation had spread quickly in the Dutch underground, and various organizations and individuals already jostled for position in what they presumed would be an underground advisory group concerned with all things Indies. Hoping to nip such expectations in the bud, members of the Contact Group resolved to clarify this point in an explanatory note that would be circulated to all underground groups.¹⁵

This clarification failed to obtain its desired effect. Only a few days later, the Contact Group received a strongly worded letter from the editors of a lesser-known clandestine newspaper, *De Opdracht* ("The Assignment"), who demanded to know why their organization had been overlooked by the GAC's Indies Commission and its important work, which it presumed to be political in nature. *De Opdracht* was a new publication, its first issue appearing only in August 1944, and was the work of a number of "Indologists" who had completed their studies at either Leiden or Utrecht University during the German occupation. Writing to the GAC on October 3, 1944, these Indologists argued that of all the other clandestine organizations, only *De Opdracht* had devoted consistent and expert attention to

¹⁴ "BEVRIJDING VAN INDONESIA! Vrijwilligers vóór!" (emphasis in original), *Je Maintiendrai*, November 1944, Issue 1 (Vol. 5 No. 4), 2; "Voor de Bevrijding van Indië," *Trouw*, Late November 1944 (Vol. 2 No. 17), 2.

¹⁵ "Kort verslag van de vergadering der C.C. op 30 Sept. 1944," Collection 184, Grote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

the “Indies question.” In sharp contrast to the extremist views then in circulation – “one side more or less reactionary, and the other side, more or less radical” – *De Opdracht* alone supported a moderate political position similar to that proposed by Queen Wilhelmina herself. For these reasons, broad segments of the population, “various well-known colonial experts,” and even young Indonesian civil servants all enthusiastically supported *De Opdracht*, or so its editors claimed. Finally, these editors explained that their organization had already spent considerable time planning an agency that “would disseminate information and stimulate interest among the general public concerning Indonesia and her liberation.”¹⁶ In other words, the Indies Commission was an unnecessary venture that promised to duplicate the work already conducted by qualified experts. Neither this impassioned appeal nor *De Opdracht*’s subsequent delivery of its most recent issue convinced the GAC Contact Group. On October 19, 1944, the Contact Group reiterated yet again the limited scope of the Indies Commission, which was to assess the best means of implementing the extensive propaganda campaign requested by the queen in her recent telegram to the occupied Netherlands. The Contact Group “emphatically desired” the Indies Commission’s findings to be free of “political considerations” but nonetheless expected they would be “directed towards” the queen’s December 7, 1942, speech. How exactly the latter was to be accomplished, the Contact Group did not specify; presumably, these resisters meant that the coming military action would be conducted in the spirit of liberation, not conquest.¹⁷ Finally, the Contact Group assured *De Opdracht* that members of the Indies Commission had yet to be determined, and that the final composition of this group would reflect the diverse array of organizations working on “the Indies-problem.” In private, however, the Contact Group had already decided that the previously unknown *De Opdracht* organization was not to be included in this new Indies propaganda group.¹⁸

This incident, although a seemingly trivial disagreement between resisters, nonetheless reveals the many tensions surrounding both the “Indies question” and the role of the resistance movements in this final stage of the war. *De Opdracht* and other organizations felt themselves deliberately

¹⁶ Letters from “Lodewijks” and “Van Wehl” (both pseudonyms) of *De Opdracht* to the GAC Contact Commissie, dated October 3, 1944 and October 7, 1944, the latter accompanying fifteen copies of its newly published second issue: Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam; Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 186. Copies of *De Opdracht* can be found in *Illegale Pers Collectie* 556, publication number 596, NIOD, Amsterdam.

¹⁷ Response from the Contact Commissie to the editors of *De Opdracht*, dated October 19, 1944: Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

¹⁸ “Kort verslag van de vergadering der C.C. op 13 October 1944,” Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

excluded from these purportedly political discussions and therefore deprived of their rights to influence policy, and the GAC failed to understand why fellow resisters insisted on politicizing the Indies Commission and its work. Yet for years now, the leftist resisters had argued that the liberation of the Indies must be more than a military battle; it must be accompanied by lasting political reform. *De Opdracht* and others on the clandestine sidelines had reason to be confused: How could these resisters suddenly separate the military and political aspects of the Netherlands' mission to the Indies? And why did the GAC insist on going it alone, when so many Indies experts could offer their expertise? Those subjected to this perceived snub were left scratching their heads while the GAC returned to the business of preparing for liberation.

Meanwhile, the *Ons Volk* organization, another clandestine group founded by Indologists and rejected for GAC membership, forged its own Indies project. First appearing in October 1943, the clandestine newspaper *Ons Volk* ("Our People") was the work of a group of university students and recent university graduates. Among them were Hans Gelder, a student of Indology at Leiden University, and G. Monsees, an Indologist from that other center of Indonesian studies, Utrecht University.¹⁹ In fact, Monsees and a number of fellow Indologists were also behind *De Opdracht*, created the following year. If Monsees' later publication focused on the future of the Dutch East Indies, however, *Ons Volk* remained preoccupied with present conditions in the German-occupied Netherlands. The students behind *Ons Volk* felt that the other leading clandestine papers had become hyper-intellectualized and too preoccupied with politics. Producing as many as 120,000 copies a week, the resisters of *Ons Volk* aspired to create a simple but effective national clandestine paper for the masses. Unlike their colleagues at *Het Parool* and *Trouw*, they did not look to mold public opinion. Rather, they sought only to stimulate resistance and bolster solidarity during this final but pivotal stage of the war. In late August 1944, the editors of *Ons Volk* petitioned the Contact Group to be included in the GAC, but at the same time they made known their unwillingness to participate in political discussions. The GAC was not a political organization per se, but its members did include organizations with broad-based agendas and a marked interest in postwar planning. Not surprisingly, then, *Ons Volk* found itself excluded from participation in the GAC, at least initially.²⁰

¹⁹ Gelder died on January 21, 1944, during the course of a *Sipo* raid in The Hague, whereas another cofounder, Willem Eggink, was apprehended during the same raid and died in German detention the following year. From this point until war's end, *Ons Volk* would be led by a ten-person-strong editorial board: Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940-1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 182-183, 186, and "Collectie Onderzoekingen-Ondergrondse Pers 1376," *Ons Volk* files (263-7e) in NIOD, Amsterdam.

²⁰ Correspondence between the editors of *Ons Volk* (Red. O.V.) and the Contact Group of the GAC (De Contact-Commissie or C.C.), dated August 24, 1944-October 5, 1944; Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

However, although professing interest solely in contemporary affairs, *Ons Volk* had already ventured into the political domain with its “Indies Survey.” Distributed by members of the organization in September 1944, this multiquestion survey aimed to shore up popular sentiment concerning “the important Indonesian question,” which, in the eyes of this organization, referred solely to the expected military mission to liberate the colony from Japanese rule. During the period of September 1944 to April 1945, a total of 20,000 to 30,000 copies of this Indies Survey made their way into circulation throughout the Netherlands, and *Ons Volk* called on the nation’s leading clandestine papers to rally the masses behind the project.²¹ In December 1944, the editorial board of *Je Maintiendrai* expressed its firm support for this “Indies Inquiry” and implored its readers to return their completed survey forms by means of a “trusted distributor” of clandestine newspapers. A few weeks later, *Het Parool* also lauded the project and its attempt to assess popular sentiment concerning this Indonesia mission.²² Yet other clandestine papers, such as communist *De Waarheid*, refused to lend their support to the survey project. In response to *Ons Volk*’s overtures, *De Waarheid* editor A. J. Koejemans cited the wartime work undertaken by the underground Dutch Communist Party as well as its recent signature of the resistance declaration concerning Indonesia (the Indies Commission’s declaration of late April 1945, explored later in this chapter).²³ Koejemans was presumably of the opinion that the results of this Indies Survey would be meaningless for the underground Dutch Communist Party, long convinced that Indonesians and Dutch needed to liberate the territory together. Further, the communists firmly rejected the premise of a purely military liberation: The true liberation of Indonesia meant granting the territory autonomy, not merely removing the Japanese overlords.

By April 1, 1945, the closing date of the survey, a total of 3,174 completed questionnaires had been returned to *Ons Volk*, with a few hundred additional ones arriving in the weeks and months to come.²⁴ The editors of

²¹ *Ons Volk*’s post-survey analysis explained that the group had originally set this target much higher, as it had planned to distribute copies to Dutch workers conscripted for labor in Germany. However, after September 1944, when the country entered into a half-liberated, half-occupied state, the *Ons Volk* organization had been forced to scale back its plans. *Ons Volk*’s survey analysis, entitled “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” is contained in “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) in NIOD, Amsterdam. This discussion of survey design, objectives, and total circulation figures appears on pages 1–2.

²² “Enquête Indonesië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, December 1944, Issue 2, (Vol. 5. No. 67), 3; “Om de bevrijding van Indonesië: Hoe denkt ons volk over dit zeer belangrijke vraagstuk?” *Het Parool*, January 9, 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 80), 4.

²³ *De Waarheid*’s response cited in “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” page 25: “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) in NIOD, Amsterdam.

²⁴ Of these completed surveys, only 108 remain in existence. These are contained in the Doc II Collection, “Nederlands-Indië,” 482-A, Files 2 and 3, NIOD, Amsterdam. The

Ons Volk wasted little time exploring the survey's findings in the form of a painstakingly detailed twenty-five-page statistical analysis, which focused primarily on responses to two survey questions: one, "Do you recognize the duty of the Dutch to actively participate in the struggle against Japan for the liberation of Indonesia?" and two, "Are you willing and able to volunteer for this struggle? If yes, why, and if not, why not?" The survey also allowed respondents to elaborate on relevant topics and questions, such as "whether this army should be a conscript or volunteer army, future Dutch-Indonesian relations, employment opportunities for the Dutch in Indonesia after the war, and so on." The editors of *Ons Volk* examined thousands of responses across age brackets, socioeconomic levels, marital status, personal experiences with/in Indonesia and other foreign countries, familial ties with Indonesia, and "book knowledge" of the colonies – all information solicited by the survey. The resisters of *Ons Volk* readily admitted that their survey sample did not fully represent the population at large. Young people, students, urban residents, certain regions, and resisters/resistance sympathizers were overrepresented in comparison to their respective percentages within Dutch society. Further, because the survey involved the "specifically male matter" of military service, women had been excluded from this national survey project, although the writers of the survey analysis acknowledged, that "without a doubt, it would have been interesting to know what women think about the different issues relating to Indonesia, especially keeping in mind the important role women in the Netherlands have played in the underground effort."²⁵

Necessarily incomplete and tentative, the findings of the Indies Survey nonetheless point to the heightened significance now accorded to the Indies by large segments of the Dutch population as well as the clandestine press' role in fostering such awareness. Particularly during the last two years, resisters had sought to prepare their fellow citizens for the great military mission awaiting them half a world away. Indeed, when queried as to whether they recognized the Dutch people's duty to actively participate in the coming battle, 89.3 percent (or 2,835 of the total 3,174) of respondents answered yes.²⁶ Had the editors of the nation's leading clandestine papers been made aware

remaining 3,492 surveys – and their accompanying commentaries – appear to have been lost. Fortunately, the post-survey analysis compiled by *Ons Volk* accounted for all 3,250 surveys received before April 1, 1945: "Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie," page 2: "Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376," *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) in NIOD, Amsterdam. This *Rapport* is undated, but appears to have been written sometime in April–May 1945, during the final weeks and even days of the German occupation.

²⁵ "Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie," pp. 1–7, "Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376," *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) in NIOD, Amsterdam. This commentary concerning women's noninvolvement in the study appears on page 1 of the survey analysis.

²⁶ "Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie," pp. 5–6, "Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376," *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) in NIOD, Amsterdam.

of the survey results – and they do not appear to have been, at least not when *Ons Volk* compiled this analysis – they would have been pleased with the responses to this question. For years, and each in their own way, resisters such as Frans Goedhart, Henk van Randwijk, Gesina van der Molen, and J. Bruins Slot had promoted the Indies mission as a national calling. After their own liberation from the Germans, the Dutch would need to rally themselves to wage this most critical of battles. On this count, these resisters had been successful: Respondents accepted the Netherlands' responsibility to liberate the Indies. However, for the last three years, the leading clandestine newspaper groups – the self-styled “opinion makers” of the Dutch resistance – had also urged the country's young men to volunteer themselves for the noble mission that awaited them overseas. No excuses would be accepted from even a war-weary people, these resisters warned. Yet, only 45.5 percent of all survey respondents indicated that they would personally volunteer for the coming military mission to liberate Indonesia. More than half of all respondents – 51.4 percent, to be precise – stated that they would not volunteer, and 3.5 percent were unsure. Of those unwilling to volunteer for service, most cited “personal reasons,” such as old age and poor health, their role as family breadwinner, physical and mental exhaustion after sustained resistance activities, or the fear of not being able to find a job after returning from Indonesia. Still others cited sheer indifference, the desire to finish courses of study already delayed by years of war and occupation, or political reasons, such as the belief that any war in the Indies would be a war for big capital. Despite their best efforts, then, the leading clandestine organizations had been unable to convince a significant majority of the fighting-age population that this national calling applied to everyone and in equal part.²⁷

With the notable exception of *De Waarheid*, the leading clandestine publication groups supported the use of a mixed volunteer-conscript army to liberate the Indies. These resisters had argued that volunteers, not conscripts, were more likely to possess the correct attitude toward their mission, namely, that this would be a liberation, not a conquest, and that the Indonesian people constituted their equals, not subordinates. Still, the same resisters recognized that the use of conscripts might prove necessary or advantageous, particularly if the Netherlands wished to mobilize the largest possible military force in the shortest amount of time. Apparently, the 1,480 Indies Survey respondents who offered their views on the subject agreed. As reported by *Ons Volk*, 27 percent supported a volunteer army, 50.4 percent supported a conscript army, and 22.6 percent supported a combination of both. Thus, 73 percent of those offering an opinion supported at least the partial use of conscripts. Whereas *De Waarheid* sought volunteers with the proper attitude to fight alongside their Indonesian brethren, members of

²⁷ “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” pp. 5, 15–16, “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e), NIOD, Amsterdam.

the general public were concerned about fairness and the equitable distribution of responsibility. *Ons Volk* noted the frequently expressed fear that if the army relied solely on volunteers, only the “cream of the nation” would volunteer itself for service, leaving the laggards, the cowards, and black-marketeers safe at home in the European Netherlands to snatch up the best jobs vacated by the country’s valiant fighting men. For these reasons, a draft seemed the best guarantee that all male citizens of the Netherlands, even those unqualified for actual combat, would fulfill their national duty.²⁸

Long before the clandestine press organizations set their sights on liberation, they had aimed to make the Indies “knowable” for an especially ill-informed, sheltered Dutch populace. From the earliest days of the German occupation, a bevy of individuals and organizations took up the mantle of “imperial consciousness,” a cause that concerned the entire nation and therefore transcended typical political divisions. During the war, strange bedfellows – Anton Mussert and his Dutch Nazi Party, the new Nederlandse Unie mass movement, resisters, and the legal publishing houses allowed to remain in existence under German rule – had all argued from the same premise: The Dutch people knew frightfully little about their own overseas territories. All of these groups sought to increase public awareness about the great bond between the Netherlands and the East Indies, Dutchman and Indonesian, stretching back for centuries and bound to continue well into the future, in one way or another. *Ons Volk*’s Indies Survey of 1944 and 1945 demonstrated that such efforts had borne fruit, at least where the military mission to the Indies was concerned. Of those survey respondents claiming familiarity with diverse literature about the Indies, approximately 57 percent were willing to volunteer. By contrast, a more modest 37 percent of those unfamiliar with such works were willing to volunteer. Indies-knowledgeable survey respondents cited such best-selling works as the nineteenth-century novel *Max Havelaar* and the recent popular history of the Indies, *Daar wérd wat groots verricht* – “Over There, Something Great Was Accomplished” – published in 1941. Respondents also noted the various articles and dedicated Indies issues published by the clandestine press, and they indicated their awareness of the contents of the queen’s December 7, 1942, speech, as publicized presumably by these clandestine papers.²⁹ Apparently, survey respondents recognized that the resistance organizations served as critical purveyors of Indies-related information, just as they apparently realized

²⁸ “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” pp. 13–15, in “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) and completed survey responses, contained in Doc II Collection, “Nederlands-Indië,” 482-A, Files 2 and 3, both held at NIOD, Amsterdam.

²⁹ “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” p. 12, “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e) and completed survey responses, contained in Doc II Collection, “Nederlands-Indië,” 482-A, Files 2 and 3, both held at NIOD, Amsterdam.

that the Netherlands remained duty bound to liberate the territory from its Japanese occupiers.

However, *Ons Volk's* Indies Survey also revealed the limits of this new-found familiarity. If the resisters of the clandestine press had hoped to provide potential Dutch volunteers with a clear sense of why they would go fight, they failed to do so. Survey respondents who both recognized the Netherlands' responsibility to liberate the Indies and were willing to volunteer themselves claimed numerous and at times contradictory motivations, such as "national interests," "duty towards the Allies," and "economic interests," as well as elusive "personal reasons," the confusing "no reason," or any combination of these. Nearly 40 percent of respondents in this category claimed some variant of what *Ons Volk* classified as "duty towards the Netherlands/the Netherlands-Indonesia form one unit," whereas another 15.2 percent claimed to recognize their "duty towards Indonesia." As indicated by these results, survey respondents might have recognized their duty toward the Netherlands, but they apparently did not recognize the same duty toward Indonesia. For all of their efforts promoting the Netherlands' continued "debt of honor" to liberate and reform the Indies, the underground activists of the clandestine press had proven unable to convince their fellow citizens that Indonesia – as a territory, a people, or even as an idea – affected them personally. Certainly, some respondents felt that it was their duty to "support the Indonesian people in their struggle for freedom and independence." Still, *Ons Volk's* editors expressed their surprise at the relatively low percentage of those claiming some type of responsibility or duty toward Indonesia. In their judgment, "remarkably few" of their respondents had considered Indonesian attitudes and preferences or wondered how the Japanese occupation might have affected the Indonesian people. Reflecting on these results, the editors of *Ons Volk* argued that although the Dutch might know very little about the influence of the Japanese occupation, they could not discount its significance. Respondents, and indeed the nation at large, had to realize that at the very least "Dutch prestige" in the Indies might have suffered.³⁰ However, if the resisters of *Ons Volk* and other clandestine organizations accepted this possibility, members of the Dutch public did not appear especially concerned or reflective about the prospects of a changed Indies. Many respondents remained willing to fight in the Indies, but by and large they believed themselves to be fighting for the Netherlands, whatever they understood this to mean.

Then, of course, there was that other 10.7 percent, or 339 of the total 3,174 respondents, who refused to recognize the Netherlands' duty to liberate Indonesia at all. Like those who recognized their nation's duty to liberate the colony but would not themselves volunteer for service, members

³⁰ "Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie," pp. 14–15, "Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376," *Ons Volk* files (263–7e), NIOD, Amsterdam.

of this 10 percent claimed mostly personal reasons, such as unsuitability for the tropical climate, physical condition, and age. Some were experiencing “war fatigue” after years of German occupation and did not wish to fight in yet another conflict, whereas others remained indifferent about the entire venture, a response that *Ons Volk* described as “let others to do to the work.” Other respondents provided no particular reason or a combination of reasons. A substantial percentage – a little more than 30 percent – noted political, principled, and/or ideological reasons, such as a general antimilitaristic or pacifist stance informed by religious convictions, and a further 16 percent specifically noted that this upcoming military action would not bring true liberation to the Indonesian people. Of the political reasons offered by respondents, most were anticapitalist in nature, referring to the Indies mission as a purely imperialist war, a blessing for the capitalists but not the Dutch workers. Yet as noted by the editors of *Ons Volk* with obvious surprise, these anticapitalist charges were evident across the political and socioeconomic spectrum; they were not expressed solely by members of the communist working class. Students, in fact, were more likely than workers to speak of the liberation in these materialist terms.³¹ In any case, and no matter what reasons they cited, respondents tended to personalize their objections: They claimed to reject the Netherlands’ duty to liberate the Indies, but they tended to cite reasons why they themselves would not go to fight. If those who completed *Ons Volk*’s Indies Survey truly understood what was being asked of them, then their responses indicated a troubling trend: The Dutch might not care about the Indies at all, that is, unless developments there affected them personally. It was precisely this type of self-serving attitude that wartime organizations had worked to eradicate.

To be sure, when leftist and centrist organizations such as *Je Maintiendrai* and *Het Parool* sought to rally popular support for the coming military mission, they expected their efforts to be met with some skepticism, particularly from workers and those familiar with the Dutch communists’ anti-imperialist stance. Yet they also assumed that members of other socioeconomic classes – young, healthy men of fighting age, students especially – would volunteer themselves for service. Similarly, the conservatives of *Trouw* anticipated some resistance from war-weary young men and their parents but still expected the nation’s youth to lead the charge overseas.³² Survey findings, however, indicated that not only might certain sectors of the population prove less enthusiastic than expected, but they might also remain apathetic about the coming military battle and, worse still, the political future of the Dutch empire. Resisters certainly had not expected such ambivalence

³¹ “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” pp. 16–17, “Collectie Onderzoekingen Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e), NIOD, Amsterdam.

³² See, for instance, “Jeugd van Holland!” *Trouw*, Liberation Issue, May 1945 (Vol. 3 No. 6), 3; Indië roept,” *Trouw*, mid-July 1944 (Vol. 2 No. 7), 2–3.

to greet them at war's end. Frans Goedhart of *Het Parool* and Henk van Randwijk of *Vrij Nederland* had long argued that the German occupation had made the Dutch appreciate the plight of the Indonesians under centuries of colonial rule. Repeatedly, these men proclaimed that the coming battle for the Indies was no imperial reconquest, but rather marked the beginning of a new era between Dutch and Indonesians. *Ons Volk's* Indies Survey revealed that members of the general public could employ similar logic but for starkly different ends: Just as they rejected the reinstatement of colonial rule, so too did they refuse to support the so-called liberation struggle. The Netherlands' clandestine "opinion makers" expected to find war-weariness and exhaustion among the population at large, but they did not anticipate that their fellow citizens might prove so willing to write off the colonies.

Although primarily intended to discern public sentiment concerning this imminent military mission, *Ons Volk's* Indies Survey encouraged respondents to elaborate on closely related topics, such as the future relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia. Not all respondents availed themselves of this opportunity, but *Ons Volk* examined and classified the comments of those who did. Most of those who volunteered their opinions on the subject of future Dutch-Indonesian relations favored some change in status for the colony, whether in the form of independence, autonomy alone, or autonomy coupled with the creation of a Dutch commonwealth. More specifically, 6.7 percent of respondents offering an opinion supported the idea of restoring the colonial situation as it had existed in 1940, whereas 8.7 percent supported full independence. Another 14.2 percent supported limited changes, and 17.4 percent offered "various remarks," that is, comments that defied easy categorization. A total of 53 percent supported either the creation of what *Ons Volk* termed an "Imperial unity-Dominion relationship" (*Rijkseenheidgedachte-Dominion verhouding*) or the granting of Indonesian autonomy. However, the editors of *Ons Volk* cautioned that these were only approximate categorizations, as respondents tended to employ confusing and occasionally contradictory terminology. For instance, because a call for *zelfbestuur* could imply either self-government or independence, *Ons Volk* needed to examine other information, such as the respondent's educational background or knowledge of the Indies, to extrapolate meaning and intent. Further complicating *Ons Volk's* task was the evident lack of consensus concerning the meaning of such popular terms as *Rijkseenheid*, or imperial unity. The clandestine press of the occupied Netherlands may have succeeded in bringing concepts of dominion and commonwealth to a wide audience, but survey respondents remained unsure of their meanings and applicability to the Dutch empire.

Seen as a whole, survey respondents – and, by extension, the Dutch public – did not envision a system of layered sovereignty, with clear divisions of power between a largely self-governing Indonesian state and the European metropole. Rather, they pictured reform in the abstract. Although

they wished to retain their connections with the Indonesian territories and peoples, they did not know how best to do this. They had only a vague notion of how a commonwealth might work in practice. Some cited Canada as a model for an Indonesian dominion and pictured a revised Dutch empire similar to that of Britain. Others simply noted that Indonesia must be granted a position equal to that of the Netherlands while remaining within the Dutch empire. One respondent – a twenty-year-old student – referenced the need to “liberate the Dutch commonwealth,” as if a Dutch commonwealth already existed. “Autonomy” meant many things to many people, as did “independence.” One respondent acknowledged that every people, even “the colored races,” had “the right to self-determination and absolute independence,” and that after the liberation, “the Indonesian people must decide, through free elections, their future form of government.” Another related the Netherlands’ own experiences under foreign oppression to that experienced by the Dutch Indies “for so many years.” He urged his fellow citizens to “show what we learned from this, and not only think of our own future,” but then recommended “a free Indonesia under Indonesian rule, all this under Dutch supervision.” One respondent, citing the economic bonds forged between the Netherlands and Indies, advocated an entirely equal relationship “but, first, a few years of white leadership in the Indies.”³³

To be fair, such confusion was hardly limited to the Netherlands. Writing in his spirited postwar defense of British imperialism, Sir Alan Burns cited a public opinion survey conducted by the Colonial Office in 1948. Sadly, he noted, this survey revealed “the extent of public ignorance” concerning Britain’s commonwealth, for “a surprisingly large proportion of those asked were unable to distinguish between the self-governing countries of the Commonwealth and the dependent territories.” Perhaps more appallingly, “some even believed that various foreign countries were British possessions.” Confronted with such a dismal state of affairs, Burns was forced to conclude that “even the better educated sections of the population know very little on the subject, while the population as a whole lacked fundamental geographical knowledge about the Commonwealth and Empire.”³⁴ However, theirs was also a confusing and complex arrangement, as James L. Sturgis has argued more recently. If average Britons could not fully comprehend the intricacies of empire in the mid-twentieth century, neither could their leaders, who employed various and contradictory terminology as befitting particular political contexts and audiences. During the 1920s and 1930s, “British Commonwealth of Nations” gained traction, as “Commonwealth” implied

³³ “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” pp. 18–21, “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” Ons Volk files (263–7e), and completed survey responses, contained in Doc II Collection, “Nederlands-Indië,” 482-A, Files 2 and 3, both held at NIOD, Amsterdam.

³⁴ Sir Alan Burns, *In Defense of Colonies: British Colonial Territories in International Affairs* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957), 14.

a softer, more progressive empire characterized less by economic exploitation and military conflict than by development and mutual aid. All the same, British politicians, observers, and critics – whether of a proimperialist, anti-imperialist, or neutral bent – continued to use these words interchangeably during the interwar period.³⁵ Little wonder, then, that similar terms engendered a similar response across the English Channel. Even as they employed the lingo, members of the Dutch public did not understand how these concepts might be translated into practice in their own empire. By war's end, few seemed to know how this Dutch commonwealth might function, but they could support it all the same. Similar problems manifested themselves in neighboring and now newly liberated France, where discussions focused on an ill-defined yet increasingly popular “French Union.” France's constitution of 1946 would lay the groundwork for this federated structure, but it hardly constituted the final word on the subject: For years, lawmakers, jurists, colonial officials, and casual observers struggled to understand the practical implications of this new political structure.

Leaving aside the terminology employed or the precise content of proposed reforms, some Dutch respondents to the Indies Survey questioned the entire imperialist project. As one Dutch respondent asked of *Ons Volk*: “What right do we have we have to the Indies? Is our civilization so exalted that we must bring it to the native people?” Another supported the deployment of an army to the Indies solely because he knew what it meant to be occupied; for this reason, he explained, he would “do anything to liberate another person.” He believed in “Indonesia for the Indonesians,” and he dismissed the long-standing claim that the Netherlands could not survive without the Indies, for this claim papered over grave injustices. In his opinion, the Indonesians were “old and wise enough to stand on their own feet,” so they no longer needed Dutch assistance. Simply put, the Dutch occupation of the Indies needed to end. On the opposite extreme stood those respondents who took aim at the prospects of reform. They argued from the position that the Indies were not yet ready for self-government, or that the Kingdom of the Netherlands could never be a commonwealth like that of Britain, because the ethnic, racial, and cultural differences between the Indonesians and Dutch were simply too great. These critics did not dwell on the particularities of these various colonial relationships; they simply pointed out that the British system would not work in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Others argued that the risks of colonial reform loomed especially large at the present moment. Now more than ever, the motherland could ill afford to lose its vital Indies connection, lest the Netherlands fall to the rank of a “tenth-rate power.” Here, too, the British provided a powerful counter-example. As argued by one young Indies Survey respondent,

³⁵ James Sturgis, “What’s in a Name? A Perspective on the Transition of Empire/Commonwealth, 1918–1950,” *Round Table* 83, Issue 334 (April 1995), 191–205.

the case of British India “spoke volumes,” because if the Dutch granted self-government to Indonesia, they would forsake the capital resources they so desperately needed at this time.³⁶ As indicated by this sweeping range of comments, *Ons Volk*’s Indies Survey revealed a public abuzz with talk of a new Dutch commonwealth but quick to fall back on established colonial traditions and ways of thinking. After five years of German occupation, much had changed, and yet much had remained the same.

ALL TOGETHER NOW: DUTCH AND INDONESIANS,
RESISTANCE FRIENDS AND FOES

As *Ons Volk* ventured into the unfamiliar terrain of public opinion and postwar planning, the Indonesian resisters in the occupied Netherlands expanded the scope of their activities as well. During the course of the occupation, Indonesian resisters had belonged to various armed groups, such as the LKP, and in this capacity had fought alongside their Dutch colleagues. Now, during the final months of the war, young men in the university city of Leiden reconstituted themselves into an Indonesian unit of the Dutch Forces of the Interior (*Nederlandse Binnenlandse Strijdkrachten* or NBS). Established by royal decree in early September 1944, the NBS assembled various armed groups into one larger organization, which was to assist the advancing Allies and help maintain order in the wake of German surrender. In January 1945, this Indonesian NBS unit experienced its first loss with the death of Irawan Soejono. The son of the first and last Indonesian minister to serve in the Dutch cabinet, Soejono was shot and killed by the Germans when he tried to flee a surprise round-up. Renamed the “Irawan Brigade” in his honor, this unit continued to engage in military drills and exercises until May 1945, when the group’s dwindling numbers forced it to disband.³⁷

Meanwhile, at their home base in Leiden, the leaders of Perhimpunan Indonesia (PI), the Association of Indonesian Students in the Netherlands, continued their distinctly more intellectual pursuits. These too were intended to foster Indonesian resistance, because by helping the Dutch defeat the Nazis, Indonesians in the metropole would prove themselves

³⁶ “Rapport over de Enquete inzake Indonesie,” pp. 18–20, “Collectie Onderzoekingen – Ondergrondse Pers 1376,” *Ons Volk* files (263–7e), and completed survey responses, contained in Doc II Collection, “Nederlands-Indië,” 482-A, Files 2 and 3, both held at NIOD, Amsterdam.

³⁷ In early June 1942, Raden Adipati Ario Soejono was appointed Minister without Portfolio, but died suddenly in January of the following year. For further information on Irawan Soejono and the Indonesian brigade of the NBS, see Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950*, (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 322–323; and the commemorative article appearing a few weeks after the liberation of the European Netherlands: “Irawan,” *De Bevrijding*, June 2, 1945, 23–24.

dedicated defenders of democracy. Created in May 1944, the new clandestine paper, *De Bevrijding*, “The Liberation,” helped propagate this message among Indonesians and Dutch alike. However, editor in chief Nazir Datoek Pamontjak and his collection of Indonesian staff writers did not wish *De Bevrijding* to appear as a PI-affiliated and therefore strictly Indonesian production. Rather, they sought to advance their nationalist agenda by promoting the self-same political ideals so ardently proclaimed by the Dutch resistance. As such, they sublimated overtly “Indonesian” demands to more general “Dutch” ones, and they promoted joint action, whether in Europe or overseas.³⁸ Once the German occupiers had been defeated and ousted from the European Netherlands, Dutch and Indonesian freedom fighters would travel to Indonesia, fully “conscious of their mission” and ready to join forces with Indonesians there. Working “in a close alliance, for the present, and for the future,” this grand coalition – encompassing colonizer and colonized, metropole and colony – would liberate Indonesia from its Japanese oppressors.³⁹ With such commentary, *De Bevrijding* not only assured Dutch readers that they could rely on Indonesian support, but implied that the cooperative partnership between the two peoples would endure long after they had defeated the Axis powers.

As the Allies advanced through Europe, the Indonesian resisters positioned themselves alongside Dutch colleagues new and old. Already in 1943, a series of meetings brought together Indonesian representatives such as Setyadjit and well-known SDAP member Lambertus Palar with prominent Dutch politicians and resisters like Willem Drees of the SDAP and A. J. Koejemans, leader of the underground Dutch Communist Party and editor of *De Waarheid*. By year’s end, this group had agreed on a set of general directives for the future: A new commonwealth structure would unite the various parts of the kingdom, and Indonesia, at long last, would receive

³⁸ Few copies of *De Bevrijding* have been preserved, so existing collections are necessarily incomplete. Although the paper made its debut in May 1944, the *De Bevrijding* collection held at the NIOD begins only with the issue dated March 1, 1945: *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication number 69, NIOD, Amsterdam. For the names of those Indonesian resisters involved with *De Bevrijding*, see Lydia Winkel, *De ondergrondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 83–84, and Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 321–322. An article appearing in *De Bevrijding* shortly after the German surrender lists over a dozen coeditors who assisted Pamontjak: “De staf van ‘De Bevrijding,’” *De Bevrijding*, June 2, 1945, 17.

PI-associated resisters also produced local versions of *De Bevrijding*, some of which barely resembled the original version issued out of Leiden. These local offshoots included *De Bevrijding* (“geautoriseerde uitgave,” Den Haag) and *De Bevrijding* (Rotterdam): *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication numbers 67-I and II, and 70-I, respectively, NIOD, Amsterdam.

³⁹ “Vrijwilligers voor Indonesië,” *De Bevrijding*, March 1, 1945, 3–4, and “Een basis voor samenwerking,” *De Bevrijding*, April 12, 1945, 1–2.

its own constitution, parliament, and government. Now, a year later and with the end of the war in sight, these collaborative discussions continued apace, acquiring additional momentum and urgency by the day. Setyadjit represented PI in both the GAC resistance organization and its dedicated Indies subcommittee, whereas Palar and other Indonesian socialists joined their Dutch party colleagues to plan the SDAP's triumphant postwar return. Indeed, such cooperative efforts seemed to portend a new phase in the age-old Dutch-Indonesian relationship, but in a more ominous twist, PI severed its ties with the SDAP after the two parties failed to agree on the precise timing of colonial reform. Among other points of contention, PI maintained that Indonesian autonomy should precede the much-touted round table conference, whereas the SDAP advocated the reverse.⁴⁰ Yet despite such differences of opinion, Indonesian resisters remained confident that just as they had cooperated and collaborated with their Dutch colleagues-in-arms, so too would Dutch and Indonesian work together after the war to bring lasting, democratic reform to Indonesia.

In the final days of the war, PI laid bare this and other pillars of its political position in the form of a two-page manifesto: "Declaration of Perhimpunan Indonesia to the Dutch People!" While celebrating the imminent Allied victory and the tremendous accomplishments of the anti-Nazi resistance movements in the Netherlands, the leaders of PI seized the moment to introduce themselves to the Dutch public. They explained that Indonesians had fought alongside Dutch resisters and participated in all facets of underground work: They had provided assistance to those in hiding, produced their own clandestine papers and written articles for other papers, and even formed their own armed group, the Irawan Brigade. Yet the PI organization was also fighting for Indonesia's right to self-determination, its leaders explained. PI sought a new relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia, one founded on mutuality and equality. Above all else, it sought "an independent and democratic Indonesia, because only in this lies a guarantee that the Indonesian people will have their full political, economic, and social development in their own hands."⁴¹ This declaration made clear that the Indonesians had done their part – and more – to help the Dutch in their

⁴⁰ Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 325–327.

⁴¹ "Verklaring van de Perhimpunan Indonesia aan het Nederlandse Volk!" dated May 1945, with these comments appearing on page 1. Both the national and local *De Bevrijding* organizations issued this manifesto as a stand-alone text, alternately known as "Manifest van de Perhimpunan Indonesia." However, the text itself bore the stamp of "Indonesia, 'the organ of Perhimpunan Indonesia,'" the organization's new postwar political journal. Because PI leaders continued to publish the main Leiden edition of *De Bevrijding* until early July 1945, these two papers appeared concurrently for the first few months after liberation. Both this May 1945 manifesto and early copies of *Indonesia* are included with clandestine *De Bevrijding* in Illegale Pers Collectie 556, publication number 69, NIOD, Amsterdam.

time of need, and in return they expected the Dutch to do the same by liberating Indonesia from its Japanese oppressors. Naturally, the Dutch would not do this alone; the Indonesians would rise to the occasion too, for only by participating in this great liberation struggle could they prove they were equal partners in this wartime alliance. After all, wartime developments had revealed the Dutch and Indonesians capable of harmonious and voluntary cooperation with one another.

However, this group of Indonesian resisters was not about to let the Dutch people off so easily. The Indonesians needed to see more than simply a joint military effort, and, more specifically, the Indonesian people had “a right to know the status of the Netherlands and Indonesia as it will exist after the war.” They deserved “to see the implementation of the democratic principles laid out by the Queen in her December 7, 1942 speech – i.e., that the relationship will be determined by ‘free consultation’ and ‘on the solid basis of full partnership.’” The Indonesian resisters of PI did not refer to a commonwealth by name, but instead described how a system of layered sovereignty might function in practice. Under this arrangement, Indonesia would serve as an autonomous territory with its government responsible to the Indonesian people, not the Minister of Colonies in The Hague, and a new overarching representative body, consisting of delegates from Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, and Curaçao, would deal with matters of mutual concern. As PI leaders took pains to emphasize, such far-reaching changes would not take effect immediately, because, in accordance with the queen’s directives, a round table conference convened after the war would need to decide on all relevant details, including the timetable for reform. The Indonesian resisters of PI remained confident that, at the end of the day, “the voice of the fighting Indonesians will be heard in a new and reborn Netherlands,” and that their shared wartime struggles with the Dutch would serve as the point of departure for many years of fruitful cooperation. PI offered its public statement in this self-same spirit of mutuality, hopeful that it would find a receptive audience with this newly liberated people. So concluded PI’s declaration to the Dutch public: “May the Indonesian people’s long-expressed and quite justified demands for autonomy now resonate in the Netherlands.”⁴²

Beginning in May 1945, PI repeatedly emphasized the burden that rested on Dutch shoulders and pushed the Dutch to act soon, as the Indonesian people stood ready for change. Welcoming the Allied forces arriving in the Netherlands, the resisters of PI explained – in English – that the Indonesians were “prepared and desired to do their part in the reconstruction of a peace-loving society on the foundation of the Atlantic Charter.” They would fight for democracy, and they remained hopeful that the blood and tears shed during the war would give way to peace and harmony among all peoples.

⁴² “Verklaring van de Perhimpunan Indonesia aan het Nederlandse Volk!,” May 1945, 2.

No less importantly, they expected that Indonesia, “free and enjoying equal rights with the Netherlands,” would be able to contribute its share.⁴³ PI’s commentary to this effect does not appear to have been a veiled threat; these Indonesian resisters did not warn of violence or revolt should democratic reform fail to materialize. Rather, they seemed intent on publicizing their wartime achievements and postwar expectations, lest the British and Americans remain unfamiliar with them. All the same, such statements made clear these Indonesians’ intentions to hold Dutch policy makers to their word. Whether in the form of the queen’s December 1942 speech, or its professed support for the principles of the Atlantic Charter in 1941, the Netherlands had signaled its commitment to colonial reform. Indonesian resisters would join the Dutch in celebrating the German defeat, but they would not forget what had been promised to them.

Nor, for that matter, would their Dutch colleagues forget – or at least those who similarly championed the cause of democratic reform in the Indies. The spring of 1945 saw the GAC’s Indies Commission hard at work, but with a different mandate than that anticipated by the GAC Contact Group the previous year. Originally intended as a politically neutral exploratory group, this Indies group now resembled a political action committee or advisory body concerned with military and political matters alike, and its new name, the “Indies Commission,” reflected this more expansive agenda. Why this shift? Undoubtedly, the original mandate of the Indies Propaganda Commission had been an impossible one, as the Contact Group might have realized. Of the leading clandestine press groups, only *Trouw* sought a purely military liberation of the Indies. All other organizations coupled military action with the implementation of democratic reforms, for only political change could bring about the true liberation of Indonesia. In addition, the group’s Indonesian member, Setyadjit, was a well-respected Indonesian nationalist and now a credentialed resister who made no secret of his commitment to long-term political change. The politicization of the Indies Commission also mirrored that of the GAC Contact Group, which steadily involved itself in the business of provisional government and post-war planning.⁴⁴

⁴³ “Welkom, Bondegnoten!/Welcome Allies!” (published concurrently in both Dutch- and English-language versions), *De Bevrijding*, May 26, 1945, 2–3. The statement also appeared solely in English as “Welcome, Allies!” *Indonesia*, Bevrijdingsnummer van het Orgaan der Perhimpunan Indonesia, May 1945, 2.

⁴⁴ This increasing involvement in overtly political matters is evident in the various materials – memoranda, correspondence, internal reports – generated during the final weeks and months of the war and contained in Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, Files 1A and 1B, NIOD, Amsterdam. See also Peter Romijn, “The Synthesis of the Political Order and the Resistance Movement in the Netherlands in 1945,” in *The End of the War in Europe*, ed. Gill Bennett (London: HMSO, 1996), 142–145; and Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62–65.

As this newly restyled Indies Commission expanded its focus to examine the topic of political reform, the task of creating and disseminating propaganda for the coming military mission fell to a number of new organizations, such as the United Indies Volunteers (*Verenigde Indië-Vrijwilligers* or VIV). Consisting largely of Indologists, former colonial officials, and others similarly familiar with the Indies, the VIV brought forth its own clandestine paper, *Ons Indië* – “Our Indies” – in November 1944 as a means of rallying popular support for the Indies campaign. The VIV’s propaganda campaign sought both to recruit volunteers for the military mission and to prepare these servicemen and women for what could become an extended stay in the colony. With an eye toward amassing a large but also well-informed colonial army, *Ons Indië* glorified the Netherlands’ great accomplishments in the Indies and proclaimed the East Indies unique among European nations. This organization’s approach harkened back to an earlier era, when imperial lobbying groups unabashedly proclaimed the glories of tropical life and encouraged European settlement. Indeed, the VIV seemed to want to return to this long bygone era.⁴⁵ By contrast, the members of the GAC Indies Commission operated from the assumption that reform was inevitable and beneficial, and they believed that, together with other like-minded groups and individuals, they would be able to direct this process of reform. They let groups such as the VIV concern themselves with military recruitment, but they considered themselves solidly in control of political planning.

Equipped with its new mandate, the Indies Commission worked to produce a simple but persuasive statement explicating its findings and recommendations for the benefit of the general public. As the resisters had argued for years, the Indies question concerned everyone – it was not an elite question, but a question for the masses – and the members of the Indies Commission tasked themselves with propagating the message of liberation and reform. In late February 1945, the GAC Contact Group approved the group’s statement, to be published on behalf of the united resistance movement with individual clandestine press groups offered the opportunity to sign their names.⁴⁶ For the next few weeks, the Indies Commission and the Contact Group deliberated the precise wording of the statement and debated which organizations should be extended an invitation to sign.⁴⁷ By mid-April, the “declaration of the Indies Commission” was complete, and participating groups had either received or knew to expect their copies of the statement, which they pledged

⁴⁵ Copies of *Ons Indië* are contained in *Illegale Pers Collectie* 556, publication number 570, NIOD, Amsterdam. See, too, Lydia Winkel, *De ondegroondse pers 1940–1945*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Veen Uitgevers, 1989), 180.

⁴⁶ “Kort verslag van de C.C. vergadering van 20 February 1945,” Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁴⁷ “Kort verslag van de Vergadering der C.C. van 20 March 1945,” Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam. See also Louis de Jong’s account of these negotiations: *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Deel 10b, Tweede Helft (’s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1982), 955–966.

to publish in their respective newspapers.⁴⁸ Offered on behalf of “The Joint Resistance Movement in the Netherlands,” the declaration’s cosignatories were to include *De Waarheid*, *Vrij Nederland*, *Trouw*, *Je Maintiendrai*, *De Bevrijding*, and *De Geus onder Studenten*, one of the nation’s first clandestine newspapers and, unlike the other publications, concerned solely with wartime resistance. Notably, *Het Parool* did not add its name to the declaration, but this omission should not be taken as proof that the organization did not support the work and recommendations of the Indies Commission. In the GAC, one resistance delegate represented a group of organizations, and the Indies Commission operated in the same manner. Although *Het Parool* did not have its own delegate on the Indies Commission, the resisters in this organization could be confident that their opinions and interests would be well represented by their representative, *Vrij Nederland* editor Henk van Randwijk. Further, the Indies Declaration merely confirmed the views long expressed in the pages of *Het Parool*; it did not contain any new proposals or commentary. For these reasons, Frans Goedhart and his fellow editors could simply reprint the declaration without adding their organization’s signature. In any case, the effect would have been the same.

Printed in all leading publications during the final weeks of the war, the final version of the “Indonesia Declaration” reiterated two points these resisters believed to be widely accepted in both London and the occupied Netherlands. One, Indonesia needed to be liberated, preferably by the Netherlands. Two, the precise manner of this liberation would serve as the foundation for the relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia. Recognizing the pressing but fraught “Indies question,” the “collective resistance movements of the Netherlands” had come together to deliberate and issue their judgment. This declaration made clear their findings. They agreed that Dutchman and Indonesian alike were to fulfill their “moral duty” to free the colony from the Japanese, which meant that this liberation struggle would be waged without concern for race or nationality and would take into account only the “abilities of the citizens.” Just as they neglected to explain why they termed the colony “Indonesia,” the resisters of the Indies Commission failed to probe the precise status of the Indonesian citizen-liberators: Were Indonesians to be granted the same legal rights as their Dutch fighters-in-arms? Would they fight as part of a new people’s militia – an institution long denied to the Indonesians – or would they be incorporated into units of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, as colonial tradition would have it? Perhaps the most obvious question was this: Would all Indonesians finally gain Dutch citizenship after they had fulfilled this “moral duty” to liberate their land? Aside from noting that all such mobilization efforts needed to account for Indonesia’s “mixed population” – whatever this might mean – the Indies Commission did not delve into these matters. Instead, it

⁴⁸ “Kort verslag van de Vergadering der C.C. van 17 April 1945,” Collection 184, Grootte Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

deferred to Queen Wilhelmina's speech of December 7, 1942, which had set the course for this all-important military mission by providing inspiration for both the common struggle against the Japanese oppressor and the reconstruction efforts soon to follow. By lending their names to this joint declaration, these resistance organizations declared their willingness to promote this agenda. They pledged to shed light on "the liberation struggle in and around Indonesia – which will indeed be a liberation and not a reconquest – for the people of the Netherlands and Indonesia"; with these efforts, they would "make the spirit ripe" for both voluntary enlistment at home and the possible overseas deployment of a new Dutch army.

Echoing the now-familiar claims of certain resisters and organizations, the Indies Commission argued that such military action, as important as it was, constituted merely the first step in a much larger process of political reform. Like the queen herself, the organizations lending their name to this declaration realized "that neither political unity nor national cohesion can continue to exist if it is not supported by the voluntary acceptance and the faith of the great majority of the citizenry."⁴⁹ For these reasons, they welcomed the convening of a postwar imperial conference consisting of representatives from all parts of the kingdom and charged with deciding "the future structure of the Kingdom." Importantly, however, these resisters emphasized that the Indonesian delegates to this postwar meeting needed to represent the entire nation and people, the implication being that Sukarno, Mohammed Hatta, and other leading Indonesian nationalists were not up to this task. Not only were these men dangerous political radicals, but they had willingly collaborated with their Japanese occupiers. If they wished to work with the Dutch, the Indonesians would need to produce more moderate and representative negotiating partners. Yet such was only the subtext of this resistance statement, which nonetheless envisioned a bright, harmonious future between the two peoples. The members of the Indies Commission then articulated their preference for a "renewed" or "reborn" (*vernieuwd*) commonwealth. They did not address how a nonexistent commonwealth might be "renewed," nor did they explain why they supported this particular arrangement over others. They simply noted that this structure would "do justice" to the sense of solidarity that had developed between the Dutch and Indonesian peoples over the course of centuries, and they explained that any new arrangement must be freely accepted by a majority in both the Netherlands and Indonesia, a condition noted by the queen in December 1942. Still, the Indies Commission remained confident that the Dutch and Indonesians would elect to loyally cooperate with one another, and for years

⁴⁹ All of the leading clandestine papers reprinted the statement in full, but only *Vrij Nederland* emphasized particular phrases in bold-face print (here italicized): "We realize, along with H.M the Queen, that neither a political unity, nor a national cohesion, can continue to exist, if it is not supported by *the voluntary acceptance* and the faith of *the great majority* of the citizenry." "De strijd voor de bevrijding van Indonesië," *Vrij Nederland*, April 30, 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 21), 3.

to come. Simply put, political reform need not – and, indeed, should not – imply a complete severing of ties between the two peoples and territories.⁵⁰

With this “Indies Declaration,” organizations typically occupying entrenched positions on either end of the political spectrum appeared to find common ground in the prospects of military liberation and political reform. The communist resisters of *De Waarheid* – never among the most vocal supporters of a commonwealth – and conservative Calvinists of *Trouw* – unwavering in their opposition to colonial reform of any sort – suddenly changed course. Perhaps these two groups believed that their previous positions were now untenable or that the leftists and centrists of *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland*, and *Je Maintiendrai* had already gained the upper hand. In all likelihood, however, the resisters of the far left and far right lent their support to promote interresistance unity, particularly now that their liberation from the Germans stood in front of them. Postwar developments would soon reveal this wartime consensus for what it was: a superficial, tenuous, and temporary agreement born of unique circumstances. Mere months after the German surrender, these two groups faced off, once more, with the future of the Indies at stake.

LIBERATION AND RESTORATION

On May 5, 1945, five long years of occupation came to an end when German General Johannes Blaskowitz surrendered his forces to the Second Allied Army in the Dutch city of Wageningen. Their wartime mandate over, Prime Minister Gerbrandy and his London cabinet resigned, and newly arrived Queen Wilhelmina appointed former “Gestel” hostages Willem Schermerhorn and Willem Drees to form a provisional government. National elections would be held as soon as circumstances allowed, but in the meantime Schermerhorn and Drees were to oversee the massive rebuilding and reconstruction efforts soon to commence. By late June, Schermerhorn had assumed the role of Prime Minister, with Drees serving as the new Minister of Social Affairs. The new Prime Minister was a relative newcomer to the national political scene, but he brought to the position a distinguished resistance pedigree: A staff writer for *Je Maintiendrai* since 1943, he had assumed leadership of the GAC’s Indies Commission the following year. Schermerhorn’s new government faced a formidable task, not least of which was enforcing a fragile political consensus.

⁵⁰ Declaration reprinted and published as “De Bevrijding van Indonesië: Een verklaring der Verzetsbeweging,” *Het Parool* (Vol. 5 No. 96), April 24, 1945; “De strijd voor de bevrijding van Indonesië,” *Vrij Nederland*, April 30, 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 21), 3; “De strijd voor de bevrijding van Indonesië: Verklaring,” *Trouw*, early May 1945 (Vol. 3. No. 5), 2; “Voor de bevrijding van Indonesië: Verklaring,” *De Waarheid*, May 1, 1945, 2; and “Verklaring Indonesië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, Bevrijdingsnummer May 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 21), 15.

With liberation, long-standing tensions resurfaced, as did certain pre-war political parties. Neither the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party nor the Dutch Communist Party was particularly pleased about the new government. For the conservative Calvinists, Schermerhorn's cabinet represented a radical departure from the prewar status quo, whereas the communists considered the new government too traditional and too far removed from wartime developments and trends. The new government also drew the ire of resistance groups, which had suddenly found themselves demobilized, stripped of their weapons and grand political ambitions in one fell swoop. In response, the resisters aligned themselves behind an array of new organizations, the most prominent of which was the Community of Former Resistance Workers, the GOIWN (*Gemeenschap Oud-Illegale Werkers Nederland*). Founded in the liberated southern part of the country in the fall of 1944, the GOIWN intended to play an active role in postwar policy making. Instead, after liberation, the increasingly vocal and militant organization operated from the margins of national politics, where it advocated those causes near and dear to the hearts of resistance veterans, such as the endowment of pension plans and the granting of honorific titles. The Grand Council of the Resistance (GAC) fared slightly better after May 1945, as it was allowed to advise the new government when it selected members for a temporary emergency parliament.⁵¹

Speaking in a radio broadcast delivered on June 27, 1945, the new prime minister addressed these and other concerns. His transitional government, he explained, was one of "restoration and renovation": restoration, because the new government would need to undo the material and spiritual damages visited on the "ravaged Netherlands," and renovation, because the past five years of war, occupation, and destruction pointed to more positive changes. Schermerhorn clarified that such renovation would not completely overhaul Dutch society and traditions, but rather sought "a restored and deepened realization of good and evil, of the effects on society that must result from an avowal of our innermost principles of life." Put simply, the government aimed for synthesis between old and new, between prewar and wartime principles and goals. With this acknowledgment, Schermerhorn gave voice to what was quickly becoming evident in the liberated Netherlands: Confronted with tremendous wartime destruction, the presence of Allied troops, and general uncertainty, the Dutch people seemed to expect the rapid normalization of politics. That they did so was understandable, because the

⁵¹ Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 61–67; Dick van Galen Last, "The Netherlands," in *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. Bob Moore (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 207–210; Peter Romijn, "The Synthesis of the Political Order and the Resistance Movement in the Netherlands in 1945," in *The End of the War in Europe*, ed. Gill Bennett, Ed. (London: HMSO, 1996), 139–147.

return of familiar patterns and ideas could blunt the edges of what promised to be a rough transition period. However, such demands also exerted powerful pressure on postwar leaders like Schermerhorn and Drees, who had long envisioned liberation as a moment to enact much-needed political, economic, and social reforms.

Speaking to these tensions, Prime Minister Schermerhorn issued a barely veiled warning to those resisters who believed they could continue fighting the good fight long after the German surrender. By involving themselves in political matters for which they were neither competent nor authorized to speak, these resistance veterans only sowed discord and tension. To these ends, the new prime minister called on his former colleagues in the Dutch underground to put aside their own interests and instead “accept the indefinitely difficult but not hopeless task” of directing all Dutch forces toward one aim, namely, “the resurrection of the national existence of the Netherlands.” As the Dutch people celebrated their freedom from their Nazi occupiers, they also needed to realize that in the Indies millions of people continued to suffer under Japanese occupation. Now more than ever, Schermerhorn explained, the Netherlands had a “moral obligation” to the Indies, and this moral obligation would find expression in the coming liberation effort. The prime minister assured his people that “a new Dutch army” was in the making, and that as soon as possible, newly reconstituted military forces would be deployed to the East Indies.⁵² He neither confirmed nor denied that colonial reform was in the offing, but rather implied that a liberated Indies would resume its position within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

In his efforts to placate a Dutch public eager to see the normalization of politics and society, the head of the Netherlands’ first postwar government gingerly sidestepped the question of colonial reform. By contrast, Hubertus van Mook, the Acting Governor General of the East Indies and former wartime Minister of Colonies, affirmed before foreign audiences the Netherlands’ commitment to imperial reform. At the moment of German surrender, van Mook was in the United States, serving as one of nearly a dozen Dutch delegates to the United Nations conference that opened in San Francisco on April 25, 1945. Speaking before that city’s Institute of Pacific Relations on May 18, van Mook assured his audience that the Indonesians were ready for democracy, to be implemented in accordance with the directives laid out by the queen in her December 7, 1942, speech. “The

⁵² The now above-ground *Je Maintiendrai* provided a summary of the speech, as did the London version of *Vrij Nederland*: “Nu of nooit! Indrukwekkende radio-rede van Minister-President Schermerhorn,” *Je Maintiendrai*, June 30, 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 26), 1–2; “Programrede van Minister-President,” *London Vrij Nederland*, July 7, 1945, 710–712. The speech also appeared in English translation as *Radio Speeches Held by Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina and Professor W. Schermerhorn, Netherlands Prime Minister, on Wednesday, June 27, 1945* (New York: The Netherlands Information Bureau, 1945), 6–11, 29–30.

final construction of the Kingdom,” he explained, could only be decided by the people of the Netherlands, the Netherlands Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao, but he remained certain that, regardless of the particular arrangement, these four territories would “have internal autonomy and representative institutions.” The new system might take the form of a refashioned central government consisting of a ministry and four-part assembly, but regional representative bodies might also take the lead in passing legislation. Matters of mutual concern, such as foreign affairs, defense, and monetary policy, would come in for “common consultation” between the various constituent parts.⁵³

Then, a few weeks later, the Lieutenant Governor General elaborated on these themes, this time emphasizing the Netherlands’ unique status among empires. The Dutch government, he boldly explained, was charting its own path. It did not seek the “complete integration” of the overseas territories, as per the French model, or more precisely, what he believed to be the French model; at this time, the French hardly possessed a “model,” let alone one based on the “complete integration” of all subject peoples. According to van Mook, the Netherlands also did not wish to create a British-style dominion system. Rather, the Dutch sought a new “partnership,” with each of the territories in this new Kingdom of the Netherlands claiming its own laws, finances, and economic systems. Each would have equal rights, and each would work closely with the other three territories.⁵⁴ Although touting such plans as novel and groundbreaking, they represented familiar terrain for van Mook. As a young civil servant in the Indies during the late 1920s and early 1930s, he had advocated the creation of what he and other members of the pro-reform *Stuw* group had termed an “Indies Commonwealth.” Under this proposed arrangement, the many territories and peoples of the Indies would be incorporated into one federated structure, politically independent but still allied to the European Netherlands in a yet-to-be-determined fashion. Now, in 1945, van Mook promoted a different and more far-reaching commonwealth, but, as in his earlier days, he remained confident that the Netherlands and the East Indies could craft a prosperous, harmonious future. Further, he believed that both parties wished to embark on this commonwealth experiment. It was a mutually agreeable solution, expected to appeal to progressive-minded Dutch and Indonesians alike.

⁵³ Van Mook’s speech was reprinted in full as *Past and Future in the Netherlands Indies: Address delivered by Dr. Hubertus J. van Mook, Acting Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies and a member of the Dutch delegation at UNCIO, before members of the Institute of Pacific Relations, May 18, 1945, at San Francisco* (New York: Netherlands Information Bureau, 1945), with these comments appearing on pages 12–16. The London version of *Vrij Nederland* summarized the contents of his address: “Dr. van Mook over herstel-problem,” *London Vrij Nederland*, June 2, 1945, 577.

⁵⁴ “Van Mook on the political future of the N.E.I.,” *Netherlands News*, June 15, 1945 (Vol. 12 No. 7), 163–164.

Taking their cue more from Lieutenant Governor General van Mook than the somewhat evasive Schermerhorn government, former resisters continued to publicize the Netherlands' pressing overseas mission. The *Je Maintiendrai* organization tirelessly publicized the need for volunteers to go to Indonesia: Soldiers and civilians, men and women alike, with or without specialized training, should declare themselves ready to fulfill their national duty. Editors P. J. Schmidt, Geert Ruygers, and Willem Verkade – who, along with a number of other wartime editors and writers, were attempting to steer their paper into a new postwar existence – called on the Dutch to keep in mind the tremendous mission that awaited them. Even as they celebrated their hard-fought freedom from the Germans, the Dutch needed to remember that in the East, that “Netherlands in the Tropics,” “tens of thousands of Dutch citizens and millions of Dutch subjects” continued to suffer nearly unspeakable horrors under the Japanese “yellow devils.” In fact, news from the region revealed that “our brothers in the Indies” may have endured conditions equaling or even exceeding those experienced by their countrymen held in German prisons and concentration camps.⁵⁵ Liberated at long last, the Dutch now had the opportunity if not the duty to bring freedom to their Indonesian brethren, and just as they had during the war, the resisters of *Je Maintiendrai* intended to contribute their part to this effort.

So too did the Indonesians of PI seek to mobilize popular support for the coming battle against the cruel Japanese warlords, who in the name of creating a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere had visited untold destruction on the archipelago. After liberation, PI leaders ceased publication of resistance paper *De Bevrijding* and instead founded a weekly paper, the simply titled *Indonesia*, devoted solely to the present situation and future status of their homeland. As explained by editors and now-accomplished resisters Moroeto Daroesman, T. M. Joesoef, and Abdoelmadjid Djoyoadhiningrat, *Indonesia* sought to provide information about all questions concerning Indonesia “in accordance with the aspirations of the Indonesian nationalist movement and in the spirit of a new solidarity between the Netherlands and Indonesia, as stemming from the speech of Her Majesty the Queen, on December 7, 1942.” Just as the Indonesians in the Netherlands had joined forces with the Dutch to resist the Germans, so too must the Indonesians and Dutch unite to defeat the Japanese, *Indonesia* reiterated. Only with this final victory against the Axis powers could the Indonesian people expect to see the implementation of those political reforms as promised by the queen and articulated in the recent “resistance declaration” concerning the Indies.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ These comments appear in “Bevrijding van Indonesië,” *Je Maintiendrai*, June 23, 1945 (Vol. 5 No. 25), 3. See also the advertisement entitled “Nederl.-Indisch Vrouwencorps” appearing on page 7 of this issue.

⁵⁶ Detailed analyses of the Japanese occupation are contained in PI's *Speciaal Nummer van het weekblad 'Indonesia': JAPAN*, May 1945. Daroesman's “De Bevrijding van Indonesië”

While advancing these ideas to the greater Dutch public, the former resisters of PI continued and expanded their cooperative efforts with like-minded individuals and organizations, such as Henk van Randwijk of *Vrij Nederland* and A. J. Koejemans of the newly reestablished Dutch Communist Party.⁵⁷ The new postwar Indies Section of the GAC also provided a venue for these ongoing, interparty discussions. After May 1945, when the larger GAC organization recast itself as a broadly based political advisory board, the Indies Commission similarly reconsidered its peacetime mandate. One month later, it rechristened itself as the Indies Section of the Grand Council of the Resistance, an independent foundation that would both disseminate objective, nonpartisan information about Indonesia and coordinate similar efforts undertaken by other organizations. Now serving as Prime Minister, Schermerhorn could not continue in his position at the head of this Indies committee, so Henk van Randwijk of *Vrij Nederland* assumed leadership. Setyadjit, who had represented PI in both the GAC and the wartime Indies Commission, would act as secretary for this new Indies Section. Approached by Indies Section representatives, newly appointed Minister of Overseas Territories J. H. A. Logemann lent his tacit approval to their new endeavor but also strongly advised them to avoid the loaded terrain of “future political relations.” Because the Netherlands did not have sufficient information concerning conditions on the ground in Indonesia, the minister suggested that the Indies Section concern itself with the coming military mission and the ongoing preparations for the round table conference meant to address these pressing political questions.⁵⁸ By contrast, Prime Minister Schermerhorn encouraged the Indies Section to aim high. Speaking to his former clandestine peers on July 18, Schermerhorn stated that the GAC “Indies Declaration” must live on; it was not to become “an antique piece from the resistance.” He assured van Randwijk, Setyadjit and other Indies Section committee members that they had reason to be optimistic, for the current government’s politics were fully in line with the queen’s speech of December 7, 1942, and he urged them to expand the scope of their activities. Even as they prepared to fight the Japanese, the public needed to be aware

piece and subscription information for the paper explicitly discussed the queen’s speech: *Indonesia*, May 1945 (Vol. 16), 7–8. See also “Aan de vooravond van Indonesie’s bevrijding!” *Indonesia*, June 1945 (Vol. 16 No. 1), 1–2. *Indonesia*, although an “above-ground” and not clandestine publication, is included in the NIOD’s clandestine newspaper collection: *Illegale Pers Collectie 556*, publication number 69, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Amsterdam.

⁵⁷ “Mededeelingen,” *Indonesia*, June 1945 (Vol. 16 No. 1), 16; and photographic report of PI-lead mass meeting in Rotterdam (October 25, 1945), “Massavergadering te Rotterdam,” in Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986), 344.

⁵⁸ Various correspondence and meeting reports, contained in Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, Files 1A, 1C, and 12A; Collection 185a, *Het Illegale Vrij Nederland*, Files 315 and 318, both held by NIOD, Amsterdam.

of the problems informing future relations between the Netherlands and its overseas territories.⁵⁹

Within weeks, however, such discussions would come to a grinding halt. As history would have it, developments in the Indies would bear little resemblance to the grand plans envisioned by these former resisters. Protracted wartime discussions concerning the comparative merits of a conscript versus volunteer army and whether the Dutch public truly recognized the nation's calling to free the Indies from its Japanese oppressors would prove for naught: The Japanese capitulation on August 15 formally brought the occupation to an end before the Netherlands could stage its triumphant military action. By late September, British troops had arrived in the colonial capital of Batavia, where they were to disarm and repatriate Japanese forces while protecting those Europeans who had spent the last few years in Japanese camps. Arriving Dutch and American units swelled the ranks of Allied forces in the Indies, although months would pass before truly significant numbers of Dutch troops would arrive from the European Netherlands. Further, and contrary to *Trouw's* strongly worded pronouncements that the Dutch should lead the forces in their colony, Allied units in the Indies would fall under the command of British Lieutenant General Philip Christison.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, on August 17, 1945, Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, thereby setting in motion a series of events that no one – perhaps not even the nationalists themselves – could have predicted. Almost unhesitatingly, Dutch officials in The Hague, Australia, and the liberated territories of the East Indies declared their unwillingness to recognize the authority of Sukarno and his Republic, and they reaffirmed their intentions to install their planned Netherlands East Indies Civil Administration in the colony as soon as possible. On the ground in the Indies, however, Allied commander Christison proved more accommodating to these purported Indonesian insurgents than the Dutch would have liked or expected. Looking to protect his troops but apparently also angered by Dutch intransigence, the British Lieutenant General allowed the republic to remain in place, even entrusting its leaders to administer those territories not held by Allied forces.⁶¹ Christison had reason to be concerned for his men,

⁵⁹ “Verslag over het onderhoud met den Minister President Prof. Schermherhorn” (dated July 18, 1945), Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 12A; Collection 185a, *Het Illegale Vrij Nederland*, File 316, both held by NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁶⁰ For *Trouw's* original commentary to this effect, see “Onze strijd om Indië,” *Trouw*, 20 July 1943 (Vol. 1 No. 8), 2.

⁶¹ Studies of the Indonesian Revolution are legion, and the following works examine these early developments in some detail: Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 164–175; George Mc.T. Kahin, “Sukarno's Proclamation of Indonesian independence,” *Indonesia* 69 (April 2000), 1–4; and R. E. Elson, “Another Look at the Jakarta Charter Controversy of 1945,” *Indonesia* 88 (October 2009), 105–130; Robert J. McMahan,

because in late October 1945, they found themselves in combat against the Indonesian People's Army, a revolutionary body of troops operating independently of the newly declared republic. With this conflict raging in the east Javanese city of Surabaya, Prime Minister Schermerhorn took to the airwaves in The Hague. Describing the situation in Java as "a race between chaos and disintegration, resulting from the collapse of authority," he called on the British to help restore calm and order. "At present," he explained, "there is no British, no Japanese and no Dutch authority," and Sukarno had proven "unable to control the island or put down the insurrection." Further, Schermerhorn was convinced that these events on Java did not signal "the true political feelings of the people of the Indies," but rather represented the typical collapse of authority that accompanied revolution.⁶²

In response to these developments, the second chamber of the Dutch parliament opened debate on Indonesia. Speaking before parliament, Minister of Overseas Territories H. A. Logemann explained that the government of the Netherlands remained ready to enter into conversations with "qualified" Indonesian representatives. A former Indies civil servant, an Indologist by training, and an expert in colonial law, Logemann had spent nearly four years in German detention as an "Indies hostage." Now, in October 1945, he expressed his conviction that current problems in Java were the work of a "superficial layer of the Indonesian population." The minister assured his audience that the government was fully committed to the ideas contained in the queen's December 7, 1942, speech and specifically to the implementation of Indonesian self-government within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The government remained hopeful that the present "horrible deadlock" in the Indies could be overcome, to the benefit of both peoples. After all, the Netherlands felt the calling to "continue its historical task, to restore order, security, and prosperity, so that the Indies will experience the blessings that come with being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands."⁶³

Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 74–113; George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952), 141–145; Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 95–101; Leslie H. Palmier, *Indonesia and the Dutch* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 46–53; Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945–1950* (Hawthorn, Vic: Longman, 1974), 19–58; M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4rd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 246–254. For British involvement in this series of events, see Martin Thomas, "Processing Decolonization: British Strategic Analysis of Conflict in Vietnam and Indonesia, 1945–1950," in *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945–1962*, eds. Christopher W. Goscha and Christian F. Ostermann (Washington, DC and Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Press and Stanford University Press, 2009), 84–120.

⁶² Schermerhorn cited in "Unrest in Java," *Netherlands News*, November 1, 1945 (Vol. 13 No. 8), 171.

⁶³ A detailed English-language discussion of Logemann's address appears in "Unrest in Java," *Netherlands News*, November 1, 1945 (Vol. 13 No. 8), 174–175, and a complete Dutch

A majority of parliamentary representatives agreed, affirming the government's official position of seeking a compromise solution with Indonesian nationalists other than Sukarno and his circle. In the eyes of many Dutch politicians and commentators, Sukarno was a traitor, a Japanese puppet, comparable to Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert, but even more dangerous: At least Mussert and his cronies, detained and soon to be punished for their treasonous behavior, lacked the capacity to further harm the nation. Throughout 1945 and into 1946, the Dutch government – primarily represented by Lieutenant Governor General van Mook – embarked on a number of investigatory missions, conducted negotiations, and pursued agreements with the Republic's current Prime Minister, Sutan Sjahrir. Both men faced considerable opposition at home. Van Mook had to contend with Catholic and Calvinist politicians who refused to concede their anti-Sukarno position as well as a new Labor Party attempting to negotiate its stance in this mounting crisis. For his part, Sjahrir knew that Sukarno and the republic would accept nothing less than the full acknowledgment of the Republic's sovereign status.⁶⁴ A stalemate, although certainly not desired by either party, might prove inevitable.

Against the backdrop of these negotiations, the members of the GAC Indies Section considered how they might best provide objective information to the general public. However, in the fall of 1945, the directors of the GAC questioned the purpose and potential contributions of this Indies Section, especially after Henk van Randwijk – busy with the publication of the new above-ground *Vrij Nederland* and increasingly critical of the government's stance toward the East Indies/Indonesia – stepped down as chair in October. His place was taken by Andrée Wiltens, a former student resister who worked with Setyadjit and the other remaining Section members to refocus the group's efforts. Reinventing itself yet again as the "Indonesia Section," the group proposed another informational foundation, albeit one with an explicitly political agenda. These former resisters pledged to promote equality and cooperation between the peoples of the overseas territories and the European Netherlands, a mission entirely in keeping with the queen's December 7, 1942, speech. They would help their fellow citizens prepare for the coming "dissolution of colonial status," as promised by the queen during the war.⁶⁵

transcript of the address is contained in the archives of the *Vrij Nederland* organization: Collection 185a, *Het Illegale Vrij Nederland*, File 322, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁶⁴ Wilco Julius van Welderen Rengers and L. G. Kortenhorst, eds., *Schets eener parlementaire geschiedenis van Nederland*, Volume 5, 1940–1946 ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), 127–132; Henri Grimal, *Decolonization: the British, French, Dutch and Belgian Empires 1919–1963*, transl. Stephan de Vos (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 193–198.

⁶⁵ "Verslag Bureau-Vergadering," October 2, 1945, Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1D; Letter and accompanying statement, dated November 29, 1945, and signed by R. M. Setyadjit, Collection 185a, *Het Illegale Vrij Nederland*, File 297, both held by NIOD, Amsterdam.

This hardly constituted a radical point of departure, as *Vrij Nederland*, *Het Parool*, and *De Waarheid* had argued the same points for years. However, under German occupation, the leaders of these organizations had argued from a very different position: They had spoken of democracy and colonial reforms at a time when such ideals remained out of reach, and their own wartime experiences convinced them that the majority of their fellow citizens ardently desired a more democratic empire as well. Now, in the fall of 1945, these resistance veterans continued to advance the same messages, but under radically different circumstances. Not only had Sukarno's declaration of independence changed the parameters for discussion, but their Indonesia Section constituted but one group among many competing for the attention of the new government. If the "Indies question" had once inspired cooperation and consensus building, it now became a source of conflict between political parties jockeying for power and public support.

During the final months of the war, the politically conservative Calvinists of *Trouw* and the communists of *De Waarheid* were able to swallow their mutual distaste for one another in the interest of maintaining a united front, at least where the Indies were concerned. It did not take very long for this sheen of consensus to disappear. Within weeks of the German surrender, the two groups and their respective ideologies found themselves at odds yet again, a seemingly endless array of topics and questions at stake: the role of the resistance in postwar political life and society, the availability of pensions and awards for resistance veterans and their families, the merits of a capitalist versus a corporative economy. Events in Indonesia provided but another major source of contention. In late September 1945, the Dutch Communist Party (CPN) of Paul de Groot – the party's first leader under German occupation – declared itself in solidarity with its Indonesian comrades in the Republic and expressed support for their righteous battle for reform and recognition. Writing in the pages of its now-daily newspaper, *De Waarheid*, the CPN also urged Dutch sailors and dockworkers to obstruct the transport of troops and weapons to Indonesia. In response, the Calvinist conservatives of the newly resurrected Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) deemed the communist position tantamount to treason, because by professing their solidarity with the Republic, the communists tacitly lent their support to Sukarno, who had been deemed an enemy of the (Dutch) state. Meanwhile, the nation's leading organization of former resisters, the predominantly evangelical and royalist GOIWN, decided to expel communist resistance veterans from its ranks.⁶⁶ By the fall of 1945, the battle lines between the ARP and CPN had been drawn, and both parties dug in their heels for a long and potentially dirty fight.

⁶⁶ Various correspondence between the Community of Former Resistance Workers (GOIWN) and GAC, October 1945, Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 4D, NIOD, Amsterdam; Joop Morriën, *Indonesië los van Holland: de CPN en de PKI in hun strijd tegen het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1982), 114–115.

Not surprisingly, the Indonesia Section of the GAC proved powerless to bridge the various divides evident in the immediate postwar period. For one, the *Trouw* group refused to work with the new Indonesia Section, citing, among other reasons, its refusal to sit at the same table with the communists. Even more ominously, however, organizations typically concerned with the Dutch-Indonesian relationship kept their distance from this new venture launched by reform-minded resistance veterans. Perhaps most telling, Setyadjit's PI colleagues refused to lend their support and opted instead to work with the newly formed *Vereniging Nederland-Indonesië* (VNI), the nonpartisan Netherlands-Indonesia Association, which called on the Netherlands to negotiate with the republic's leaders and institute a cease-fire.⁶⁷ The Dutch and Indonesian members of this organization – both men and women, and largely from the political left – argued their case publicly, loudly, and repeatedly in the form of massive rallies and lectures. By contrast, the much smaller Indonesia Section was intended to function behind the scenes. Faced with evident lack of enthusiasm and support for its cooperative but more muted endeavor, both section chair Wiltens and Minister of Overseas Territories Logemann recommended that the GAC dissolve this Indonesian subcommittee, and on March 20, 1946, the GAC obliged.⁶⁸

Nor would the GAC remain in existence for much longer: In the fall of 1945, the GAC's board of directors had decided to disband the inter-resistance organization after the national elections of May 1946. The new parliament convened on July 23, and on the following day, the GAC held its final meeting, attended by former resisters, Prince Bernhard, and ministers, in the form of a grand banquet celebrating the wartime accomplishments of the Dutch resistance.⁶⁹ This closing ceremony underscored what many of these resistance veterans already knew: The former resistance movements had little place in postwar Dutch society. If resistance veterans wished to influence political developments, whether at home or in the larger empire, they would have to do so as individual members of the nation's traditional political parties.

So too did that other collaborative effort of the resistance, the Dutch People's Movement (*Nederlandse Volksbeweging* or NVB), suffer a similarly

⁶⁷ Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 352–353.

⁶⁸ Agenda and Report of GAC Plenary Meeting, held on March 20, 1946; Letter from Wiltens of the Indonesia Section to main office of the GAC, February 15, 1946; and “Verklaring van den Minister van Overzeesche Gebiedsdeelen betreffende de ‘Stivo,’” 4 February 1946, notice entitled “afl. copie Mededeelingenblad,” Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, Files 1C and 12A, NIOD, Amsterdam.

⁶⁹ Agenda and Report of GAC Plenary Meeting, held on March 20, 1946, Collection 184, Groote Adviescommissie der Illegaliteit, File 1C, NIOD, Amsterdam; Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 64–66.

dismal fate. This much-touted new political party, created in large part by *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland* and *Je Maintiendrai* resisters, failed to make inroads into the national electorate. In the first postwar elections, voters made known their preference for traditional political parties, such as the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), or else threw their support behind a number of new parties with at least partial prewar pedigrees. The Catholic People's Party (*Katholieke Volkspartij*, KVP) replaced the Roman Catholic State Party, and the Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA) merged the Social Democratic Party of the Netherlands (SDAP) with a number of small left-wing parties.⁷⁰ "Renewal," as conceived by the resisters and other prominent citizens behind the NVB, would not come to pass in the immediate postwar years. In fact, as these renewers had reason to lament, the prewar system of *verzuiling* – that division of Dutch society and politics into clearly demarcated "pillars" – soon reasserted itself with a vengeance.

ONCE MORE, WAR: THE NETHERLANDS VERSUS THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

Only in the 1960s did the Netherlands see the type of far-reaching social and political changes envisioned during the wartime years.⁷¹ In the immediate postwar period, the pressures against extensive reform of this type were simply too great, and popular demands for normalization and restoration formed a pincer of sorts, shrinking the range of possibilities open to would-be reformers in all sectors of society. In perhaps no other area was this more apparent than in the vexed world of Dutch colonial politics. Confronting an electorate seemingly intent on restoring the prewar status quo on the one hand and a clear nationalist challenge from Sukarno's Republic of Indonesia on the other, a succession of postwar governments found only limited room to maneuver. If lawmakers in The Hague recognized Sukarno's claims to independence, they risked popular disapproval from a public eager to condemn Sukarno, Hatta, and company for their purported collaboration with the Japanese – and this while Anton Mussert and other Dutch Nazis stood trial for collaboration with the nation's German occupiers. Because popular

⁷⁰ Jan Bank, *Opkomst en ondergang van de Nederlandse Volksbeweging (NVB)* (Deventer: Kluwer, 1978) examines both the wartime origins and postwar activities of the NVB. For the postwar tenure of this movement, see Madelon de Keizer, *De gijzelaars van Sint Michielsgestel: Een elite-beraad in oorlogstijd* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A. W. Sijthoff, 1979), 169–175.

⁷¹ See, for instance, J. C. H. Blom, "The Second World War and Dutch Society: Continuity and Change," in *Britain and the Netherlands*. Vol. VI, War and Society: Papers Delivered to the Sixth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference, eds. A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977) 228–248; and J. C. H. Blom and W. ten Have, "Making the New Netherlands?: Ideas about Renewal in Dutch Politics and Society during the Second World War," in *Making the New Europe: European Unity and the Second World War*, eds. M. L. Smith and Peter M. R. Stirk (New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990), 98–111.

disapproval of this sort might destabilize the government to the point of collapse, the queen and her ministers wished to avoid this route at all costs. Yet by denying Sukarno's claims, the government risked the prospects of colonial insurrection and, in the worst case scenario, a colonial war at a moment when the Netherlands could spare neither personnel nor resources to wage such a conflict. In this environment, the Dutch government simply could not win, or so it might appear in hindsight. But postwar politicians also seemed to set themselves on a crash course with the Indonesians by ignoring the colonial situation or, at the very least, downgrading its significance. After all, conditions at home demanded immediate attention, and Sukarno's declaration could be handled later in due course, once the European Netherlands had begun to recover from the ravages of war and occupation.

As lawmakers in The Hague struggled to respond to the unpredicted series of events overseas, they contended with those former members of the Dutch resistance who had remained active on the Dutch political scene. After declaring itself on the side of the Indonesian Republic in the fall of 1945, the CPN continued to protest the Netherlands' involvement in Indonesia. However, de Groot, A. J. Koejemans, and colleagues did so from a distinctly minority position. Try as they might to influence the course of events in The Hague and overseas, the Dutch communists simply did not have ample popular support, votes, or cabinet positions. By contrast, the Labor Party (PvdA) adopted a more equivocating colonial stance expected to preserve the party's political position at home. Although growing out of the prewar SDAP, the new PvdA aimed to forge a more inclusive party, encompassing workers, doctrinaire socialists, former communists, Christian liberals, pacifists, and the remnants of the failed NVB, among others. This was a difficult mandate under any circumstances and made even more so by the successful return of the established political parties. The first postwar elections of May 1946 produced a strong showing for the PvdA, which garnered the second-highest number of seats; Willem Drees, now of the PvdA, became Vice Prime Minister to the Catholic People's Party (KVP) Prime Minister, Louis Beel. For the next four years, and ever mindful of their position as both as an aspiring "people's party" and a coalition partner, Drees and the PvdA walked a fine line on the Indonesia question. After heated internal discussion and the defection of thousands of members, the PvdA ultimately lent its support to the two colonial "police actions" of 1947 and 1948.⁷²

At least initially, Henk van Randwijk, now serving as the editor of the weekly political journal *Vrij Nederland*, counted among the ranks of the PvdA. In early 1947, and as Dutch and Indonesian representatives worked

⁷² See, for instance, Dietrich Orlow, "The Paradoxes of Success: Dutch Social Democracy and its Historiography," *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 110, no. 1 (1995): 40–51; Frans van Baardewijk, "De PvdA van het koninkrijk 1945–1947," *Het Jaarboek voor het democratische socialisme* 2 (1980): 164–212; and J. Bank, "De PvdA en de Indonesische revolutie," *Socialisme en democratie* 38, no. 12 (Dec. 1981): 585–593.

out the terms of an agreement recognizing the republic, van Randwijk traveled to Indonesia to offer his services as an informal negotiator. With his ties to both the Dutch PvdA and Indonesian nationalists like his wartime friend Setyadjit, van Randwijk arrived in Republican territory confident that he could help the two parties implement the terms of the recently signed Linggadjati Agreement. According to this agreement, the Netherlands would recognize the Republic of Indonesia's de facto authority over the islands of Java, Madura, and Sumatra. Other territories presently occupied by Allied and Dutch forces would be included, gradually, into the Republic, which in turn was to be incorporated into a new federal United States of Indonesia. Van Randwijk's stay in the Republic did not shake his long-held belief in an independent Indonesia, but it did temper his enthusiasm for a peaceful, mutually agreeable solution to the present conflict. He witnessed firsthand the poverty, violence, and chaos accompanying the Indonesian revolution, and he observed how the Dutch community in Batavia remained unwilling to recognize either the Republic or those Dutch representatives sent to negotiate a settlement. He was right to be wary, for Linggadjati did not hold, and during the first half of 1947 each party accused the other of unilaterally interpreting the agreement and half-heartedly enforcing its terms.⁷³

In July 1947, and in order to end what had clearly become a stalemate, lawmakers in The Hague authorized a military response. Van Randwijk's response in *Vrij Nederland* was swift and unequivocal: The Dutch had waged war on the Republic, just as surely as the Germans had waged war on the Netherlands in May of 1940. He excoriated his fellow citizens for – among other things – denying others the freedoms they had celebrated only two years prior at liberation, and for failing to heed their supposed belief in democratic freedom and justice. His condemnation of what would later become known as “the first police action” would cost his paper many subscriptions and earned for van Randwijk the title of “traitor” among certain sectors of the population. When the new government of PvdA Minister Willem Drees authorized a second “police action” in December 1948, van Randwijk issued a similarly scathing response. Along with scores of others, he also left the PvdA. He continued to advocate on behalf of the republic, and just as he had done for years, he used *Vrij Nederland* to do so. However, while the Netherlands and Indonesia worked to conclude a final agreement transferring sovereignty to a compromise “United States of Indonesia,” the struggling *Vrij Nederland* acquired new owners, and van Randwijk was pressured to resign his editorial position in February 1950. Stripped of these

⁷³ For van Randwijk's trip to Indonesia, see Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk, *H.M. van Randwijk: Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 545–565; and I. Schöffer, “Randwijk, Hendrik Mattheus van (1909–1966),” *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 4 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1994), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/randwij>.

institutional ties, he embarked on his second trip to Indonesia. Upon his return to the Netherlands, he founded his own press, specializing in publishing works that could help repair the Dutch-Indonesian relationship so badly damaged during the previous five years.⁷⁴

Frans Goedhart of *Het Parool* – who during the war had professed many of the same ideas as van Randwijk – followed a slightly different postwar path. Like van Randwijk, he joined the PvdA, but he occupied a higher position within party ranks. Goedhart represented the party in the temporary parliament of 1945 and 1946, and when Schermerhorn was sent to negotiate with the Republic, Goedhart took his seat in the second chamber of parliament. Like van Randwijk, he also appointed himself as a “middleman between the Netherlands and the Indonesian nationalists” and believed he would be able to bring the conflict to a swift conclusion. Twice Goedhart visited the Republic of Indonesia. During his first trip of mid-June to mid-August 1946, Goedhart served as a special correspondent for the now-daily newspaper, *Het Parool*. With his fact-finding mission, he sought not only to assess the situation for himself but also to obtain evidence that would allow him to combat the “overwhelming anti-Republican mood in the Netherlands.” Indeed, in both his *Het Parool* articles and a booklet he penned upon his return, Goedhart conveyed the moderate tone and constructive approach of the new Republic. Leading Indonesian nationalists such as Hatta and Sjahrir actively discouraged revolutionary violence, and Sukarno, far from the marginal, tainted figure of Dutch imagination, maintained tremendous popular support. The Netherlands simply could not afford to ignore these facts, Goedhart maintained. Much had changed since Goedhart’s earlier days as a commonwealth supporter. He now realized that the Indonesians, if amenable to the idea before, no longer wished to form a “lasting confederation with the Netherlands.” They remained willing to negotiate these and other points, but only after the Dutch recognized the government of the Republic.⁷⁵ With the tenuous Linggadjati Agreement faltering and tensions mounting, Goedhart departed for Republican territory once again, this time as an official representative of PvdA.

In June 1947, party chairman Koos Vorrink – a former *Het Parool* editor who in 1942 left the organization largely because of personal and political

⁷⁴ Gerard Mulder and Paul Koedijk, *H.M. van Randwijk: Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1988), 584–613, 641–651, 655–672; I. Schöffer, “Randwijk, Hendrik Mattheus van (1909–1966), *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 4 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1994), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/randwij>; and *Vijftienvintig jaar Vrij Nederland: Een bloemlezing uit het illegale en het na-oorlogse Vrij Nederland* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1965), 67–78.

⁷⁵ My discussion of Goedhart draws on the detailed analysis provided by Madelon de Keizer in her “‘Mission Impossible’: The Intermediary Role of the Dutch Politicians and Journalist Frans Goedhart in the Dutch Indonesian Conflict, 1945–1947,” *Indonesia* no. 55 (April 1993), 113–139, especially pages 116–117, 120–124.

disagreements with Goedhart – dispatched Goedhart with a clear assignment. He was to hold confidential meetings with Indonesian social democrats and convey the Dutch government's willingness to use military action; he was to explain the difficult position in which the PvdA now found itself, and ultimately persuade his Indonesian colleagues to work toward a compromise solution. Yet once overseas, and to Vorrink's tremendous frustration, Goedhart overstepped his mandate by discussing confidential PvdA matters, issuing public statements on behalf of the party, and meeting with Sukarno. Goedhart apparently sought to mediate his own solution to the escalating conflict, all the while publicizing his efforts in the pages of *Het Parool*. In response, Vorrink and other PvdA leaders disowned the efforts of their unpredictable emissary, although Goedhart would remain in Indonesian territory until Dutch forces launched the first "police action" on July 20, 1947. Briefly detained and then released by Dutch soldiers, Goedhart returned to the Netherlands, furious not only at his government but at the PvdA ministers who had supported a military action he deemed unnecessary and futile. Goedhart ultimately elected to remain in the PvdA, albeit in opposition to the party's Indonesian policy. Resigned to the government's pursuit of an objective he viewed as self-destructive and unjust, he turned his attention elsewhere. For the next few decades, he continued to write opinion pieces for *Het Parool*, focusing on a number of political issues and developments as viewed through his strong anticommunist stance.⁷⁶

If the former leaders of *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland* struggled to convert their wartime plans into postwar reality, the same could not be said of the politically conservative Calvinist resisters of *Trouw*. During the war, they had argued that not only did the Netherlands need the colonies to survive as a nation and world power, the Indonesian natives and society were not yet sufficiently developed – politically, culturally, economically, and spiritually – to rule themselves. Although the wartime "Indies Survey" pointed to the unpopularity of such ideas at war's end, *Trouw's* editors and writers argued with an unquestionable clarity and strength of purpose. They appealed directly to their readers of faith, who were then expected to pick up the charge against godless, dangerous reformers. Well into the postwar period, the same individuals responsible for *Trouw's* wartime stance continued to argue these points. Now they did so not as members of a de facto political class, but as de jure political authorities, because unlike the PvdA or the short-lived NVB, the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP)

⁷⁶ Madelon de Keizer, "'Mission Impossible': The Intermediary Role of the Dutch Politicians and Journalist Frans Goedhart in the Dutch Indonesian Conflict, 1945–1947," *Indonesia* no. 55 (April 1993), 129–135; and for further details concerning Goedhart's post-1947 work for *Het Parool*, de Keizer's biographical entry for Frans Johannes Goedhart, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* (BWSA) database, BWSA 8 (2001), 50–57, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/goedhart.html>.

experienced few growing pains. It benefited from both organizational and ideological continuity, and as a result was able to advance a consistent Indonesian policy – or rather, an anti-Indonesian policy, as the ARP denied the existence of a united “Indonesia” and refused to recognize the authority of those Republican leaders who claimed to speak in its name.

After his liberation from the Mauthausen concentration camp and his return to the Netherlands in the spring of 1945, former *Trouw* editor J. Schouten assumed leadership of the newly resurrected ARP. He would hold this position until 1956, in which capacity he crafted the party’s hard-line position against Sukarno’s Republic of Indonesia. Like their coalition partner, the KVP, Schouten and the ARP not only contested the rogue behavior of Sukarno and other purported collaborators but took aim at the more moderate voices within the Dutch government calling for a negotiated peace and the formal recognition of Sukarno’s government. J. Bruins Slot, one of *Trouw*’s cofounders, served as another leading voice in the postwar ARP. From June 1946 to June 1963, he represented the party in the second chamber, and from 1945 until 1971, he edited *Trouw*, which now appeared as a daily newspaper. In these dual capacities, Bruins Slot both influenced governmental policy toward Indonesia and shaped the manner in which such policies and developments were conveyed to the Dutch masses. By contrast, other former *Trouw* editors commanded far less of the political spotlight in the postwar period. After liberation, Abraham Rutgers – who, during the war, had served as *Trouw*’s resident colonial expert – continued to advise the queen, her ministers, and parliament in his position in the Council of State (*Raad van State*). A member of this advisory body until his forced retirement in 1956, Rutgers did not play an especially prominent role during the decolonization process. Like Rutgers, *Trouw* cofounder Gesina van der Molen also distanced herself from the Indies question as it played out in the immediate postwar years. The only woman to have actively participated in the clandestine colonial discussions of 1940 to 1945, van der Molen remained involved in the world of ARP politics but concentrated on women’s and children’s issues, human rights, and international law instead of colonial politics.⁷⁷

For van der Molen and those who thought as she did, these positions were not incompatible or hypocritical. Rather, they indicated the “tensions of empire,” described by Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper as a potent mixture of universalizing discourses and exclusionary practices shaping

⁷⁷ An extensive analysis of van der Molen’s postwar activities appears in Gert van Klinken, *Strijdbaar en Omstreden: Een biografie van de calvinistische verzetsvrouw Gezina van der Molen* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006). For a more abridged account of both her prewar and postwar work, see Ien van der Coelen, “Strijdster voor gerechtigheid,” in *Geleerde vrouwen. Negende Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis*, eds. Tineke van Loosbroek et al. (Nijmegen: SUN, 1988), 191–194.

modern empires.⁷⁸ Conservative Calvinists may have considered international law a means to forge a more peaceful and prosperous world, but they simultaneously used universal principles to defend the traditional colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia. For instance, they proclaimed the individual's right to freedom, justice, and peace, and argued that the Netherlands alone could guarantee these rights. Further, the ARP continued to maintain that because "Indonesia" did not exist as a nation-state or other form of independent political entity, the Indies must remain a dependent territory. This is not to say, however, that van der Molen and her ARP colleagues wished to see the Indonesians oppressed and exploited, whether by Dutch colonizers or by Sukarno; van Molen and her colleagues did not profess to be modern-day *conquistadors*. These conservatives did fear the chaos and disorder they believed would result if colonial peoples were granted too much self-government too quickly. The Calvinists' evangelism must also be taken into account here. Unlike other groups, which viewed the colonial situation through a more secular lens, these conservative Calvinists continued to frame their policies in light of their religious mission. The Indonesians remained politically as well as spiritually immature; they needed Christ and the Gospel. For these prominent ARP voices, universal and secular principles could only carry so weight much against the Christian ethics laid down in the Holy Scriptures.⁷⁹

With the exception of these conservative Calvinists, former resisters had been optimistic that war's end would set in motion far-reaching reforms, to be instituted as soon as circumstances at home and abroad allowed. Much like those colonial administrators who considered themselves enlightened standard bearers of the Netherlands' "ethical policy," they relied on the counsel provided by members of the Indonesian elite – scholars, students, members of noble families – as they formed their impressions of Indonesian aspirations and interests. Reform-minded resisters such as van Randwijk, Goedhart, Koejemans, and Schermerhorn remained confident that their Indonesian colleagues spoke for Indonesian aspirations and

⁷⁸ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56, pages 1–3 and 37 especially.

⁷⁹ See, for instance, van der Molen's discussions of these topics in 1949. Although not specifically concerned with Indonesia, they nonetheless provide a window into this ARP worldview: Gesina H. J. van der Molen, *Subjecten van volkenrecht (with elaborate English summary) Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van haar ambt als buitengewoon hoogleraar in het volkenrecht aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 25 Maart 1949* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1949), 36, 39. A more targeted analysis of ARP policy concerning Indonesia appears in Hans-Martien ten Napel, "'Overgangstijdperk': de ARP onder Schouten en Bruins Slot," in *De Antirevolutionaire Partij 1829–1980*, Eds. George Harinck, Roel Kuiper and Peter Bak (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), 239–253, pages 242–244 especially.

interests when they, too, proclaimed the merits of a “renewed” Kingdom of the Netherlands. Naturally, both groups expected to play a prominent role in this process of forging a new Dutch-Indonesian relationship born of mutual respect, equality, and solidarity. These Dutch resisters expected that enlightened thinkers such as themselves would represent the Netherlands, whereas their European-educated Indonesian friends, accomplished men like Setyadjit and rising socialist star Lambertus Palar, would steer a newly autonomous Indonesia. In reality, neither these progressive-minded resisters nor their Indonesian counterparts would assume the leadership roles to which they aspired. Once the Dutch electorate revealed its preference for the prewar system of “pillars” and established political parties, those ideas deemed too ambitious were relegated to the margins, even as their proponents remained active participants in the postwar political scene. To add insult to injury, many of these same former resisters would square off against their Indonesian counterparts at the bargaining table. It was almost as if all that wartime talk of democratic reform, mutual cooperation, and commonwealth had never happened.

Conclusion

The End of an Era

In the summer of 1945, Dutch society, still reeling from the effects of German occupation, had been taken unaware by developments in the East Indies. Once Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno proclaimed the independent Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945, the Dutch were forced to embark on the process we now know as decolonization. Obviously, the Netherlands was hardly the only country to confront a rapidly changed colonial situation and forced to improvise new policies so soon after war's end. Colonialism, reform, and ultimately decolonization were both regional and global phenomena. In Burma and Malaysia, the British quickly and relatively easily reestablished their authority, whereas the situation in India demanded immediate and sustained attention. Negotiations between British authorities, the Indian Congress, and the Muslim League commenced months before war's end, but not without their share of contention. Although significant change evidently lay on the horizon, the future of the British Raj remained up in the air in 1945: An Indian dominion, a united India, and a partitioned state all appeared as potential options. Meanwhile, in their Southeast Asian territories, the French confronted developments similar to those in the Dutch East Indies, for on September 1, 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. However, unlike the Dutch, who refused to work with Sukarno, the French negotiated with the nationalist leader, a strategy that allowed them to implement their stated plans for the Indochinese territories. In a March 1945 declaration addressing the political future of Indochina, the French minister of colonies proclaimed that an "Indochinese Federation" would join with France "and other parts of the French community to form a 'French Union'."¹ Ho's semiautonomous Republic of Vietnam initially

¹ Minister Paul Giacobbi cited in Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 90. See, too, Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 416–417.

appeared to be compatible with this planned Indochinese Federation, but, as we well know, the French-Vietnamese arrangement remained subject to revision, whether by negotiation or by force, over the course of the next decade. The Dutch, however, followed a uniquely two-pronged approach: They negotiated with republican leaders other than Sukarno while demonstrating their willingness to engage in military conflict. Even at the time, this dual strategy was a spectacular failure. If the Dutch had wished to retain any semblance of a relationship with the Indonesians, the events of 1947 to 1949 appeared to prove otherwise.

Why did the multitude of plans, policies, and efforts hatched by the nation's clandestine organizations bear such little resemblance to these starkly different postwar realities? Certainly, these resisters had tried to shape the future the best they could. For the previous five years, the editors and writers of the clandestine press sought to repair what Jeroen Dewulf has termed "national self-esteem,"² reminding their readers of essential values, practices, and traditions that endured even under foreign occupation. As they urged resistance, they also sought to transform their Indies-ignorant readers into informed imperial citizens, personally vested in the kingdom's past, present, and future. In the process of creating an imperial consciousness, these resistance organizations – with the notable exception of *Trouw* – had helped prepare the Dutch people for decolonization. These resisters had envisioned a very particular type of decolonization process: gradual, controlled, informed by mutual interests and respect, and perhaps above all else, nonviolent. From its wartime home in London, the government-in-exile had planned for the Netherlands' return to the East Indies, but the queen and her ministers remained preoccupied with the liberation itself, not the postwar period.³ They expected to address the colonial situation only after they had returned to the Netherlands, and they believed they had the time to do so. By contrast, the leading resistance organizations – whether of the political right, left, or center – considered the "Indies question" a far more urgent matter. Conservatives believed the Netherlands needed to demonstrate its military prowess, and quickly, to its Allies, lest it lose the Indies forever, whereas political leftists and centrists anxiously awaited a promised round table conference, widely expected to create a Dutch commonwealth.

² Jeroen Dewulf, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra by ... Albert Helman: The Image of Germany and the Germans in Dutch Clandestine Literature (1940–1945)," *German Studies Review* Vol 33 No. 2 (May 2010): 262–284, with this term noted on page 281.

³ Martin Conway, "Legacies of Exile: The Exile Governments in London During the Second World War and the Politics of Post-war Europe," in *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940–1945*, ed. Martin Conway and José Gotovich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 255–274, with exiled governments' postwar planning – or the lack thereof – discussed on pages 262–263.

Perhaps the Dutch resistance could be faulted for a lack of imagination. Such was the verdict issued by Willem Schermerhorn in 1963, reflecting on the role of the clandestine press in fostering both “illusion and reality” about the Dutch-Indonesian relationship. Immediately after the war, newly appointed Prime Minister Schermerhorn had urged his resistance colleagues to view the GAC’s “Indies Declaration” as a living, breathing set of directives for the future. Nearly twenty years later, this ugly process of decolonization behind him, Schermerhorn was forced to admit that this interresistance declaration had failed to serve as a point of departure after the war. In his view, the Dutch resistance movements had failed to appreciate the truly complex nature of this “Indies question” as they strove to achieve consensus and cooperation under German occupation. Specifically, in their rush to support a “renewed commonwealth” – in itself a problematic concept, as it implied that a Dutch commonwealth already existed – resisters had neglected to consider the consequences, and they had resorted to easy formulas in place of more imaginative plans. Schermerhorn lamented that these men had viewed the situation within a vacuum, and that even the most knowledgeable and experienced among them had been unable to anticipate that the postwar period might necessitate even further compromise than that expressed in this resistance declaration.⁴

However, this criticism, especially coming from a former member of the resistance, is unfair, because even the most well-informed, most engaged members of the Dutch underground admitted they lacked necessary information and perspective. Henk van Randwijk of *Vrij Nederland* and Frans Goedhart of *Het Parool* suspected, but could not confirm, that the Netherlands’ continued refusal to grant democratic reforms had triggered profound disillusionment and anger, just as they suspected that the Indonesians had cooperated with their Japanese occupiers. The editors of *Vrij Nederland*, *Het Parool*, and *De Waarheid* could hardly blame the Indonesians either, as the Netherlands’ stubborn refusal to recognize moderate nationalist demands had pushed the Indonesians into the arms of the Japanese. These resisters surmised that the war might have engendered tremendous psychological changes throughout Asia, but here too they refused to predict the future; only after the Axis powers had been defeated and evicted from the Indies would the Dutch be able to ascertain the formative effects of the war. Furthermore, Schermerhorn’s “vacuum” could cut both ways, because at least some segments of the Dutch underground believed that the German occupation had made the Netherlands more sensitive to its position and behavior as a colonizing power. Nearly a decade before Aimé Césaire – poet,

⁴ Willem Schermerhorn, “Nederlandsche Indië of Indonesië. Illusie en werkelijkheid over Nederland- Indonesië,” in *Visioen en werkelijkheid: de illegale pers over de toekomst der samenleving*, eds. Bert Bakker, D. H. Couvée and Jan Kassies (Den Haag: Bert Bakker/Daamen, 1963), 170, 175–180.

essayist, politician, and famed son of French Martinique – powerfully articulated the same phenomenon in his *Discourse on Colonialism*,⁵ resisters like de Groot and Goedhart admitted the similarities between German National Socialism and European imperialism. They did not believe Dutch imperialism to be rooted in the race-based thinking and racial prejudice so intrinsic to National Socialism. For one, the Netherlands prioritized economic and cultural development in its colonies, whereas the nation's German occupiers had prioritized neither. However, in the final analysis, both ideologies produced extremely similar results: A foreign power forcibly oppressed and exploited another people, depriving them of their sovereignty, rights, and freedoms. These resisters acknowledged such parallels, and they wished their fellow citizens to do the same.

As they contemplated their present situation under German rule, these resisters relied on colonial ideas and practices from the past. Despite their hopes and fears that the war would trigger sweeping political, social, and economic reforms, resisters viewed Dutch colonialism through the lens of well-tread mantras, whether the promises and failings of “ethical policy” or the Dutch “debt of honor” owed to the Indonesian territory and people. Certainly, Dutch resisters did not fully appreciate the more radical direction assumed by the Indonesian nationalist movement, nor did they anticipate the magnitude of events transpiring in 1945. If popular pressures for restoration and reconstruction constituted the first part of a pincer shrinking The Hague's room to maneuver, then Sukarno formed the second part of this pincer. No one in the Netherlands, even the most far-sighted communist, had expected the nationalist leader to make the first move. Contrary to wartime expectations, the Dutch would not be able to dictate the type and pace of colonial reforms, but rather would be forced to assume a defensive posture. Nor were the Dutch the only surprised party. Whether in Europe or the Indonesian territories, Indonesian nationalists outside of Sukarno's inner circle were similarly broadsided by the declaration of August 1945. In one fell swoop, Sukarno and Hatta had placed themselves at the head of not only a new Indonesian state but a diverse Indonesian nationalist movement. Suddenly, Indonesians needed to close ranks around the new leader and Republic or else suffer the consequences, as so many would learn in subsequent years and decades. Such was the impact of Sukarno's bold move in August 1945.

Like their Dutch colleagues, Indonesian resistance veterans in the European Netherlands attempted to negotiate the terms of this new

⁵ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 36–37. Or, as stated by Mark Mazower in his discussion of Césaire, the Europeans “had needed Nazism, in a sense, to bring home to them what racial prejudice produced. They had failed to grasp the true nature of colonialism because racism had prevented them sympathizing with the plight of those they oppressed”: Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 585.

relationship. Drawing on the political capital they had accumulated by virtue of their clandestine accomplishments, they readily offered their services during this transitional moment. Setyadjit and Moroeto Daroesman, among others, served as members of the Indonesian delegation to the Hoge Veluwe negotiations in April 1946, where, working alongside Dutch representatives Schermerhorn, Drees, and Lieutenant Governor General van Mook, they agreed that the Indonesian Republic would become part of a federal state of Indonesia, in union with the Netherlands. However, as these talks and arrangements collapsed, former Indonesian resisters living in the Netherlands were forced to take sides, and many of them now opted to return to Indonesia. Lambertus Palar, elected to the second chamber of parliament in July 1946 as a member of the PvdA ticket, left the party the following year, after the Netherlands launched its first “police action” against the republic. From 1948 to 1953, Palar represented the young Republic at the United Nations in New York, assuming this position even before the Netherlands agreed to a formal transfer of power.⁶ Roestam Effendi, who had been sworn in as the first Indonesian member of the second chamber of Dutch parliament in July 1933, was expelled from the Dutch Communist Party in January 1946. Effendi had spent the wartime years with his family in a kind of inner exile, with their extended stay in the well-heeled town of Blaricum financed at least originally by the underground CPN. The precise reason for Effendi’s fall from grace remains unknown. He might have been punished for his noninvolvement in the wartime resistance or for siding against longtime communist leader Paul de Groot in the party’s first post-war power struggle. Effendi also might have been expelled on account of his Trotskyist sympathies, as some in the party would later claim. In any case, Effendi returned to Indonesia, where he remained active in the leftist political scene, whether as a member of the Trotskyist Proletarian Party (*Partai Murba*), an advisor to various political parties, or an activist writer. From halfway around the world, he also continued to snipe at the colonial policies of the CPN, policies he considered a betrayal of true Marxist principles.⁷ Setyadjit – considered by his Dutch colleagues as one of the

⁶ Emile Schwidder, biographical entry for Lambertus Nicodemus Palar, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* (BWSA) database, BWSA 7 (1998), 168–172, accessible at Palar, <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/palar.html>; Lambert J. Giebels, “Palar, Lambertus Nicodemus (1900–1981),” in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* 5 (Nijhoff: Den Haag, 2002), <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn5/palar>.

⁷ Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and Inge van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I, Indonesiërs in Nederland, 1600–1950* (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986), 354–355; Joop Morriën, biographical entry for Roestam Effendi, *Biografische Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, BWSA 7 (1998): 41–45, accessible at <http://www.iisg.nl/bwsa/bios/effendi.html>; and Parlementair Documentatie Centrum’s Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for R. Effendi, accessible via “Personen” search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

leading lights of the Indonesian nationalist movement – also departed for the land of his birth in 1946. During the course of the next few years, he served in two short-lived Indonesian cabinets. By the end of 1948, he was dead. Accused of trying to plan a communist uprising in East Java, he was captured and believed to have been executed by the Republican Army.⁸ For his former resistance colleague and negotiating partner Willem Schermerhorn, Setyadjit's fate revealed the fundamental tragedy of this battle for Indonesia: Both sides had made mistakes in this long and violent process, but it was Indonesia that seemed to bear the greater share of the burden for these mistakes.⁹

As these former resisters tried to negotiate a place for themselves and their ideas, the conflict in the Indies raged on. Like the one before it, the new Dutch government of May 1946, headed by Louis J. M. Beel of the Catholic People's Party, refused to recognize either Sukarno or his Republic of Indonesia. Beel's government, however, did engage in protracted negotiations with other Indonesian representatives deemed acceptable, namely, Indonesians who could not be accused of collaborating with their Japanese occupiers. For a time, the Dutch delegation was led by Willem Schermerhorn, former Prime Minister and wartime chair of the interresistance Indies Commission that in April 1945 had publicly declared its support for a Dutch commonwealth. These oft-contentious negotiations came to a halt in July 1947, when The Hague launched its first "police action" against the republic. Essentially a small-scale colonial war, the "police action" was intended to enforce the terms of previous agreements, terms that included, ironically, a cease-fire. At the request of member nations India and Australia, the Dutch-Indonesian conflict was brought before the United Nations in August 1947, and both sides reached a tentative agreement shortly thereafter. Yet this arrangement collapsed too, and the Dutch launched yet another "police action" in December 1948, this time capturing Sukarno, Hatta, and other nationalist leaders. A UN Security Council Resolution passed the following month called on the Dutch to end their military operations, release all prisoners, and return to the negotiating table. As proposed, a specially designated UN Commission for Indonesia would oversee all subsequent negotiations and ensure compliance with the agreements reached by the two parties. At this point, the Netherlands had few options remaining. Facing financial crisis at home, international isolation, and mounting pressure from

⁸ Joop Morriën, *Indonesië los van Holland: de CPN en de PKI in hun strijd tegen het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1982), 153–154; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek Biographical Archive, entry for Raden Mas Setyadjit Soegondo, accessible via "Personen" search at <http://www.parlement.com>.

⁹ Willem Schermerhorn, "Nederlandsche Indië of Indonesië. Illusie en werkelijkheid over Nederland-Indonesië," in *Visioen en werkelijkheid: de illegale pers over de toekomst der samenleving*, eds. Bert Bakker, D. H. Couvée and Jan Kassies (Den Haag: Bert Bakker/Daamen, 1963), 189.

the United States, the Dutch agreed to resume negotiations with an eye toward ending the conflict.¹⁰

In late August 1949, the long-awaited Round Table Conference opened in The Hague. Nearly seven years had passed since Queen Wilhelmina issued her fateful speech announcing her intention to convene a meeting assembling delegates from all parts of the realm to discuss the future structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Now, Queen Juliana, Wilhelmina's daughter and successor, would oversee a far different meeting than that envisioned in 1942. In The Hague, representatives from the European Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia agreed on a formal transfer of sovereignty. According to this agreement of November 2, 1949, the Netherlands would surrender authority over the East Indies – minus the territory of Dutch New Guinea – to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia by December 30 of that year. On December 27, 1949, Queen Juliana presided over the transfer of power to Sukarno, the newly elected first President of the United States of Indonesia, and Prime Minister Mohammed Hatta.

Against all odds, the final agreement signed between the two parties in November 1949 created a “Dutch-Indonesian Union.” This Union was to reflect the mutual relationship between two “independent and sovereign states” and would “aim at cooperation of the partners for the promotion of their common interests,” specifically in the fields of foreign relations, defense, culture, and finance. Standing at the head of this Union would be Her Majesty Queen Juliana or her successors, who would thus embody “the concept of voluntary and lasting cooperation between the partners.”¹¹ As this familiar wording would seem to indicate, the Dutch had successfully reconstituted the Kingdom of the Netherlands into a commonwealth, in accordance with

¹⁰ For extensive discussions of American political involvement in this final phase of the Indonesian conflict, see Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), pages 253–295 especially; and Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920–1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 294–305. In contrast to McMahon, Gouda, and others, Pierre van der Eng denies that American political pressure forced the Dutch to change course and return to the negotiating table; rather, he explains, the Dutch confronted serious financial difficulties and wished to preserve its economic ties with Indonesia. Furthermore, he argues that the American government consistently supported Dutch policy, at least as far as financial and material assistance were concerned: Pierre van der Eng, “Marshall Aid as a Catalyst in the Decolonization of Indonesia, 1947–1949,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* Vol. 19 No. 2 (September 1998), 335–352.

¹¹ “Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty and Text of the Hague Statute of Union”: United Nations Delegation Chronological File, Container 46, file 2 (1949 2/4), Jeanne S. Mintz Papers, Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. The full text of the Charter of Transfer of Sovereignty, appearing alongside excerpted articles from the Hague Statute of Union, is contained in Henri Grimal, *Decolonization: the British, French, Dutch and Belgian Empires 1919–1963*, transl. Stephan de Vos (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 263–264.

both the queen's speech of December 1942 and the subsequent elaborations provided by the clandestine press. However, lest former resisters rush to pat themselves on the back for a job well done, this Union hardly constituted the Commonwealth of the Netherlands they had so enthusiastically supported under German occupation. Obviously, this bilateral arrangement excluded from consideration the territories of the West Indies, which would remain traditional colonies until 1954, when they became autonomous dominions under the Dutch crown. Suriname became fully independent in 1975, thus taking leave of this commonwealth-type structure.¹² However, the Dutch-Indonesia Union truly foundered on the shores of New Guinea. The final 1949 agreement between the Netherlands and Indonesia had stipulated that this territory would remain under Dutch control for the following year, with its precise status to be determined within the course of that year. Instead, the territory became the subject of heated conflict, thereby precluding the possibility of mutual cooperation, whether in foreign affairs or other matters.¹³ Repeatedly throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Sukarno and other Indonesian politicians would denounce the Dutch-Indonesian Union, and for their part, Dutch policy makers exhibited little enthusiasm for a continuing commonwealth-type relationship. Of course, as the progressive resisters had repeatedly emphasized during the war, the Dutch commonwealth could only be entered into voluntarily, and by extension, member territories should be able to exit the commonwealth at will too. After 1949, both the Netherlands and the new nation of Indonesia exercised their right to leave or at least ignore this arrangement – hardly the scenario envisioned a few years prior by hopeful resisters, both Dutch and Indonesian, convinced that the two peoples and territories would elect to retain their historic bonds well into the future.

Regardless of whether these and other former resisters approached the colonial situation from the political left, center, or right, they would all have agreed on one point: The disintegration of the Dutch-Indonesian relationship during the period of 1945 to 1949 bore little resemblance to their grand wartime plans. If the resisters of the political left and center had imagined a gradual, controlled process of reform, undertaken with an eye toward autonomy and eventual independence, their colleagues on the right believed that the restoration of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was not only possible but preordained. Nor were these resisters alone in thinking that the Netherlands would be able to dictate the type and pace of reforms implemented, if any, in its prized Dutch East Indies. Anton Mussert and his Dutch Nazis; the leaders of that failed wartime experiment, the *Nederlands Unie*; and members

¹² Bob Moore, "Decolonization by Default: Suriname and the Dutch Retreat from Empire, 1945–1975," in *International Diplomacy and Colonial Retreat*, eds. Martin Thomas and Kent Fedorowich (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 228–250.

¹³ The seminal work on this conflict remains Arend Lijphart's *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

of the general public all assumed that the Dutch-Indonesian relationship would continue well into the future, whatever else that future might hold for the Netherlands. Yet after the Japanese surrender of August 1945, the Dutch would never reestablish their authority in the Indies, and the process of decolonization leading to Indonesian independence in December 1949 would prove far more sudden, violent, and uncontrollable than anyone in the German-occupied metropole had imagined.

Undoubtedly, the Kingdom of the Netherlands had entered the twentieth century as a lesser imperial power to France and Great Britain, but in no way did the smaller size and fewer territories of the Dutch empire mitigate the trauma of decolonization. In fact, their empire's lesser position only magnified Dutch feelings of shock, anger, and injustice. Those Dutch citizens living in the European motherland – let alone those directly subjected to the violence of decolonization overseas – experienced the events of 1945 to 1949 as nothing less than a travesty of the first order, albeit for various reasons. For centuries, the Dutch had staked their national self-image on their relationship with the East Indies, an archipelago rich in people, territory, and resources. When faced with the loss of sovereignty and self-determination under German occupation, some eagerly looked to the time when they would resurrect their glorious empire and the Netherlands would again take its place among the most powerful of nations. Yet others imagined a new Dutch-Indonesian relationship informed by the painful lessons learned under five years of German occupation. At long last, the Dutch would have the opportunity to fulfill their “debt of honor” by helping the Indonesians along the path to autonomy and independence, and the two peoples would go forth, together, as proud partners in a new Dutch commonwealth. Like so many others, these resisters could only be disappointed by the final outcome.

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