

## Answers

### DISCOVERING FACTS IN THE DUTCH RESISTANCE MUSEUM

Life in the occupied Netherlands: adjust, collaborate or resist?  
1940-1945

Dutch Resistance Museum,  
May 2011

# The Netherlands during the 1930s

## 1. The 1930s

This first part of the exhibition shows the Netherlands before the Second World War. Look around and then match each letter with the right picture.

A: Democracy is in danger in several European countries.

B: The Netherlands is also in an economic crisis. There is great poverty and unrest.

C: Here you can see one of the four pillars into which the Dutch population is divided. Each pillar has its own political party, newspaper, associations and schools.

D: The NSB is a small Dutch political party that hopes to attract the disgruntled Dutch. Hitler's Nazi Party was the model for the NSB.

Clockwise, starting from the left: D, A, B, C

## 2. The German invasion

On the left, you can see and hear the German invasion and the bombing of Rotterdam.

On May 10th the Germans invade the Netherlands by surprise. After four days of fighting, Rotterdam is bombed. The Germans threaten that other cities will follow. The Dutch army surrenders. The royal family and the government go into exile in England.

# 1st period May 1940 – February 1941 Germany overruns Europe

## 1. Questions about the green banner

a. Which country found itself alone in the struggle against Nazi Germany after France had surrendered?

Great Britain

b. Germany had complete power. How do many Dutch people react to the new situation?

Many Dutch believe they should reconcile themselves to the situation.

In 1940 German troops begin a major offensive to overrun Europe. On May 10th they invade the Netherlands, which had declared itself neutral. The Dutch army holds on longer than was expected. After four days of fighting, Rotterdam is bombed. The Germans threaten that other cities will follow. The Netherlands surrender. The royal family and the government go into exile in England.

The Dutch are shocked by the invasion, but the occupation doesn't seem all that harsh. The occupiers behave properly, hoping to win over the Dutch being part of the 'Germanic brotherhood' to National Socialism. As a gesture of good will they release the Dutch prisoners of war.

There appears to be no stopping the advance of Nazi Germany. After the French had surrendered in June 1940, Great Britain finds itself alone in the struggle. Many Dutch believe they should reconcile themselves to the situation.

## 2. Democracy abolished

a. Many Dutch civil servants stay on as long as possible. Why?

(green text board 1.2)

In 1937, the Dutch government had stipulated that civil servants must stay on as long as it is in the interest of the people.

1.2 In the interest of the people

The occupiers abolish democracy. Parliament is dissolved. The Austrian Arthur Seyss-Inquart comes to govern the Netherlands with a small occupying force. Dutch officials have to carry out German laws.

In 1937, the Dutch government had stipulated that civil servants must stay on as long as it is in the interest of the people. But when is staying on no longer in the interest of the people? Anyone who steps down is usually replaced by a Dutchman with German sympathies. This is a dilemma, especially for civil servants in positions of authority such as mayors. Eventually, more than 30% of the mayors, have stepped down or have been removed.

b. Dilemma: Stay on?

Do you think Mayor Boot acted properly?

Own opinion

Bending or breaking

Mayor Boot of Wisch en Terborg in the eastern region of De Achterhoek wanted to stay on for as long as possible. *'I believe it is permissible to lie to the occupiers and be deceptive as long as Dutch interests are being served.'* In June 1943 he still wrote, *'In a word, it is a pleasure to play one German authority off against another.'* But in September 1944, he was forced to turn in 500 people to work on the German line of defence along the IJssel. He decided to resign and go into hiding.

## 3. OZO: 'Oranje Zal Overwinnen'

During the first months after the Dutch surrender some people let others know they are not happy with the German occupation. How do they show that?

They paint 'OZO' on walls or they wear orange or red, white and blue pins and bows.

['Orange' refers to the Dutch royal family – the House of Orange. The Germans were not happy with all this 'Orange decoration'. The queen had fled the country but was part of the government in exile, which stood with the Allies. With orange and red-white-blue decorations, people could show that they supported Orange and were against the German occupiers. For many, the royal family (and Queen Wilhelmina's speeches for Radio Orange) was the symbol of a free Netherlands.]

### 1.3 *Oranje Zal Overwinnen!*

Most Dutch people keep hoping for a German defeat and the return of the royal family. They come up with a code expression: if someone says *O zo!* ('So there!') it means *Oranje zal overwinnen!* ('Orange will triumph!').

June 29th 1940 is Prince Bernhard's birthday. The flag is flown everywhere. Many people wear a carnation in their lapel, just like Prince Bernhard. This gesture turns into a mass protest demonstration. In reaction to this 'Carnation Day', the Germans have all the royal portraits removed from public buildings. Later on street names are changed. This turns the Royal House into an even stronger symbol of resistance. Many Dutch people wear pins and bows to show their loyalty to the queen and therefore their hatred of the occupying forces. It helps to keep spirits up.

## 4. NSB

People have many reasons for choosing the NSB (Dutch Nazi Party). Which ones do you see on the wall picture?

- protecting their own career
- poverty and division
- compassion for the Jews
- decisiveness and solidarity
- the achievements of Hitler
- fear of communism

- *'Leadership was something we could build a national community on. With too many voices nothing gets decided, and there's always that self-interest hiding round the corner.'*
- *'There was enormous poverty and division in our country, The NSB was opposed to such a pretense of democracy.'*
- *'What attracted me was the energy: the singing and marching, and that sense of belonging.'*
- *'We couldn't make a living from the shop, and the NSB claimed that things would get better for the middle class.'*
- *'With Germany in power, membership of the NSB offered good opportunities for starting a career.'*
- *'I was impressed that Hitler had turned a land with millions of unemployed into a prosperous country.'*
- *'I saw only one choice left: National Socialism or the chaos of communism.'*

### 1.5 For 'Folk and Fatherland'

The *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* [NSB, National Socialist Movement, the Dutch Nazi Party] was set up in the Netherlands at the end of 1931, modelled after Hitler's *NSDAP*. The party remains small. After May 1940 the *NSB* finally has a hope of taking control. Thousands apply for membership. But the Germans do not jump at the chance of close cooperation. They do not have a high opinion of the *NSB*, and they know that most Dutch people strongly detest this party.

The members of the *NSB* push their way into the limelight by holding ostentatious parades. Gradually it becomes clear that they are virtually the only loyal supporters of the occupying forces. So in December 1942 the Germans permit *NSB* leader Anton Mussert to call himself 'Leader of the Dutch people', although he has no real power.

## 5. First anti-Jewish regulations

a. What information can you get from this map?

## Where and how many Jews lived in 1941 Amsterdam.

### b. Dilemma: Register?

In 1940 all civil servants are required to fill in an 'ancestry form', indicating their religion and that of their (grand)parents. (green text board 1.7)

Do you fill in your form or do you refuse? Why?

### Own opinion

#### 1.7 Registration and dismissal

The first anti-Jewish regulations seem rather harmless. In October 1940 all civil servants are required to fill in an 'ancestry form', indicating their religion and that of their parents and grandparents. Everyone knows that the purpose is to register Jewish civil servants, yet the response is massive compliance. One month later the Jewish civil servants are dismissed. In Leiden and Delft, students go on strike to protest against the dismissal of their Jewish university teachers.

In January 1941 all Jews have to report for registration. Almost everyone obeys. After all, what can possibly happen if you refuse? And why shouldn't you be open about your origins? However, this registration makes it easier for the Germans to carry out other measures against the Jews later on.

## 6. The February Strike

a. The February Strike (green text board 1.8) is a protest against:

The round-up, abuse and removal of 425 Jewish men.

b. Many Dutch now see the Germans differently because of the way they respond to the strike. Explain.

At first the German occupation seemed not so bad. Now the Germans were dropping their friendly manner and striking hard against the Dutch. This is the first clear confrontation.

#### 1.8 Strike, strike, strike

In early 1941 the members of the *NSB* in Amsterdam develop an aggressive attitude towards the Jews. Jewish and non-Jewish young men form commando groups to protect themselves, which results in fighting. One *NSB* member is killed. Shortly thereafter a German patrol is sprayed with ammonia gas. The occupiers seize on these incidents to carry out their first round-ups. On February 22nd and 23rd 425 Jewish men are rounded up, beaten and taken away.

Many Amsterdam residents are shocked. The illegal Dutch Communist Party [*CPN*] calls for a protest strike for February 25th and 26th. The strike catches on. More and more businesses take part. The strikers march through the streets. On the second day the strike spreads to outlying towns. The Germans are taken by surprise. They abandon their friendly attitude and react harshly, shooting at groups of strikers. In March three death sentences are carried out. The mood becomes more embittered.

## 2nd period March 1941 – April 1943 German advance stagnates

### 1. Questions about the green banner

a. Germany faces two new powerful opponents:

the Soviet Union & the United States

b. In Russia the German advance is halted at Stalingrad

In June 1941 the Germans invade the Soviet Union. In December they declare war on the United States. This gives England two powerful allies. Fighting ceases in Western Europe. The conflict in Northern Africa has its ups and downs, but it ends with a German defeat in September 1942. The German advance in Russia is halted at Stalingrad in January 1943.

Holland anxiously awaits an Allied invasion. In May 1942 the occupiers begin building defensive works along the coast — the *Atlantik-Wall*. The entire Dutch coastal region is evacuated.

At the same time, the occupiers continue to make frantic efforts to turn the Netherlands into a National Socialist society. More and more Dutch institutions are brought under National Socialist leadership.

### 2. Propaganda

Which do you think is the most powerful propaganda poster? Explain.

Own opinion

#### 2.3 V = Victory

The Germans, with an overwhelming amount of propaganda material, try to influence the Dutch population. Cinema newsreels, pamphlets, brochures and colour posters are intended to drum into everyone's head the unstoppable victory of National Socialism. Dormant aversion to the Jews is stirred up and the fear of communism is fed.

Allied aeroplanes drop pamphlets that challenge German propaganda. The letter V becomes a symbol for Victory. In the summer of 1941, the Germans adopt the V in their own campaign: 'V = Victory, because Germany is victorious on all fronts'. In a counter move, the Dutch vandalize the posters. The V becomes W, for Wilhelmina, or V for *Verliest* (loses) or *Verzuipt* (drowns).

### 3. Shortage

a. What are these vegetable boxes about? (green text board 2.2)

Shortages, distribution and the rationing system.

b. If you have people in hiding, it's very difficult if many products are rationed. Explain.

People in hiding do not receive ration coupons and therefore cannot buy these products.

#### 2.2 Everything rationed

Even before the occupation, a system had been developed in the Netherlands to make sure that scarce foodstuffs were fairly distributed. The standard of living drops during the occupation. Import from overseas is impossible and many goods are transported to Germany. Soon only surrogate versions of coffee, tea and tobacco are available. More and more products are rationed. The allowance becomes increasingly smaller and the distribution system more complicated.

Even rationed products are sometimes difficult to obtain. There are often long queues at the shops. The shortage of petrol means there are hardly any cars left on the roads. Bicycles appear with wooden tyres and wheels from scooters. Busses use alternative forms of fuel. Trams and trains ride less frequently and become more and more crowded.

#### 4. Anti-Jewish measures

The Germans isolate the Jews from the rest of the population with anti-Jewish measures. On the blue wall you can see a timeline with pictures of these measures. The Jewish star worn on clothing is required from May 3rd 1942.

Why did the Germans gradually introduce anti-Jewish measures, do you think?

To limit resistance. If you introduce all measures at once, it all seems much worse. If you do it step-by-step, people will not be so quick to protest.

#### 5. Identity card

Some Jews hope to escape from the German occupiers with a false identity card. Take a look at a real and a forged identity card from one person.

I've seen the identity cards of: .....

Two differences between real and forged:

1. .... and 2. ....

Possible differences to be named: whether or not a J, name, birth date, signature, municipal stamp, profession.

##### 2.1 *Ausweis bitte!*

In 1941 the *persoonsbewijs* [*pb*, identity card] is introduced. Every Dutch citizen age 14 and over must be in possession of such a card, with passport photo and fingerprint, and must carry it at all times. The data are recorded in a central registry. No other country in Europe has an identity card that is so technically and administratively complete.

The identity card makes it possible for the Germans to exert more control over the Dutch and to counteract the resistance. Even so, the introduction of the *persoonsbewijs* is met with little resistance.

#### 6. To the East

Of the 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands, more than 100,000 are murdered.

Most Dutch Jews are deported from transit camp **Westerbork** in Drenthe to the concentration camps Sobibor and **Auschwitz** in Poland.

##### 2.4 Over 100,000 murdered

Gradually the Dutch Jews are separated from the rest of the population. Public facilities are closed to Jews. Separate Jewish schools are opened. At the end of April 1942, all Jews are required to wear a Star of David. That summer the deportations begin. Jews are required to report for 'employment in Germany'. Many ignore the call-ups despite the severe threats. They are driven from their homes during round-ups.

A *Joodse Raad* [Jewish Council] is set up, making the Jews themselves responsible for making known and, to a certain extent, carrying out the measures. The Council grants proofs of deferment. But those with deferments are only given a place at the end of the queue. Going into hiding is difficult.

Via the *Hollandse Schouwburg* [Holland Theatre] in Amsterdam and the Westerbork transit camp the occupiers deport 107,000 Jews to concentration camps, such as Auschwitz and Sobibor. Only 5,500 of these will survive. Of the 25,000 Jews in hiding, one-third are arrested and killed. A total of 78% of the Jewish population is murdered.

# 3rd period May 1943 – May 1944 War tide is turning

## 1. Questions about the green banner

The Germans suffered heavy losses for the first time. What are the consequences for the situation in the Netherlands?

Fill in the blanks:

**Liberation** is expected soon.

Many Dutch men forced to work in Germany **go into hiding on a grand scale**.

The Germans switch to **intimidation and violence**.

After their victory at Stalingrad, Russian troops drive the Germans back. The English gain supremacy of the air, and German cities are subjected to heavy bombing. Hitler stirs the population on to an all-out effort in *Totalkrieg* [Total War]. There is a massive move of German soldiers to the Eastern Front. Labour forces from occupied countries are put to work to keep the German war industry going.

People in the Netherlands expect the liberation to happen soon. Defiance increases. Dutch men forced to work in Germany go into hiding on a grand scale. The Germans abandon their attempts to win the Netherlands over. They switch to intimidation and violence.

## 2. The milk strike

a. Why is industrial engineer Loep in particular shot?

**He was missing at roll call on the second day of the April/May strike. He had not been part of the strike but just had a free day. His explanation did not help. After all, there had to be some death sentences.**

Summarily shot

Envelope with the possessions carried by the executed engineer Loep at the time of his arrest. Loep was missing when the Germans held a roll call on the grounds of the Stork machine factory in Hengelo on the second day of the April/May strikes. When he was arrested outside the factory, he truthfully responded that he simply had the day off. His statement was ignored. Death sentences had to be carried out, and there was no way around it. Loep did not distance himself from the strike: *'I stand with my countrymen and I don't want to be a strike breaker.'* His body was never found. His family was given nothing but the envelope containing the contents of his pockets.

b. Why do the people go on strike? (green text board 3.1)

**Because 300,000 Dutch soldiers who had been freed in 1940 were now taken away as prisoners of war after all.**

## 3.1 The milk strike

April 29th 1943: a completely unexpected announcement is made that 300,000 Dutch soldiers will still be transported as prisoners of war. In 1940 they had been released, but now Germany needs labour forces. Spontaneous strikes break out in the eastern region of Twente and spread across the entire country like lightning. Particularly in the countryside people go on strike. In many places farmers refuse to deliver milk.

The occupiers respond with force. Eighty strikers are summarily executed. Their names are printed on posters as a deterrence. Shots are fired on groups of strikers. An additional 95 are killed and 400 are seriously wounded. On May 3rd most of the strikers go back to work.

The strikes mark a turning point. Now all of the Netherlands has experienced the German terror. Support for the resistance increases sharply.

### 3. Crossing the border

Find each of the England voyagers' items pictured below in the display cases (green text board 3.6) and write down what it is.

Top left:

A razor in which microfilms were hidden.

Top right:

Wristwatch containing a tiny roll of paper with contact addresses in the Netherlands, Belgium and France.

Lower left:

Coded message on a cigarette paper. In case of danger the paper could be eaten.

Lower right:

Broadcasting suitcase belonging to the secret agent Sjoerd Sjoerdsma.

#### 3.6 Crossing the border

After May 1940 the borders are closed. Even so, more than 9,000 people from the occupied Netherlands manage to escape. Most of them want to get to England to join in the fight against Germany. Initially, these 'England voyagers' try to cross the North Sea in small boats. This is made impossible by the construction of the *Atlantik-Wall* along the coast. Now the journey follows secret border crossings through occupied Belgium and France to Switzerland or Spain. From these neutral countries the voyagers sometimes succeed in reaching England.

Information is also smuggled into England. Various espionage groups gather data on the German army. They make reports that are translated into secret code and telegraphed to England. Sometimes the reports are recorded on microfilm and brought to England via escape routes. Secret agents are parachuted into the Netherlands to try to improve spy contacts.

#### 4. Dilemma: Help?

The resistance searches for places for people who have to go in hiding. Press the doorbell and hear the reactions.

a. What would you do? Would you help someone who rings your doorbell and asks if you would give one or two people a safe hiding place? Why or why not?

Own opinion

b. How many people are in hiding in 1944? (green text board 3.7)

More than 300,000.

#### 3.7 Hiding the persecuted

As the occupation continues, the number of people in hiding grows to more than 300,000 in 1944. Jews are the first large group in 1942, followed later by students, former soldiers and young men trying to escape work in Germany. Many people in the resistance are also living in hiding.

It is difficult to find safe hiding places in the densely-populated Netherlands. In addition, people in hiding need food — and therefore ration coupons — as well as forged identity papers and money. It is not easy to take in people in hiding. Many small groups are formed that organize help for people in hiding. In 1943 the *LO* is set up, the National Organization for Aid to Those in Hiding, with a vast network of regions and districts.

Enter the room to the left of the door.

## 5. Help in hiding

The resistance helps people in hiding by:

- A: killing traitors
- B: falsifying papers
- C: arranging hiding places
- D: attacks and raids

Match the letters to the right pictures.

Left to right: D, A, C, B

### 3.8 Forged papers

The Germans introduce all sorts of official documents to keep the Dutch under control: work exemptions, bicycle permits, etc. Forged papers are therefore indispensable for people in hiding and resistance fighters.

In 1941 and 1942 the first attempts are made to forge identity cards. The person's name is bleached out, and the 'J' for Jew is removed with a penknife and pasted over. The techniques are improved slowly but surely. The *Persoonsbewijzencentrale* [PBC, Central Office for Identity Cards], founded in 1942 by the Amsterdam sculptor Gerrit van der Veen, evolves into the country's largest forging organization. At the end of 1943, the *Falsificatie Centrale* [FC, Central Office for Forged Documents] of the National Organization for Aid to Those in Hiding becomes the second largest forgery organization. Both organizations produce hundreds of thousands of forged papers. They even issue catalogues of forged stamps, available for delivery.

### 3.9 Attacks and raids

A forged identity card offers little protection if the information does not coincide with that in the registry office. During the evening of March 27th 1943, a resistance group sets the Amsterdam Registry Office on fire. The action causes quite a stir.

In August 1943 the National Organization for Aid to Those in Hiding begins setting up a network of *Landelijke Knokploegen* [LKP, National Organization of Armed Squads]. The armed squads set registry offices in fire and carry out armed raids in which they seize ration coupons and blank identity cards.

With the help of Dutch infiltrators, the Germans try to round up the resistance organizations. Sometimes arrested resistance fighters are forced to act as infiltrators. Exposed traitors are shot by the resistance. Despite moral objections, most resistance fighters regard the liquidation of traitors as a bitter necessity.

## 6. Paintings

How did Eva know where the paintings were hidden?

On the train to Auschwitz, Heinz told Eva.

### Betrayal and paintings in hiding

*“Muti and I were in hiding in Amsterdam, Vati and my brother Heinz in Soestdijk. They took up drawing and painting,”* says Eva Geiringer-Schloss.

*“The woman who was helping Vati and Heinz began threatening them and asking for increasing amounts of money. So they secretly left in the night. We were betrayed and all four of us were arrested. On the train to Auschwitz, Heinz told me he had hidden the paintings.”*

*“Vati and Heinz did not survive. Muti and I later formed a new family with our old neighbour Otto Frank. When he found the diary of his dead daughter Anne, I remembered the paintings! Under the floor in Soestdijk, we found a note and thirty paintings about being confined and the longing for freedom.”*

## 7. Illegal newspapers

What do you think of the choice made by Wim Speelman?

Own opinion

Don't give in to blackmail

Student Wim Speelman played an important role in the organisation of two illegal newspapers, *Vrij Nederland* and *Trouw*. The *Sicherheitsdienst* [German secret police] apparently knew his identity. In 1944, the *SD* promised to spare the lives of 23 *Trouw* employees who had been sentenced to death if *Trouw* ceased publication. Speelman only had to sign a note. It was a weighty decision. But, reasoned Speelman, if he gave in it would be a stab in the back of every Dutch person who had been incited to resistance by *Trouw*. 'Keep going,' he decided. The 23 death sentences were carried out. Six months later Speelman was also arrested and shot.

3.11 Read this and pass it on!

Illegal newspapers publish news about the course of the war and are important for public morale. They challenge German propaganda and incite people to resist. During the last year of the occupation they also print many articles about the future of the Netherlands after the war.

A total of 1,300 different illegal newspapers are published. There are many local editions, and all political and religious groups have their own paper. Circulations differ widely. Some of the papers are typed and stencilled in people's living rooms and distributed within the neighbourhood. Most of the large national illegal newspapers such as *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland*, *De Waarheid*, *Trouw* and *Ons Volk* [The Motto, The Free Netherlands, Truth, Faith and Our People] are ultimately printed on presses. These papers have a large network of people at their disposal who gather the news and organize distribution.

# 4th period June 1944 – May 1945 Germans driven back

## 1. Questions about the green banner

Why is June 6th 1944 an important day?

On that day the long-awaited invasion finally begins.

On June 6th 1944 the long-awaited invasion finally begins. American and British troops come ashore in Normandy. On August 4th they reach Paris, and on September 3rd Brussels. The liberation of the Netherlands seems just close by. But after failed airborne landings near Arnhem, the Allied advance comes to a halt at the Rhine.

The bulk of the Netherlands will have to wait until May 1945 to be liberated, in a winter of hardship. After the airborne landings, the area around Arnhem is evacuated. Dire food shortages afflict the western part of the Netherlands. The Germans become increasingly ruthless. They force Dutch men to lay German defence lines. Resistance actions are followed by harsh reprisals.

## 2. Liberated

Which part of the Netherlands was liberated in September 1944?

The southern Netherlands

### 4.2 The southern Netherlands liberated

In September and October 1944 large parts of the southern Netherlands are liberated, in some cases after heavy fighting. Exuberant celebrations are followed by disappointment and irritation. There is a severe lack of food, wartime damage is barely repaired, German shooting is causing new losses. The Allied leaders and the Dutch officials have trouble cooperating, and there is confusion about their competences.

Resistance fighters in the occupied territory try to establish contact with the liberated south. They succeed by means of illegal telephone connections and boat crossings over the Biesbosch region creeks.

## 3. Railway strike

In September 1944 the Dutch government in London calls for a railway strike. (green text board 4.3)

Find the story of Henk Das in the flip book. Does he think the railway strike was a success? Explain.

No, he thinks the strike came too late. On September 4th and 5th, the Germans had still been able to deport by train all the prisoners of Camp Vught. And the strike made life difficult for the resistance.

*'Naturally we were behind the railway strike, but we did think they had gone on strike too late. On September 4th and 5th, the Germans had still been able to deport by train all the prisoners of Camp Vught. We thought, "Damn, why didn't they go on strike those two days?" The strike made life difficult for the resistance. The district leaders always met in Amsterdam, but after the railway strike the people from the northern and eastern parts of the country could no longer attend. I was in Utrecht and I could get there by bike.'*

Henk Das, district leader of the National Organisation for Aid to those in Hiding, Utrecht

### 4.3 Railway strike

In September 1944 the Dutch government in London calls for a railway strike. German troop transport must be brought to a standstill because the Allies are planning to carry out airborne landings near Arnhem. The expectation is that liberation will follow within a few weeks. But the airborne landings fail.

The railway strike is a success: 30,000 railway employees go into hiding, with financial support from London. Even so, the results of the strike are disappointing. The Germans use their own trains for transporting troops. The German propaganda machine keeps insisting that the strike will only harm the

Dutch civilian food supply. Continuing the railway strike becomes a matter of prestige. The strike continues until the liberation.

#### 4. The hunger winter

a. Take a look in the kitchen. What do the Dutch eat during the hunger winter?

1. tulip bulbs
2. sugar beets

b. There is a severe shortage of almost everything: food, gas, electricity, water, coal for the stove. Push the second button from the top and take a look at the short movie. Even children help to collect fuel. They are collecting coal fallen from trains and wood.

#### 4.4 The hunger winter

In response to the railway strike, food transport to the western Netherlands is banned. After six weeks the ban is withdrawn, but the supply remains frozen because of the dismantled railway network and the German requisitioning of goods. During the harsh winter of 1944/45 there are severe food shortages in the cities.

The transport of coal from the liberated south also ceases. Gas and electricity are shut off. To get fuel people chop down trees and dismantle empty houses. The amount of food available on ration drops steadily. City dwellers go on hunger expeditions to the countryside. They trade their valuables with the farmers for food. More than 20,000 people die of starvation.

#### 5. Resistance in the final phase

The British Air Force drops containers by parachute above the Netherlands.

What is in them: weapons

For whom: the Dutch resistance movement

Sabotage and armed resistance were made more difficult by lack of weapons and explosives. The situation began to change in August 1944 with weapon drops made by the British Air Force. Containers were dropped by parachute from airplanes at night.

#### 4.5 Resistance in the final phase

During the last winter of the war, the resistance grows in spite of the oppression. The railway strike makes train transport impossible, so bicycle courier services are set up. The telephone also plays an important role in maintaining resistance contacts. Technicians of the Telephone Company set up connections outside the normal telephone network.

A great deal of money is needed for the resistance and for the tens of thousands of people in hiding. The young banker Walraven van Hall sets up the *Nationaal Steunfonds* [NSF, National Relief Fund] in 1943. In 1944 he receives a guarantee from the Dutch government in London, making it possible for him to contract large loans with banks and businesses. With help from tax inspectors he is able to draw on tax revenues. The NSF makes payments to the resistance totalling 47 million guilders. In addition to this the illegal press covers its own expenses through the clandestine sale of books, postcards and calendars 'on behalf of the resistance'.

In September 1944 the three large armed resistance groups *LKP*, *OD* and *RVV* are combined into one army: *Binnenlandse Strijdkrachten* [BS, Interior Forces]. Prince Bernhard is given supreme command. The BS members are supplied with equipment for the expected liberation struggle by means of weapon drops. Until then they sabotage German troop transports.

## 6. Terror and reprisals

What does this wall photo make clear about resistance in the final phase (green text board 4.6)?

The Germans took hard actions against the resistance members. Anyone who had a weapon at the time of arrest could be shot, without any form of legal action. The bodies were left lying in the open as a deterrent.

### 4.6 Terror and reprisals

During the summer of 1944 Hitler decides that from now on resistance is only to be suppressed by conducting a reign of terror. Anyone who is arrested and found armed will be executed without trial. These *Todeskandidaten* [death candidates] are kept in prison until a resistance action is carried out. Then they are shot in public as a reprisal. Bystanders are forced to watch. The bodies are left lying to deter people.

Innocent citizens also become the victims of German retaliatory actions. After an assault on a German car near the village of Putten on October 1st 1944, the entire male population is transported to a concentration camp. In March 1945 the reign of terror reaches its apex when more than 200 resistance fighters are executed after an assault on *SS- und Polizeiführer* Rauter.

## 7. Gerrit

What were these keys used for?

To free resistance friends of Gerrit van der Veen.

### Raid in Amsterdam

Anyone imprisoned on charges of armed resistance could be executed in revenge for the resistance attacks of others. On 1 May 1944, Gerrit Jan van der Veen and a group of helpers entered the House of Detention in Amsterdam to free his resistance friends. They managed to make a copy of the key with help of a guard. The raid had to be in absolute silence.

But in the dark a dog suddenly appeared. '*Van der Veen immediately fired his gun,*' one of the helpers said. '*All was lost from then on. We ran for the exit. Gunfire was coming from everywhere.*' Van der Veen was shot in the back, but his companions were able to drag him away. He was nursed in a safe house for a few weeks. But then he was arrested and executed anyway.

# Liberation comes to the Netherlands!

## 1. Questions about the green banner

- a. The German troops surrender on **May 5<sup>th</sup> 1945**.
- b. How many Dutch collaborators are put in prison? **Approximately 120,000**.

From March 1945 onwards Allied troops begin capturing those parts of the Netherlands still under occupation, with heavy fighting and much damage inflicted. Only on May 5th the German troops surrender. Chaotic days follow in which still people are killed. At the same time, the recovered freedom is celebrated with exuberant festivities that go on throughout the Summer.

Thousands of Dutchmen sign up to fight against Japan in the Netherlands East Indies. The Second World War is only over when Japan capitulates in August.

Approximately 120,000 Dutch collaborators are put in prison. Their trials continue for several years. In the end, 34 Dutch people are executed, including *NSB* leader Mussert.

Hundreds of thousands of political prisoners, victims of persecution and of forced labour return to the Netherlands. There are very few repatriation facilities set up to receive them and there is very little understanding for the traumatic experiences of Jewish survivors. Many members of the resistance become disappointed with post-war politics. Interest in the war dwindles as the forties draw to a close and the ravaged Netherlands concentrates on reconstruction.

## 2. Watch out!

The arrival of the liberating troops is met with great joy. But why should Dutch girls watch out for these soldiers?

**Because of the danger of unwanted pregnancy.**

## 3. Resistance member

Why didn't Jan Brasser join in the liberation festivities?

**He was done in... completely worn out, mentally exhausted.**

*'It was a time of enormous tension and emotion. You never got any rest — real rest, I mean. Always on the go, always on your guard... The emotions that you had to deal with if your comrades were arrested [...]. You couldn't reflect on that very long. There just wasn't the time.'*

*'I didn't join in the liberation festivities. I was done in... completely worn out, mentally exhausted. I didn't want to go out in the street with all those singing and dancing people. I just couldn't bear it.'*

Jan Brasser, an armed squad leader from Krommenie

## 4. Return to the Netherlands

What was Dina Davidson's experience when she returned to the Netherlands?

**Nobody was interested in her story because people had had their own difficulties. She was not taken care of at all.**

*'There was no one to meet us when we returned. We couldn't move back into our house until six months after the liberation. People shrugged their shoulders in response to our story. Then they would tell us of their own hardships: everything had been rationed, their bicycles stolen...'*

Dina Davidson, a Jewish woman who returned from hiding

## 5. Resistance begins with a question

Part of a poem by Remco Campert:

*'Asking yourself a question,*

*that's how resistance begins.  
And then ask that same question  
to someone else.'*

Even today there are things you could resist. What question could you ask yourself to begin resistance?  
**Own opinion**

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