THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF ANTIMILITARISM AND PACIFISM IN THE NETHERLANDS FROM 1918 TO 1940 AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY CONTRIBUTED TO THE QUICK DEFEAT IN MAY 1940

by

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ABSTRACT

After May 1940 a national soul searching took place in the Netherlands to uncover the reasons for the quick defeat at the hands of the Germans. One of the reasons frequently mentioned was the antimilitaristic and pacifistic mentality permeating large parts of Dutch society during the twenties and early thirties. But no serious investigation was ever undertaken to prove or disprove this claim.

This dissertation attempts to discover the degree to which antimilitarism and pacifism weakened the national will to resist an invasion in general and undermined the combat efficiency of the armed forces in particular. To determine the nature and extent of antimilitarism the wealth of contemporary pamphlets, newspapers and documents in the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam and in the Peace Palace in the Hague were used. Antimilitarists and pacifists were categorized into five main groups: social democrats, those further left (anarchists, communists, syndicalists, etc.), religious groups, certain middle class groups including two major women organizations, and youths. The size of each category, its political and economic strength, and the extent each was able to influence Dutch society as a whole are described as accurately as possible.

Information on the effect of antimilitaristic propaganda on the armed forces was obtained from documents and reports in the military Central Archive Depot in the Hague, the
military archives in Schaarsbergen, the Sectie Krijgsge­schiedenis of the army, and the reports of the Central Intelligence Service.

The conclusions reached were that in the early twenties antimilitarists were strong enough to force considerable reductions in the size of the conscripted army and the length of its service. Until the later thirties antimilitarists were influential enough to prevent an increase in the size of the armed forces and to block the allocation of sufficient funds for modernizations of material and weapons. Antimilitaristic propaganda was extensive and persuasive enough to convince a large segment of the population that the military forces were a useless and dangerous extravagance of a by-gone era. Professional soldiers were laughed at and as a result their morale was low and their efficiency slight. Conscripts were indifferent or belligerent and tried to do as little as possible during their tour of duty. The result was that training, discipline, skill and morale were insufficient and below standard. Since arms and equipment were also of an inferior quality and in short supply the Dutch forces, and specifically the army, quickly collapsed when the Germans invaded.

Antimilitarism was not the sole cause of the Dutch defeat but it was the main reason for the rapidity of the defeat of the Netherlands.
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Chapter I: Antimilitarism and the Dutch Nation

1. Thesis Outline and Definition of Terms

In May 1940 the Germans defeated the Dutch in five days. This evoked an intensive national soul searching for the reasons for the quick and total defeat. Many people pointed to the "defeatist elements" before the war who had prevented the creation of proper defence measures. These "defeatist elements" were the antimilitarist and pacifist groups whose existence was undeniable. But no effort was made in the post war period to substantiate the charge and to investigate the specific ways in which the antimilitarists had curtailed national defence efforts.

This thesis attempts to discover the nature and extent of antimilitarism in the Netherlands before 1940 and to what degree it undermined the national will to resist outside aggression. Such a study cannot look at antimilitarism as an isolated entity but must look at it in relation to the way it hindered, modified, or prevented the development of adequate defence measures. It must also investigate whether there were other reasons for the inadequacy of the military forces, and whether these other reasons were not as important as the opposition of the antimilitarists.

During the course of the research it became clear that the achievements of the antimilitarists took place in three separate areas but that they could not all be measured with the same kind of accuracy. The bills they defeated in parliament,
or whittled down, or forced to have withdrawn, or changed in a manner detrimental to the armed forces, are a clear indication of the strength of the antimilitarists. The way they influenced the Dutch military forces, created an opposition to or dislike for the military among conscripts, or fostered a defeatist mentality, is more difficult to measure. But in many instances it is still possible to show a direct link between antimilitaristic propaganda and opposition to or rebellion against the military by the men serving in those forces. The way the antimilitarists influenced the nation as a whole cannot be accurately measured. Certain indications and examples can be given that the country as a whole did not support its military and that antimilitaristic propaganda was the reason. But it can never be proven how much greater the national will to resist an invader would have been had there been no antimilitarist groups in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the thesis contends that the size of the Dutch army which fought the German invader, the training, the equipment and weapons, the preparations, the will to fight, and the national support for the army were all deficient as a result of twenty years of antimilitaristic efforts by many people.

In order to avoid confusion it is necessary to understand that the words "militarism", "pacifism", and "antimilitarism" had a different meaning in the Dutch language than in the English. An added difficulty is that the different groups tended to give varying connotations to these words and used them quite loosely at times. In the thesis these words have the meanings that the various groups gave them.
Since antimilitarists were birds of such diverse plumage they had many explanations as to what "militarism" was. Very few limited the meaning of the word to the domination of the political process by the military as is commonly understood by "militarism". For many antimilitarists the fact that the Dutch government insisted on having a national defence force was enough to call it "militaristic", regardless of the size of that force or that it in no way dominated the civilian processes. The term "militarism" thus lost much of its proper meaning but for antimilitarists it always retained a negative connotation with the emphasis that anything connected with the military ought to be opposed. Antimilitarists thus negated the difference between what Vagts calls the "military way" and militarism. The former he describes as,

marked by a primary concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power with the utmost efficiency, that is, with the least expenditure of blood and treasure. It is limited in scope, confined to one function, and scientific in its essential qualities.

It is important to note that Dutch antimilitarists did not make this distinction and that the word "militarism" as it is used in the thesis has the meaning they gave it and thus includes opposition to the military way. It is permissible to use the word in this sense because the prime objective of the thesis is not a careful analytical study of the theories of Dutch antimilitarists, but of the ways they hindered the Dutch military. This opposition to the military is the most important guideline because it, in all its varied facets, contributed to undermining the will and ability of the nation to defend its independence.
Dutch pacifists wanted peace and sought to achieve it through the settlement of international disputes by arbitration and international courts of law and through gradual, international disarmament. Colonial wars were accepted as necessary, however, and a defensive war for a civilized country, for the time being, as unavoidable. The Dutch meaning of the word pacifism, therefore, was quite limited. The present connotation of the word, that the waging of war by a state and the participation of an individual in war are wrong, was not accepted by Dutch "pure" pacifists.

Antimilitarists, on the other hand, opposed not only a military spirit, the ideals and attitudes of professional soldiers and the glorification of war, but also rejected the maintenance of an army and navy for defensive purposes. Some antimilitarists, basing themselves on religious or moral grounds, rejected all forms of violence; others opposed the militarism and wars of the bourgeois state for ideological and political reasons. Some of the latter thought it permissible to use violence to overthrow the existing state. Others accepted military service to subvert the structure from within or to learn the use of weapons so that they could use them against the state when the right time came. All the groups had in common that they actively propagated their views and tried to convince as many people in the Netherlands as possible.

Nineteenth century antimilitarists repudiated pacifists as bourgeois who still wanted to maintain the capitalistic and imperialistic state which, by definition, meant that wars would continue to take place. During the inter war years this
feeling still existed but was much less antagonistic. Bart de Ligt, one of the best known Dutch antimilitarists, wrote that the difference between pacifists and antimilitarists was that the latter strove for more than peace; they wanted a more worthy, more humane society. War was combated not only because it was criminal and unworthy of human endeavour, but also because it obstructed the transcendence of society from the present to a higher form.\(^2\) J.B.Th. Hugenholtz, another well known antimilitarist, thought that pacifists who gained a deeper insight into themselves would become antimilitarists when they realized that war was not only bad, destructive, inhuman and unchristian, but also morally impermissible and that it was their personal duty to bring it to an end. Consequently, they would not only combat war, but also that which made war possible: militarism and the system of national defence.\(^3\)

In spite of the differences between antimilitarists and pacifists it is still easy to confuse them because the terminology changed over the years as the English meaning of pacifism became more prevalent. Dutch antimilitarists began to call themselves "radical", "revolutionary", "left-wing", or "active" pacifists which in their own understanding differed intrinsically from the "bourgeois-pacifism", or "League of Nations pacifism", subscribed to by many upper and middle class Dutch people. To avoid confusion the term "antimilitarist" will be used whenever possible. The proliferation of antimilitarist and pacifist groups was so extensive after 1919 that they cannot all be included within these broad categories. Nor can, will, or need all the groups be discussed.
The criterion for consideration is the extent each group proselytized the Dutch nation and/or actively opposed the government and the military. The labels of the groups can be misleading but taking the above criterion into account, most of the antimilitarists and only a few pacifists fall within the framework of this thesis. Three broad categories can be noted here. The first are the religious antimilitarists. They thought Scriptures and war irreconcilable and therefore worked to end war; pastors and priests played an important role and the congregations were the fields to harvest; pressure on the government was slight, but the influence on the population considerable though difficult to gauge. Secondly, "parliamentarians" sought to achieve their aim through legal, political pressure on the government and the people, and their membership varied from the "bourgeois-pacifist" Liberal Democratic League to the Social Democratic Workers Party which considered itself strongly antimilitaristic. Thirdly, the "real" antimilitarists rejected the Social Democrats' claim to that name and continued to work for the overthrow of capitalistic society as the necessary prerequisite to rid the world of militarism and war.

These three broad categories are not exact enough to use them as chapter headings so that a further subdivision was made. Youth was dealt with in a separate chapter because they did not fit in any one of the three categories. They formed separate youth associations because they were youths and wanted to keep away from the adult society which they mistrusted and blamed for the ills of the world--very much like the "beat generation" of the sixties--and this alone warrants separate treatment.
Both the Social Democrats and the groups which considered themselves part of the "Peace Movement" were parliamentarians but since there were major ideological differences between them they have been treated separately. Most of the religious groups have been dealt with in the chapter of that name, but a few of them put much more emphasis on the "Social Question" than on religion and have been dealt with in conjunction with the Extreme Left, or the Social Democratic Workers Party. The order of the chapters (except the Youth chapter) is roughly the order of the chronological development of the groups. The most intense period lasted for about one decade (from 1925 to 1935); libertarian groups virtually had the field to themselves before that time, while religious and middle class organizations stood almost alone when the Germans crossed the Dutch border.

Within the Netherlands there were between 40 and 50 anti-militarist and pacifist organizations working nationally and a similar number regionally or locally so that a complete investigation of each would be too exhausting. The groups that are dealt with in detail were representative of a particular ideological or religious bloc within Dutch society. Furthermore, some of these groups were important because of the way they were viewed by the majority of Dutch society and the manner in which the latter reacted to them.

Traditionally, and for reasons to be discussed later, the majority of Dutch people viewed socialists, communists, and libertarians with suspicion and a certain amount of trepidation. This fact is important when analyzing the reasons for the Dutch mental and military unpreparedness in May 1940. Those
who favoured a proper defence force were more concerned for many years with the "threat from within" than with the danger from without. Consequently the already meager military preparations were weakened because precautionary measures were taken against the left.

Religious antimilitarist groups are noteworthy for a very different reason. The majority of Dutch people were religious and many explained the need for a military force with religious arguments. Religious antimilitarists interpreted Scriptures differently and came to the opposite conclusion. They approached the religious majority with the alternative interpretation and thereby sowed a certain amount of doubt and confusion within the ranks of the majority.

The chapter entitled "The Peace Movement" deals with groups whose composition was quite diverse and they can probably best be described as being middle class even though the term must be used with caution. The majority of those belonging to the Peace Movement—the term is an exact translation of the title Vredesbeweging which they gave themselves—considered themselves to be middle class. Many were intellectuals, teachers, managers, businessmen, etc., but a number of workers also belonged to the Peace Movement, as well as a small group of people who were definitely upper middle or upper class. The two women's organizations have been placed in this chapter because their membership was largely drawn from the wives and daughters of men in the middle class.
As will be outlined in the next section, a breakdown of Dutch society into classes is especially difficult because there were both horizontal and vertical divisions within the nation. In certain instances it is possible to use the horizontal stratification based on economics but frequently vertical party structures based on religious adherence will be encountered.

2. National Character and the Four Blocs

"National character" has been defined as "the enduring personality characteristics and unique life styles found among populations of particular national states." As such, a discussion of it is difficult, can never be complete, and can touch only the few "main" characteristics found in the complex population of a nation. Nevertheless, a brief explanation of the Dutch national character must be given so that later chapters will be more comprehensible.

The old adage that God created the world but the Dutch made Holland cannot be wholly substantiated; but there is no doubt that the geography and history of the Netherlands provided the Dutch with a few peculiar national characteristics. For a country no bigger than 12,500 square miles with about six million inhabitants (in 1914) the people were unusually diverse. Many dialects were so pronounced and distinctly regional that verbal communication was awkward and confusing. Rivers, streams, canals and ditches fostered separation and strengthened local customs, habits, beliefs, and idiosyncrasies. The sea was a common enemy and in time of calamity brought forth a national
effort to stop the inrushing waters. But the water also brought separation; each area surrounded by a dike ensured that those living within gave their loyalty first to THEIR polder. The many who made their living on the water—the merchant marine, the fishermen, the thousands on the river-crafts—were also very individualistic; "next to God, skipper on his own ship" was a common and much loved expression. But the most predominant feature of Dutch society was its burgher mentality. Cities and towns had always ruled, the countryside had obeyed. The burgher had been solid and conscientious, sober and calculating. Bourgeois society of the 19th Century was concerned with the maintenance of the individual within society and of that particular society as a whole. Those outside the middle class sometimes reacted against the value system of the bourgeoisie, yet they strove to obtain the same kind of values.

The result was that Dutch people tended to be sober minded, conservative, frugal, business-like, religious, and very individualistic. The people disliked things military, had an antipathy towards the discipline this involved, hated having to leave their village or town, and did not want to subordinate themselves to men from other areas with different dialects and strange ideas. A critical attitude and incessant complaining (kankeren) were very much part of the national heritage but never employed as freely as when talking about the army. Family life was very important for the Dutch; their social life centered on the living room, not the market place, and this was another reason military service was disliked.
Religious division was very pronounced within the Netherlands and placed an indelible stamp on the lives of the people. North of the big rivers orthodox Calvinism predominated creating a society where religion played a major part in all aspects of private and public life, not least of all in politics. South of the rivers and in the lighter soil areas in the east the population was largely orthodox Roman Catholic and very much under the control of the church. For centuries little more than second class citizens, the Roman Catholics reached recognition as equals by the turn of the century through the seemingly unnatural alliance with some of the orthodox Protestants. The alliance came about because both groups had recognized a bigger enemy—the atheistic liberals, supposedly out to destroy the church. Political cooperation did not necessarily mean that the common man now accepted the other's religion. The terms "heretic" and "papist" were used only slightly less than had been the case during the Reformation. Ignorance of each other's position and centuries of one-sided teaching were still not eradicated by the time Hitler's troops crossed the border.

In addition to the aforementioned, characteristically Dutch divisions within society, there were those present in every other country: between people of different occupational groups, between literate and illiterate, between believer and agnostic, between rich and poor, between city and countryside and, beginning in the latter part of the 19th Century, between class conscious workers and those controlling the means of production.
A typical manifestation of the Dutch national character was that most things came in fours: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Socialist, Neutral. Within the four main blocs there were often many subdivisions based on religious differences, class conflicts, minor nuances in religious, political, or ideological interpretations, or just plain stubborn individualism. The four fold separation existed not only in the political arena and trade union federations, but also in sport organizations, employer associations, etc. It was a natural dictum of life that each individual fitted himself into his own bloc; changing blocs usually meant a break with all former friends and associates.

Roman Catholics formed the most homogeneous bloc because the authoritative position of the church ensured that people with diverging opinions were ostracized from the Catholic community. Dissident voices were heard from time to time but usually within the confines of what the church hierarchy judged to be permissible. Only a small number of Catholics broke with the "official", church supported, Roman Catholic State Party to form another political party.

The Protestant bloc was internally divided into several political parties and churches. The largest Protestant church in the Netherlands, the Dutch Reformed Church, harboured three "streams" within itself: latitudinarian (usually referred to as "modern"), middle of the road, and orthodox. The latter stood very close to the other major Protestant church, the Reformed Church. Both the orthodox wing of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Church were staunchly Calvinistic.
(In order to avoid confusion it should be emphasized that the Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Church were separate churches with no organizational ties.) Orthodox Calvinists belonged to either the Christian Historical Union or the Anti Revolutionary Party. The former broke away from the latter over the suffrage question which was a major and divisive issue in Dutch politics from 1880 to 1918. The Christian Historicals largely became the party of the elite in the Reformed community while the Anti Revolutionaries were the "small folk" (kleine luiden). In addition there were a few small orthodox Calvinist parties who drew their membership from the smaller churches and sects and, to a slight degree, from among the ultra conservatives in the Reformed Church and the orthodox wing of the Dutch Reformed Church. The latitudinarian wing of the latter generally belonged to the Neutral bloc.

Calvinists and Roman Catholics had great national as well as bloc loyalty. Catholic national loyalty was rather surprising because their churches and services had been banned in 1573 when the Eighty Years War with Spain started. In the centuries that followed the Catholics had always fought for emancipation within the nation. They wanted to remain part of it because they felt Dutch. There was in any event no alternative because secession was impossible. At first they allied themselves with the liberals but when the School Question became of paramount importance in the second half of the 19th Century, the Catholics joined the orthodox Protestants. Both groups demanded, and eventually obtained, public funds for their respective religious schools. Throughout the long battle for equality the
Catholics always felt very strongly that they lived in a Protestant nation and the loyalty to their own bloc is therefore self-evident.

Calvinists' loyalty to their own nation and bloc is not hard to understand. Calvinism became almost synonymous with Dutch patriotism as a result of the war with Spain and subsequent generations carried on the tradition. Loyalty to their own bloc became stronger as more and more "un-Godly" influences became visible in the world. First there was the fight against the freethinking or latitudinarian liberals who refused public aid to religious schools. Thereafter came the rise of socialism which was not only anti-religious but also advocated the abolition of God-given private property and God-instituted social classes.

The neutral bloc was the most heterogeneous of the four. In a sense "neutral" is a misnomer because it implies a withdrawal from or indifference towards the aims of the other three blocs. This was not the case. The nucleus of the neutral bloc of the 20th Century were the conservative and liberal parties of the 19th Century. The former died as a political entity in 1891 and the latter split into three parties after 1888. Occasional cooperation proved possible but never to the extent that one liberal party was re-formed. After 1918 there were two liberal parties and they differed considerably. The Freedom League was the party of the businessmen and often supported, or was part of, the clerical governments of the inter war years. The Liberal Democratic League was more the party of the intellectuals, was in favour of moderate state socialism, and opposed
the clerical governments until 1933. From 1924 to 1934 the Liberal Democrats demanded complete unilateral disarmament of the Netherlands and worked together with the Social Democrats in order to achieve this. The two groups amalgamated in 1945 in the newly formed Labour Party. Several small parties with no religious or left-wing connections completed the political manifestations of the neutral bloc.

Most "neutrals" were latitudinarian in religion or were freethinkers. They wanted to keep religion and politics separated as much as possible. In this they differed intrinsically from the Protestant and Catholic blocs who saw their religious belief as the foundation on which their political programs ought to be built. In the Netherlands such a difference was fundamental and precluded any union; only cooperation on an ad hoc base was possible with the clericals. Working together with the Social Democrats was also sporadically possible for the neutrals but was in any event less important because the former did not enter the government until 1939.

The socialists formed the fourth bloc. Until 1913 they were a minor element in the national fabric because socialism developed quite late in the Netherlands. In part this happened because the industrial development did not really commence until 1870. Another deterrent was the strong hold Protestant and Roman Catholic churches had on their members. As a result the labour movement remained weak and divided. In 1914 about 250,000 workers were organized but only fifty per cent belonged to a national trade union federation. Inevitably blocs were formed: the syndicalists had about 10,000 members and the
Protestants slightly more; the neutrals had barely 4,000 but the Roman Catholics almost 60,000; the Social Democrats had the greatest number, 84,000. These figures are quite small considering that more than 2,500,000 people were in the labour force of whom 782,000 worked in industry.

Socialists were also quite late in their appearance on the parliamentary scene. The main reason for this was the Dutch socialist leader before 1900: Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis. Disillusioned with the parliamentary method and disliking formal political parties he carried many Dutch socialists with him to the anarchist corner. The Social Democratic Workers Party was a break-away movement (in 1894) from the Domela Nieuwenhuis dominated socialist world and had to fight a constant battle against syndicalists, free socialists, and anarchists who considered Domela Nieuwenhuis their spiritual leader even though they disagreed with him on specific issues. The Social Democrats weathered this storm quite well and after electing two men to parliament in 1897 they increased that number to six in 1901 and seven in 1909. In that year the orthodox Marxists were expelled from the party and they, under the leadership of D. Wijnkoop, formed the Social Democratic Party which became the nucleus of the Communist Party in 1918.

In 1913 the Social Democratic Workers Party elected 13 men to parliament, increased this number to 22 in 1918 and thereby firmly established itself as a major bloc in Dutch society. But Social Democrats did not use this strong representation in parliament to its maximum advantage. Following the guidelines of the Second International, the party refused to take part in
any government. After the war the Social Democrats changed their mind but their attempted revolution in November 1918 created so much mistrust that the clerical parties kept them from entering the cabinet until 1939. Being kept out of the government presented special problems for a party which held nearly one quarter of the seats in the (100 seat) Second Chamber especially since it advocated that the country disband all its armed forces. The difficulties will be discussed in Chapter IV.

In the inter war years various other socialist parties were formed so that the left became a confusing welter of groups, organizations and parties all working towards the creation of a new society. The envisaged end, and the required means to obtain it, kept the groups apart while personality conflicts exacerbated the ideological differences. The whole left, including communists and libertarians, opposed the existence of a national armed force. But the reasons for the opposition and the proposed paths to eliminate it were so diverse that combined action seldom took place.

The deep cleavages within the Dutch nation would have made a national existence impossible were it not for two factors. Firstly, there was an over-riding desire among all groups and individuals to keep the country together. No one wanted to secede and form a new nation. Secondly, there was a great propensity for finding a peaceful compromise for all problems. Social, class, and religious schisms might be deep but the consensus that the Dutch nation ought to continue its existence meant that some sort of solution was always found. Each group was allowed to live as it desired providing it did not
infringe upon this same right of other groups. Consequently, no extreme left or right wing organization was forbidden during the inter war years no matter how virulently it attacked the government or an existing situation. The understood corollary was that the attackers would not use physical violence. This freedom of speech and association meant that antimilitaristic propaganda was virtually unchecked. Those who rejected the antimilitaristic standpoint had to counter with propaganda of their own if they wished to obtain national support for the maintenance of a defence system.

3. The Government

Finding an efficient yet democratic form of government for a nation as diverse as the Netherlands was no easy task and the Dutch never really solved the problem. During the 19th Century the powers of the king were slowly curtailed and by the time of the First World War the Queen reigned but did not rule although her prestige and personality ensured that she did not become a mere figure-head. Political power was vested in parliament. The Second Chamber was elected by a meticulous form of proportional representation which gave one seat for every one per cent of the national vote a party obtained. The First Chamber was elected by the (11) provincial governments and served a somewhat similar function as the British Upper House or the Canadian Senate. The government was headed by a premier who needed not be (but often was) an elected member of parliament and the same was true for cabinet ministers.
Because of the divisions within the country political formations were numerous. In 1918, 17 parties were represented in parliament; up to 1940 the number never fell below 10. More than thrice as many participated in elections; the maximum number of participating parties, 54, was reached in 1933. No party ever obtained a majority in parliament and every government was therefore a coalition. After each election the Crown appointed a formateur who tried to coordinate the various party interests and their desire for a particular number of cabinet posts, and work out an agreement on broad principles which the coalition would follow for the coming years. It was a cumbersome and time consuming procedure. From 1918 to 1940 there were six elections, three premiers, and ten cabinets. The Roman Catholics, Christian Historicals, and Anti Revolutionaries each furnished one premier.

As the short cabinet lives indicate, agreement in principle did not guarantee stable and long lasting governments. Party discipline was weak; there was no established tradition that parties automatically supported the legislation proposed by "their" cabinet. Members of Parliament voted as their conscience dictated; usually this meant that the cabinet could count upon the support of their coalition but in certain areas, such as national defence, this support was not automatic.

The clerical coalitions in the inter war period did not have a sound base. Before 1917 the clericals had been united in their fight for clerical school support; when this became a reality in 1917 there was little to bind the three parties together except tradition and the fear of the left. The former wore thin in the
daily endeavour for particular goals; the latter was not shared by all clerical party members in parliament.

Coalition governments added to the tensions and strife normally present in each political party and especially in clerical parties. They were vertical parties; they incorporated within themselves members from all levels of society whose particular Weltanschauung was determined by religious principles. The social heterogeneity caused stresses and strains which were magnified through collaboration with religiously "other-thinking" people. Specifically in the Roman Catholic State Party the oscillations of official party policy, and the inability to deliver the votes in the Chamber from time to time, reflected the subterranean upheavals. But in spite of internal friction there was a strong belief within the three major clerical parties that the maintenance of a clerical government was of paramount importance.

The Netherlands prided itself on being a "Christian nation"; roughly sixty per cent of the population were members of, or at least voted for, one of the clerical parties. Most orthodox believers held the individual's conscience to be the final arbiter of right and wrong, but this hardly resulted in unstructured individualism. The Roman Catholic Church largely decreed what the individual's conscience should accept and reject; the Protestant churches were a little more lenient but still put great weight on church regulations, Biblical laws and examples, and governmental authority. It was generally accepted that the government had to ensure that a Christian society was maintained. In practice this meant: domestic change came slowly;
little social legislation was passed (God had created classes as well as rich and poor); private enterprise was encouraged and favoured (God blessed the industrious); the Soviet Union was not granted diplomatic recognition (it was atheistic and out to destroy Christianity) and its admission to the League of Nations opposed; independence for the colonies was rejected (the mother country had a God-given mandate to direct, protect, and convert the native population); a military force to protect the Netherlands and Indonesia was essential. Especially the Protestants believed very strongly that God had given the Netherlands to the Dutch—after their long fight against Spain—as a bulwark for the true religion in a wayward world. History, the House of Orange, and a considerable amount of nationalism were usually brought in to augment the religious argument.

Under the impact of the Bolshevik victory in Russia, the changes in Germany, and the "near revolution" at home in November 1918, the government promised sweeping social changes, but swiftly forgot them once stability returned. Old ideas and principles triumphed. Successive coalitions accepted the axiom that the Netherlands ought to be defended by its own armed forces, but ignored the corollary that the technical advances of the military demanded a much greater financial sacrifice. They assumed that Indonesia had to be retained, and recognized that a fleet was necessary for its defence, but would not admit that a modern fleet was beyond the technical and financial capabilities of the nation. The government could truthfully declare that it was not aggressive or militaristic and that it kept military expenditures to the bare minimum. This was a
time-honoured standpoint accepted by many people. The myth that the prompt mobilization in 1914 had saved the nation from being invaded was readily believed by the conservative majority and was repeated with unchanging conviction. A succession of governments preached that a defence force, a position of strict neutrality, and support for the League of Nations would ensure that the country could stay out of a future war the same as it had stayed out of the past war.

That the Netherlands between the wars was ruled by conservative men is probably an understatement—ultra-conservative would be more accurate—and this was the cause of the strange predicament the country was in. These men viewed the world, and conducted the domestic and foreign policy of the country, largely in pre-1914 terms. It created conflicts with groups who wanted a more modern approach. In the realm of a defence policy it brought special problems because the government did not try to eradicate the beliefs and sentiments which actively undermined or passively rejected a national defence force.

Antimilitarism based on particular ideological, religious, or ethical convictions could not have been changed, but the latent dislike for the military so prevalent in the Netherlands could have been lessened. This dislike stemmed from the individualistic nature of the Dutch which was adverse to military discipline, from the regional ties which resulted in an antipathy to being placed in garrison in another area, and from the parsimonious nature of the people which quickly labelled defence expenditures as needlessly extravagant. Such feelings could have been lessened through more efficient and
more up-to-date policies in, and for, the armed forces. But the men and parties in power showed very little initiative; they were satisfied as long as there was an army and navy without giving much consideration to the quality of these forces. Consequently the widespread indifference or dislike remained and made it easier for antimilitarists to win converts to their cause.

Few Dutch antimilitarists contended that the civilian government was controlled by the military; such a position was difficult to maintain because it did not exist. The opposition was directed at the existence of any military force, regardless of its size or efficiency, either because such a force had the potential of settling international disputes through violence, or because a tiny force could become the nucleus of a larger one and could result in military domination of the civilian process, or because war and violence were considered a sin. As the next chapter will show, 19th Century antimilitarists did not yet have such ideas clearly worked out while pacifists adhered to very different principles. The Great War proved to be a major catalyst; it forced antimilitarists to develop their theories more fully and brought them and the pacifists closer together. In the early twenties there was probably more formal opposition to war in general and to the national military establishment in particular than in any other country in Europe.
Chapter II: Dutch Pacifism and Antimilitarism to 1918

A cursory examination of Dutch pacifism, antimilitarism, and the military before and during the Great War provides information which makes the post war period more intelligible. It is important to note that the Netherlands had a long history of neutrality, that this policy was supported by all parts of the nation, and that this attitude shaped the view many people held on pacifism, antimilitarism, and the military.

During the 19th Century neutrality was at times taken to extremes. A few examples will suffice. The Protestant government in the early 1860s refused to protest against the persecution of Protestants in Spain. In 1867 Napoleon III sent a note to Russia protesting the severe treatment of the Poles after their abortive uprising, and other nations joined in the protest. When the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, van der Moesen, also sent a note, the uproar in the country and the Second Chamber was so great that he had to resign.¹ That same year, at a conference in London, the major powers declared Luxemburg neutral and guaranteed her safety. The Netherlands also signed the document, but the Second Chamber opposed it because it was not a "neutral act."²

¹. Dutch Pacifists before 1914

Few Dutchmen could see the need for a peace society in a peaceloving country that did not have any enemies. When an organization was created in 1871 it was more a reaction to the Franco-Prussian War than from being convinced by the propaganda
of foreign peace societies. The history of the Dutch Peace League bears out this judgement. Initial membership quickly reached 2,500 people in 26 branches, but two years later only 17 branches remained and by 1882 the number was down to six. The League barely remained alive (with two branches) to the turn of the century. Then it was revitalized through the general interest in the subject of peace because of the first Disarmament Conference in the Hague, the opening of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (1901), and the amalgamation with the recently created Women's League for Disarmament and International Arbitration. The new organization was called Peace Through Justice in recognition of the fact that only through international justice and arbitration could a lasting peace be obtained.

The old Peace League had always considered itself pacifist which meant, in the then common definition of the term, that wars were justified when "self-defence against violent attacks from others was unavoidable." This rule counted for civilized nations because only they had a high morality and intellectual standard. Consequently the League refused to protest the Dutch government's declaration of war against Atjeh (a small state on North Sumatra). It was thought improper to send suggestions or advice to the government at any time in spite of the fact that a number of parliamentarians were members of the organization. Once international arbitration was accepted by a number of governments as a viable vehicle for settling international disputes, the League jumped on the bandwagon and within a few years could think of no other method to achieve peace.
Pacifists did not admit that disarmament or personal refusal to bear arms were acceptable methods for obtaining peace. In 1877 the Yearbook of the League urged those members who wanted to abolish the fleet and army to depart; twenty years later the Yearbook still gave similar advice. Apart from condemnations, pacifist literature of the time does not mention the antimilitarists. Why the two had nothing in common was quite clearly explained in 1905 by A. ten Bosch, one of the better known spokesmen for Peace Through Justice:

Pacifists are not antimilitarists. Pacifists believe in the right of self defence and also that, once humanity recognizes that justice ought to go before violence, armies will come into the service of justice and will be no more than police forces....Pacifist beliefs and antimilitarist sentiments should not be confused.

Peace Through Justice, like the Dutch Peace League before it, professed to be an organization for all classes and religious convictions, but in practice was staunchly middle class with liberal humanism predominating. In 1909 Peace Through Justice held a meeting to discuss how the working class could best be attracted. The gathering took place in one of the nicest rooms of the stately Hotel des Indes in the Hague; the ladies served tea; those present wore evening dress. This was at a time when 23 per cent of the Dutch population lived in a one room house and 31 per cent in a two room house.

In spite of the absence of the working class, Peace Through Justice increased its membership to 5,500 by 1914. The peace movement became popular and fashionable in Europe; many women became attracted to it, partly because it provided an outlet for their ambitions in a male ruled world. The first and second Peace Conferences, the opening of the International Court of
Arbitration, the building and opening of the Peace Palace—all in the Netherlands—provided numerous activities and much publicity which convinced many that pacifism was a worthy cause and not in any way detrimental to the traditional neutrality policy of the nation.

2. Dutch Antimilitarists before 1914

Before the Napoleonic wars the Netherlands was already in decline and the years of the French occupation, severing the connections with the colonies, hastened the descent to an economic stagnation which did not begin to revive until 1870. By this time the industrial and agricultural labourer was mentally and physically almost retarded through generations of poverty, unemployment, poor housing and an insufficient diet. The advent of socialism brought a certain militancy into the workers. Minor riots and disorders, especially in Amsterdam, became frequent. The army, as the vehicle for the maintenance of law and order, became the antagonist and fueled the century old latent dislike for the military with specific grievances. Socialists could now "prove" that the army was nothing more than the final pillar with which the rotten capitalistic society kept itself aloft.

Until 1898 antimilitarists focussed their attention primarily on the Replacement Law. This law, abolished in 1898, made it possible for anyone chosen (by lot) to serve in the armed forces to find a replacement. Since it cost about 700 guilders to get a replacement—most of the money went into the pockets of the middleman—and workers earned less than one guilder a day,
the army was filled with the children of the poor. The various left-wing youth leagues paid the most attention to the Replacement Law, no doubt because they were personally involved. The Social Democratic Youth League passed a resolution in 1891 demanding that the law be abolished and general conscription be introduced. It was a desire to democratize the army and have the burden of conscription fall on all classes of society. Other deeds show a more militant attitude. Leaflets were distributed at the places where the numbers were drawn, and again at the time when those who had drawn a "bad" number had to report for the first time to the barracks. Efforts were made to smuggle socialist propaganda into the barracks and to start an organization among those already serving. The successful example of the Young Guard in Belgium could not be duplicated, however, probably because the Dutch lacked organization, discipline, and numbers. Nevertheless, between 1898 and 1913 there were at least 18—the actual number is probably higher—young men who refused service and received repeated prison terms for their refusal.

A different kind of movement was the League of Navy Seamen established in 1897. Controlled and organized solely by sailors, the League tried to fight the poor treatment of the sailors, the rough conditions they had to live under, and the severe discipline. At that time 13 year old boys could be signed up for 12 year periods—of which the years before they were age 16 did not count. These children were virtually defenceless against the whims of older sailors and officers. The League tried to get the law, which allowed children to be signed,
changed. The leaders of the League were repeatedly harassed by the Navy, or dishonourably discharged from the service, but others were always ready and able to fill the vacant places.\textsuperscript{15}

Among the adult socialists antimilitarism tended to be marred by ideological differences which prevented unified action. Domela Nieuwenhuis, first a Lutheran pastor, then a social democrat, and later an anarchist, was by far the most active and best known Dutch antimilitarist. In 1871 he was a member of the Peace League and favoured popular militias and international arbitration, but he quickly became disenchanted with the League and departed. In the 1890s he became the thorn in the side of the German delegates to the congresses of the Second International where he proposed a general strike, massive civil disobedience, and a military strike in case a government declared war. Domela Nieuwenhuis also urged abolition of the distinction between an aggressive and defensive war because it stank of chauvinism. At the Congress in Brussels (1891), and again in Zurich (1893) he was voted down, while in London (1896) he was not allowed to appear because he was considered an anarchist.\textsuperscript{16} This did not stop him within the Netherlands. The speeches he had not been allowed to give before the Congresses were printed and widely distributed within the country.\textsuperscript{17} The Dutch left was now hopelessly divided, however, and the anarchists had to give ground to the newly formed Social Democratic Workers Party which followed the guidelines of the Second International regarding antimilitarism.
The Second International advocated the abolition of standing armies and their replacement by popular militias (Paris, 1889; London, 1896; Stuttgart, 1907), urged social democrat parliamentarians to vote against all military expenditures (Paris, 1900); should war threaten, the working class, her representatives, and the International Bureau should do all in their power to prevent it breaking out (Stuttgart, 1907; Copenhagen, 1910). It was not a difficult program to follow and the Dutch Social Democrats faithfully carried out the directives. They voted against the military budget, harassed the Ministers of War and Navy, and demanded a popular militia. The careful and hesitant antimilitarism of the Second International proved its impotency in August 1914; that of the anarchists and Christian-socialists might have been more effective had they received greater support.

The Dutch Christian-socialists (sometimes called Christian-Anarchists) were loose groupings around the modernist pastors L.A. Bähler and N.J.C. Schermerhorn, and the writers Felix Orrt and L. van Mierop. Their opposition to militarism was based on religious principles. In many ways they were followers of Tolstoy but they refused to call themselves Tolstoyans and would only admit that they had similar ideas. Like socialists and anarchists they saw capitalism as the main source of wars and militarism, but rejected the anarchist position that it might take a violent revolution to overthrow capitalistic society. Only peaceful methods could be employed. It was that standpoint which created an immediate division between the Christian and non-Christian socialists when in 1904 the first antimilitaristic organization in the Netherlands came into being.
The International Antimilitaristic Society was born as a direct result of the first Anarchist Congress held in Amsterdam in 1904, but indirectly stemmed from the constant efforts of F. Domela Nieuwenhuis. His continual work to end military institutions had won converts in the Netherlands but their effectiveness was hampered by his insistence that no anarchist should enter any kind of permanent association. In 1904 he condescended to the formation of an organization limited to fighting militarism and the resulting Society—the "I" for International was largely illusionary because it was really a Dutch organization—was for 35 years a small but extremely active hearth of antimilitarism.

The Society based itself on the class struggle theory and therefore saw all existing military establishments as the means by which the bourgeois class maintained itself. Propaganda was the only weapon presently available. Personal refusal to serve, whether from ethical, religious, or social principles was recognized and accepted as a viable method of opposition, but a motion to support such individual action was defeated because the French and Bohemian representatives at the Congress voted against it. The Christian-socialists and anarchists left the Congress because they objected to the acceptance of violence under certain circumstances.

Most of the 700 members in 1905 and the 900 in 1906 were anarchists, syndicalists, and free socialists. The Society's membership remained fairly constant until 1914. They considered fighting militarism as an important propaganda weapon for their cause, as well as a necessity because the army was
used to break strikes and other activities used by the libertarian groups to weaken capitalistic society. Of course there also existed a genuine dislike of war which would put worker against worker for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Nieuwenhuis had already written in 1901, "I favour civil war over international war because in the former one fights for an idea, in the latter for the pleasure and benefit of others." 20

Efforts to spread propaganda among the soldiers was substantial considering the small membership of the Society. A Soldatenalmanak (Soldiers' Almanac) was printed every year from 1906 to 1922 and the 5,000 to 10,000 copies were distributed among the conscripts; brochures about various subjects, from 10,000 to 20,000 copies, were common while the official monthly publication De Wapens Neder (Down the Weapons) reached 6,000 to 7,000 people each month. All this material was sold by less than 1,000 people in their spare time. 21 Judicial prosecution because of certain articles was frequent, jail sentences quite common, and police harassment when hawking literature on the streets a constant problem. But the movement persisted and reached its height during and after the First World War.

3. The Military before 1914

All the activities of the antimilitarists against Dutch "militarism" appear exaggerated when the size and influence of the Dutch military are considered. There was no military tradition to speak of. The glories of Prince Maurice' (largely mercenary army) exploits were too long ago and no significant military caste existed to give lustre and importance to the army.
Whereas in Germany the victories of 1864, 1866, and 1870-1871 unified the country and swept away the last opposition to the military, the only Dutch military exploits in the century had been a disastrous expedition against (what became) Belgium in 1830 and a desultory and costly colonial skirmish against Atjeh. The Replacement Law enabled the more prosperous youths to stay out of military service, so the army became a mottled group of poor and rather ill-equipped youths who had to serve for very little money while being subjected to the many minor and major irritations of barrack life. The initial service time was 8-1/2 months, which was too short to make soldiers out of civilians, while the few re-training periods in the years thereafter were only a costly nuisance, especially because they usually took place in the summer when work was more plentiful and earnings a little higher. The army was considered an object of squandered money by the majority of tax-payers, a wasted year by those conscripted, an evil institution by mothers who feared the bad influence of barrack life, a hearth of atheism by many Roman Catholics, and the means by which the capitalists maintained their power by the socialists.

Growing criticism of the army forced the government to examine the whole military question. Abolition of the Replacement Law was the first step, but for the next fifteen years under four ministries and eight ministers of war the military problem was constantly a matter of political conflict and popular debate. After a series of laws, resignations of ministers, demands for clarification by the Queen, and long explanations by prime ministers, the final settlement was achieved in 1912 through the "Laws of Colijn" (the Minister of War).
Each year 23,000 youths would be conscripted of whom 600 went to the navy. Those in the infantry (by far the greatest number because it was the cheapest) were to serve 8-1/2 months (the others a little longer) with two re-training periods of no more than four and three weeks during the six militia years. When these years were completed the men automatically became members of the Landweer which meant a six day training period in one year and a one day equipment inspection in each of the other four years. Thereafter the men were in the Landstorm, which also encompassed all those who had been volunteers, had been in the army in Indonesia, as well as those who had never been in the military service. All these men, up to age 40, could be called up in case a second mobilization was necessary, but this would only occur when the army (of the first mobilization) could not cope with the enemy. In theory there was a trained reserve and an untrained reserve in the Landstorm, but considering the short initial training and the infrequent and short re-training periods thereafter, there was really no hope that these men could ever be used to defend the country. The Netherlands is so small that by the time it was clear that the men of the first mobilization could not cope with the enemy, it was much too late to call up, let alone train, the men of the second mobilization. All it meant was extra administration and a certain frustration for the men who still knew themselves to be part of the army. The "standing army" of the Netherlands consisted of about 30,000 men, but 22,400 were really recruits.

The "Laws of Colijn" were not viewed as a victory for their cause by the antimilitarists, but in certain ways they were. Thanks in part to the unwillingness of many parliamentarians
to spend much money on defence, the burden of the military was rather light compared to the tremendous increase in military spending that was taking place in virtually every European country. An annual draft of 23,000 men out of a population of six million was hardly drastic. The short service time, and the provision that no one in the militia could be sent to the colonies without his own consent allowed for a quick return to civilian life. A large and influential military caste could not develop out of the existing structure. The few men in the Netherlands who admired the German system and would have liked to emulate the example did not have a chance to do so. All this was not enough for the Social Democrats, however; they demanded a popular militia on the Swiss model and continued to vote against the military budget. The anarchists were even less satisfied because they wanted the abolition of all military forces while the Christian-socialists simply denounced everything connected with arms and violence. The war gave both those against and those in favour of a military establishment a chance to evaluate their ideas and allowed both to prepare for the real struggle which started about 1919.

4. The Netherlands Anti War Council

Initial reaction of the Dutch people to the events of July 1914 was to rally together in support of the government to face a common enemy. The rapidity of events caught the Dutch, as well as every other nation in Europe, by surprise. There was never any doubt as to what position the Netherlands should take; neutrality had been the official government policy for many
decades. Fear of a possible German invasion, not wholly ungrounded, brought a unity to the people that had long been absent. Very few men refused to heed the mobilization call, and the antimilitarists were silent. Troelstra, leader of the Social Democrats, declared in parliament that the government could not be blamed for the present war, agreed that the mobilization was necessary, and promised support (with reservations) for the government in the future. The Social Democrats voted in favour of the fifty million guilders mobilization credits even though—in a remarkable contradiction—they continued to vote against the regular defence expenditures as they had always done.

The pacifists, after being stunned in August because the whole edifice of international arbitration had come crashing down, regained their composure and sought ways and means of bringing the war to an end. Peace Through Justice, the Roman Catholic peace society, the national women's society and other groups, including the Social Democrats, agreed that a combined effort would be most effective. By the end of September the Netherlands Anti War Council (Nederlandse Anti Oorlogs Raad—NAOR) was in existence. Initially there were 53 persons on the Council but a year later the number had grown to 145 of whom 25 were Members of Parliament representing three clerical parties, two liberal parties, and the Social Democrats. In January 1915 the NAOR had 8,527 individual members and 38,746 by 1918; at this time the number of organizations belonging to the NAOR totalled 1,181.
Without hesitation the NAOR originators decided that past differences ought to be forgotten, that membership would be denied no one, and that the sole objective should be to study ways and means to bring the war to an end. Initial cooperation was good; Social Democrat Members of Parliament as well as Schermerhorn, one of the originators of the Antimilitaristic Society, joined the NAOR. But dissension returned quickly. The Social Democratic Workers Party asked its MPs who were in a leadership role within the NAOR to withdraw from those positions. Henceforth Dutch Socialist leaders concentrated their efforts for peace in the International Bureau which resulted in the formation of the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee and the Stockholm Conference. The Antimilitaristic Society held a Congress in May 1915 and asked Schermerhorn to step out of the NAOR. The Society and similar organizations saw the Anti War Council as another Peace League or Peace Through Justice—organizations where various doctrines were expounded without committing the individual to anything.

In a sense, the Society was correct: the NAOR did little more than propose a "Minimum Program" necessary for peace, and issued reports on excellent in-depth studies the Council undertook on such subjects as annexation, the problem of nationalities, the freedom of the seas, etc. The Minimum Program necessary for a permanent peace retained some of the pre-war ideas such as peace conferences and compulsory arbitration. Other points were new, and a few found themselves incorporated into Wilson's Fourteen Points: there was to be no annexation without popular consent (to be determined through a plebiscite);
each state should give equal status, religious freedom and language equality to all nationalities within its borders; the freedom of the seas must be ensured; all parliaments should have a voice in all foreign policy decisions; secret diplomacy and treaties must be abolished.  

Efforts to bring the combatants to the conference table were unsuccessful; the NAOR proved as unable to bring this about as any other group or country. A conference of neutral countries was organized but did not achieve anything. Connections were laboriously established with the warring nations, both in official and non-official circles in the hope that through personal contact talks could be started. This proved a vain hope. The Dutch government was asked to act as mediator, but refused. Peace came without the help of the NAOR; in January 1919 the Council disbanded itself, as did Peace Through Justice. The members of both organizations decided that a new society ought to be formed. It was to be called the Association for the League of Nations and Peace and within itself embodied the legalistic pacifism of bourgeois society.

5. The Social Democratic Workers Party

For both political and ideological reasons Social Democratic leaders had a difficult time convincing party members that support of the government's mobilization order was in the best interest of the social democrats. Many articles and publications attacking or defending the official position appeared, until the matter was settled at the Arnhem Congress in April 1915 by the acceptance of two resolutions. The first declared that
the Netherlands ought to remain neutral in the present conflict and must take all the necessary steps to ensure this; the second motion stated that the party would reconsider its position regarding militarism only after the present conflict was terminated. The debate was vigorous and almost one-third of the votes were against—a clear indication that the party was of two minds concerning this matter.

It was difficult for the party leaders to convince everyone that no drastic change in policy had taken place. For years the party had agitated for the replacement of the standing army by popular militias. The rank and file had been used to reading the biting critiques of their military expert in parliament, K. ter Laan; the cry "not a man or a cent for the military" had been heard frequently within party ranks; the party newspaper Het Volk (The People) had often printed polemics against the military establishment, especially when troops were used as strikebreakers. Ideologically the party leaders did not have a strong position. At many congresses of the Second International the Dutch had voted in favour of antimilitaristic resolutions. Unlike their German counterparts, however, Dutch Social Democrats had never stipulated that they would fight for their country in a defensive war. Now that the whole international workers' solidarity had come crashing down and was replaced by the defence of national boundaries and bourgeois governments, was it really necessary to follow this example? The party leaders had answered in the affirmative and most of the rank and file followed, but many were doubtful and their misgivings were fueled by the Extreme Left.
The small groups of anarchists, syndicalists and free socialists were quite virulent in their opposition to the Dutch defence efforts. The war was viewed as a capitalistic undertaking wherein the workers were slaughtered for the benefit of the possessor class. It was therefore essential to disrupt the military system as much as possible and considerable energy was expended on this project. The Marxist Social Democratic Party thought the war of no concern to the working class which should withhold all support. Those who were drafted should try to subvert the system from within. Some Social Democrats could sympathize with these ideas and they could also point out that not all socialists had succumbed to nationalism and chauvinism. The Zimmerwald Conference showed that not all socialists thought it necessary to fight and kill fellow workers for the defence of their country. The fact that Henrietta Roland Holst, one of the best known literary figures in the Dutch socialist world, attended the Conference and returned to preach national and international mass action against the war was itself enough to make Social Democratic leaders uneasy about the official position they had adopted. Finally, there were a number of Christian socialists—both within and outside the party—who opposed the war and all support for the Dutch military on religious grounds. These groups provided considerable alternatives to those within the Social Democratic Workers Party who disagreed with the official position.

Social Democratic executives were well aware of the latent antimilitarism within the ranks of their party and of the possibility that they could lose members because of their support
of the government. The party was officially still opposed to militarism, however, so that it was possible, once the danger of invasion waned, to classify more and more things as "militarism" and less and less as necessary for the defence of the Netherlands. In 1915 the party voted against the Landstorm-wet which enlarged the draft; the Mobilization Clubs (see p.51) were defended in and out of parliament even though the party had little control over them; partial demobilization was urged on many occasions and criticism of the strict discipline, excessive power of the military, the high cost of defence, etc., were voiced frequently. These measures proved sufficient to prevent minor revolts or major disturbances within the party in so far the official position on the defence of the Netherlands was concerned. It also ensured that the antimilitarism within the party remained alive and made possible a more definite and far-reaching position after the war.

By the end of the war the reformist Social Democrats had changed so much that even a token attempt at a revolutionary takeover was tried. As a result of riots in several military camps in late October 1918 Troelstra and other Social Democrats thought the army showed a real revolutionary spirit and he decided that it was time to act. Leaders of the party and the Social Democrat trade union federation met on October 28, November 2 and 3. By this time the mutiny in Kiel had broken out (October 28) and was spreading to Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck. This strengthened certain Dutch socialists in their belief that the revolution in the Netherlands was only a matter of time. On November 5, Social Democratic MPs demanded immediate
demobilization and the removal of the Commander in Chief, General Snijders. The General was removed from his post on November 8 and a hasty, partial demobilization was decided upon by the Cabinet to take place on November 9, 10, 11, ignoring all the carefully worked out demobilization plans. It looked as if the government was collapsing and Troelstra, a peace loving man and not at all suited to lead a revolution, began to be carried away with the turn of events.

On Sunday, November 10, Social Democrat leaders held another meeting in which diverging opinions were expressed. K. ter Laan, the military expert, warned that the many associations and clubs in the army were not revolutionary councils. Nevertheless, the decision was made to print a Manifesto and to hold large meetings on Monday night in Rotterdam because that city appeared ready to hand control to the socialists. The Manifesto hit the streets on Monday morning and had fifteen demands of which the most extreme were immediate demobilization with financial support for those not able to find employment, socialization of certain businesses, and abolition of the First Chamber. That evening, in one of the five meetings held in Rotterdam, Troelstra, carried away with his own rhetoric virtually announced the revolution—albeit not on the violent Russian model.

When parliament met the following day, November 12, it was obvious that the socialists' thunder had been stolen. The Premier announced that the daily bread ration would be increased, that shipments of food were on the way from England and America but that these were addressed to the Royal Netherlands Government
and hence would not be delivered to another government which had obtained power by unconstitutional means. The Minister of War announced a series of reforms for the army as well as the fact that partial demobilization was already underway. J.B. Bomans, a member of the Catholic party announced that only that very morning the Roman Catholic workers had promised their support for the government. All these announcements, in addition to the measures that various private individuals had taken to get loyal troops into the major cities ensured that the "revolution" was stillborn. The stimulus had come in part from events in Germany, from the apparent revolt of the Dutch troops, and from the duplicit party position on antimilitarism. The initial reaction in August 1914 had been similar to those of other socialist parties—siding with the national government to defend the nation—but when the Netherlands remained neutral, it became more difficult to acquiesce to the fact that the government had to be supported in maintaining a fully mobilized army. When the Antimilitaristic Society and other organizations received an increasingly more favourable response to their propaganda, the attitude of the Social Democrats changed even though the official position did not. Not surprisingly, therefore, the party adopted a substantially different stance after the war when it reconsidered it position on militarism.

6. The International Antimilitaristic Society and others

Antimilitarism proliferated quickly during the war years and only the major lines and organizations can be mentioned. The Antimilitaristic Society will be given the major share of attention,
It increased its membership from less than 1,000 before the war to more than 3,000 by the end of 1918.\(^4^2\) During the 51 months of hostilities, its monthly, *De Wapens Neder*, averaged 18,000 copies a month.\(^4^3\) Many brochures and pamphlets were distributed, such as the 50,000 against the Landstormwet, the 20,000 warning of the danger of military toys for children, etc.\(^4^4\) Publications from other groups preached a similar message: *Opwaarts* (Upward), the organ of the Society of Christian Socialists; *Levenskracht* (Life's Vitality), of whom L. van Mierop, the well known vegetarian was the editor; *De Vrije Mensch* (The Free Man), a monthly published by the Christian anarchist pastor L.A. Bahl. Moreover, the free socialists and syndicalists published their own papers. Initially these publications combated the war with differing emphasis and arguments but the war and resulting increase in military power reached such magnitude that cooperation among the various groups became close and frequent.

The Antimilitaristic Society changed its focus during the war. The class war theory was not forgotten: strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation were still held to be viable means of preventing war and possibly bringing about the revolution, but these tactics were mentioned less frequently and seldom practised. Almost all attention was directed towards refusal to serve in the military; the men who made this principled decision were supported in every way possible. They, or their families, received financial contributions, letters were written to those in jail, etc. In line with anarchist thinking, each individual was left free to act as he thought proper. The 1917 Society's Christmas Congress emphasized this by voting in favour
of propaganda against munition making, but left members free to decide whether or not they should work in a munition factory. The same was true for members who were conscripted; they could serve and still remain members. Consistent with the Domela Nieuwenhuis dictum that anarchists shun all formal organization was the rejection of the motion that an "anti-militarist candidate" participate in the next election.

By de-emphasizing their various religious, doctrinal or ideological beliefs many diverse groups could work together. The slogans "not a man or a cent for the military" and "we fight for a society where there is no place for brute force" were accepted by a great many people. When in 1916 the Society of Christian Socialists called an Easter Congress of revolutionary socialists, thousands came. A Revolutionary-Socialist Committee Against War and its Consequences was set up and had 50,000 members who included nearly all anarchists, syndicalists, Tolstoyans, revolutionary social democrats, and Christian socialists. Nevertheless, each group concentrated on the issues with which it was most concerned; the propaganda against the military generally took one, or a combination of the following forms. The printed page was the most widely used, in the form of regular monthly papers, brochures against specific laws or acts of the government or military, pamphlets left in trains or streetcars or passed from hand to hand in barracks, manifestoes distributed throughout the country and placed as notices in the newspapers that would print them. Sermons, meetings and Mobilization Clubs were quite effective, while public trials for those charged with agitation became
speaking platforms for those so charged. Those less flamboyant
sent flowers and cards to war resisters\textsuperscript{47} serving jail sentences
and contributed to the funds set up to aid the families of
those in jail. Traditional latent antimilitarism could easily
be brought to the surface because the individualistic and
independent approaches that were possible found favour with
many Dutch people.

From the government's point of view, one of the most damaging
kinds of propaganda was the War Resisting Manifesto which first
appeared in 1915 and was repeatedly reprinted with an ever
larger number of signatures. The Manifesto declared that the
undersigned protested against the growing spirit of war and
militarism in the Netherlands and declared that they opposed
all forms of militarism, including popular militias. They hoped
to have the strength of their convictions to refuse to serve
in the military even if they were punished with incarceration
or death. And they expressed, by means of this Manifesto, their
support for all those opposing military service, whatever the
reason for the opposition.\textsuperscript{48} The first edition of the Manifesto
had 180 signatures, the fourth 577, the fifth over 900, the
sixth passed the 1,100. Many of those who had signed were
influential people: doctors, pastors, teachers, technicians,
as well as factory workers, labourers, and housewives. The
names of some of the signers were well known: van Mierop, Orrt,
Enka (pseudonym for A. van der Vlies), and H. Roland Holst were
all literary figures. Others, such as the pastors de Ligt, Kruyt,
Bähler, Schermerhorn, A.R. de Jong, etc., were known for their
connections with various antimilitaristic groups and publications,
as well as for their sermons which had brought expulsion for some of them from certain areas in the Netherlands. The trials against some of the initiators and composers of the Manifesto only provided propaganda and martyrs for the cause. The speeches of the defendants were quickly printed and distributed while prominent people such as van Mierop and Roland Holst wrote scathing pamphlets denouncing the government for its actions. When two teachers convicted by the courts were also fired from their positions in their Protestant schools all the non-orthodox religious people took the side of the antimilitarists.

Much of the popularity of those fighting for the Manifesto came from the simple fact that the Netherlands did not have any kind of law which allowed conscientious objectors exemption from military service. Orthodox Protestants and Roman Catholics who normally opposed any kind of action or suggestions from left-wing elements, now saw the lacuna in the government's position because Quakers and Mennonites did not have a lawful exemption either. But the government did not act and antimilitarists obtained support from people who normally would never have given it. The liberal Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant (New Rotterdam Paper) on March 27, 1915 wrote in favour of freedom of conscience. On March 25, 1916 the organ of the Anti Revolutionary Party, De Standaard (The Standard), admitted that it was time a conscientious objection law was passed. A few members of the Society of Christian Socialists started an Action for Conscientious Freedom and, using arguments forwarded by both the liberals and Calvinists, demanded that the government introduce such a law. Of the people who signed the demand,
44 were pastors and not all of them were pacifists or anti-militarists. In 1917, 1,700 citizens of Rotterdam presented the government with a similar demand. The best that could be obtained was a provision by the Minister of War, de Jonge, saying that he would study requests for exemption from military service. In the meantime the requestor would stay in the service. If the request was granted the requestor would have to serve one extra year in an alternative position. Such a proposal satisfied no one and only provided more fuel for antimilitarists. The Social Democrats gratefully grabbed this "militarism" issue and frequently demanded in parliament that the government introduce such a law.

Considering the efforts and propaganda of the antimilitarists the number of men who went to jail rather than don the uniform does not appear large. The mobilized army numbered roughly 200,000 men, and 600 went to jail as war resisters. When compared to the British figures, however, the Dutch number is not really that low. In Great Britain just under 6,000 men were convicted for their conscientious objection, but the army numbered more than two million men. Without casting doubt on the sincerity of the British objectors, the fact remained that the British knew they were likely to end up in the trenches; the Dutch were reasonably certain that they only faced a dull time on a border post. It is impossible to discover how many Dutch youths dodged the draft or got out of the army on a ruse.
The Dutch army was so eroded through antimilitaristic propaganda that after four years of mobilization no real fighting force existed anymore. The latent dislike for things military provided a fertile soil to work in. The small corps of professional officers and men had long known that the army was not popular. In addition to constant criticism in parliament about expensive military projects there had been enough public pressure about "barbaric training methods" and "Prussian drill tactics" that the army had been forced to simplify its drill movements, reduce the number of watches, cut out all big parades except on the Queen's birthday, and allow military clubs for officers and NCOs. The officers had given little thought to the problem of this antipathy towards the military, however, and continued in the old way. Some of them looked with longing and envy to the well trained and disciplined troops in Germany but knew that this was unattainable in the Netherlands.

Unlike their German counterparts, Dutch youths were not attracted to uniforms, cursed their bad luck when drafted, and only lived for the day they would be discharged. Discipline for the sake of discipline was not accepted, nor was it clear to very many why someone had to be obeyed simply because he had a higher rank. Recruits repeatedly said that they did not wish to be commanded by NCOs from their own drafts (who were their own age), or by someone from their own village. The recruits knew that their attitude was shared by the people back home, and so did the officers. On the one hand they received surly obedience from the men, on the other hand small thanks (or none
at all) from the general public. The public blamed the officers for the sloppiness and bad discipline in the army, and the officers held the public largely responsible because it held the officers in such slight esteem.  

In such a situation it was not difficult for antimilitaristic groups to make matters worse and this was unintentionally augmented through mistakes by the military establishment. Until the summer of 1917 war resisters were imprisoned in separate barracks in regular army camps. This lead to frequent demonstrations between those willing and those unwilling to serve, while the latter had a marvellous opportunity for spreading their ideas. Ironically, the objectors were often sent flowers and pastry by the general public living near the camps, but the soldiers were not. One writer relates how one man who had refused to serve and had "done" his time in jail, on his return home had been led in triumph through his village behind the local band. This sort of thing happened not infrequently. By the time the army realized that it made no sense to use army camps both as jails and homes for regular soldiers, the situation was beyond repair.

The army was also slow to realize how well the clubs and Military Homes lent themselves for propaganda purposes. As early as September 1914 Rev. de Jong was preaching in Military Homes that war was immoral and only served the interests of a few evil persons. Removed from the area in *staat van beleg* he entered it somewhere else to preach the same message. Rev. de Ligt followed a similar pattern and was finally forbidden to preach to military personnel, which elicited a typical reaction
from one classis of the Dutch Reformed Church; it declared itself "saddened and indignant that the military authorities prevented the preaching of the Gospel." 64

Even more effective were the Mobilization Clubs—the socialist answer to the Protestant and Roman Catholic Military Homes—where the non-religious soldier could find entertainment. Social Democrats always defended these clubs even though control was frequently in other hands. The more extreme elements who gained the control usually renamed the clubs Independent Development Clubs to show their independence from the Social Democrats. Programs within the clubs varied greatly: some had outside speakers, others employed plays, musical evenings, poetry readings—almost always with an anti-military slant. Left-wing and antimilitaristic literature was usually available and could be bought freely. How the soldier smuggled it into the barracks was his problem.

The army was aware that the clubs and literature were undermining discipline, but counter measures were not very effective. Fourteen regular publications eventually were forbidden 65 but keeping them out of the barracks was virtually impossible and preventing the reading outside the barracks wholly so. Closing clubs and transferring participating soldiers to other units was equally ineffective. The clubs would reopen under a different name while the transferred individuals continued their activities in their new surroundings. 66

Concrete proof that the army was deteriorating was not difficult to find. In 1915 there were disturbances in the big camp in Tilburg; the following year saw small riots and protests
in Maastricht, Leiden, and other places; in 1917 soldiers in Laren threw stones through the windows of the officers mess while the latter were dining. Procrastinations, malingering and simulations were common. Ten per cent on sick call when a march was planned for that day was normal. Those unable to get out of the march would drop out from "exhaustion", "sickness", or "sore feet", and make their own casual way back to camp. Often sympathetic civilians lavished food and drink on the "poor exhausted fellows". A drop-out rate of 50 per cent on a march was not uncommon. "Theft, forging leave passes, refusing to salute, being absent without leave" were other favourites and practised frequently. When in April 1916 leaves were cancelled because of a possible German invasion, thousands of soldiers went home for Easter anyway. When by 1917 civilian unrest increased because of fuel and food shortages, and troops were used to maintain order in the big cities, soldiers repeatedly refused to act against civilians, made common cause with them, or went back to their barracks without breaking up the demonstrations as ordered by their officers. The erosion of the army was reflected in the number of cases the highest military court in the Netherlands had to handle. In 1915, the first full year of mobilization, the court dealt with 3,836 cases; in 1916 the number increased to 5,952, in 1917 to 9,735, and in 1918 to 10,562 cases.

The way discharged soldiers were treated also aided anti-militarists. There was no law that employers were to take back workers called up for military service, and many had to look for new employment when discharged. In 1904 a group of men set up
the National Association to Aid Conscripts and in the ten years before 1914 at least 3,000 men were given financial assistance or were helped to find employment. The Association obtained its money from volunteer contributions, but these fell far short once 200,000 men were mobilized. Arrangements were made with the National Relief Committee and other special agencies and the Association could recoup 75 per cent of its expenditures; the remainder had to come from volunteer contributions. During the mobilization, 260,000 requests for help from discharged soldiers were received; 237,000 were assisted (37,000 twice) with short term financial aid, obtaining work clothes, tools, employment, living quarters, etc. Efforts to have employers promise to take back their workers after their tour of duty were not very successful. In 1918 the Department of Defence finally shouldered the responsibility for the discharged soldiers.

By that time, almost one-quarter of a million men had a bitter taste in their mouths about the way they had been treated. Forced to serve their country, it had discarded them without a thought; they had to go and ask for assistance, for food, for clothes, for tools, etc. In a way they had been treated the same as war resisters who, while in jail and afterwards, had also received aid from funds brought together by private organizations. It was not likely that an overly large percentage of Dutch conscripts would be willing to repeat their army experience, nor that they instilled in their children much enthusiasm to serve their country.

Not all the ill behaviour of the Dutch conscripts stemmed from a principled antimilitarism; some of these men probably acted just as casually and indifferently in civilian life.
Others disliked the army for no other reason than that the food was different than at home, that leave periods were not as frequent as they desired, or that the pay was poor. The boredom of four years mobilization without much useful work also was a big factor. When everything is taken into consideration, however, there still remained a large reservoir of antimilitarism which went deeper. For some men it was grounded in the religious belief "thou shalt not kill", for others it was an ill defined ethical concept that no man had the right to demand that another obey all his orders to the extent of getting himself killed or killing others. For those educated in the class war doctrine, the army was nothing more than the last bastion of capitalism and as such needed only to be endured superficially while undermining the structure subvertively. When in late October 1918 the riots and demonstrations took place in many of the camps all these feelings came to the surface. It was not from revolutionary zeal that the soldiers acted, but a tired and "fed-up" antimilitarism which once again sought an outlet. The men had enough playing soldier for the state of the Netherlands.

For the Dutch people as a whole the war had been a good, and cheap lesson. The shortcomings in the defence apparatus had glaringly come to light. It had also become abundantly clear that only in time of immediate danger were the people willing to place the national interest first. As soon as the danger diminished, individualism, regionalism, church or party interests, etc., became more important than the national interest.
For the government the war was proof that its policy of neutrality and impartiality was correct, that it worked properly, and that it ought to be continued. The Dutch armed forces had prevented an invasion through their prompt mobilization and had thus carried out their task. This myth would be repeated with unchanging conviction for twenty years. Little thought was given to preventing a recurrence of the riots; these were dismissed as "mobilization weariness". No thought at all was given to combating the growing antimilitaristic sentiment in the nation.

The termination of the war forced antimilitarists to re-think their attitudes and policies. There was a general consensus that a repetition of such a holocaust must be prevented. It took the Social Democrats two years to work out a program to achieve this. It took several years before major religious and middle class organizations were formed to work for this goal. But the Extreme Left needed no time for soul searching; it started the post war era determined to make it a permanent peace and this could only be achieved through the abolition of all armed forces. It was self-evident that one ought to start in one's own country with the implementation of such a policy. Much energy was expended by the Dutch Extreme Left to make this happen at the earliest possible moment.
Chapter III: The Extreme Left

1. Introduction

Detailed coverage of Extreme Left antimilitaristic organizations has been limited to a few groups since it would be pointless to investigate them all. The Extreme Left included anarchists, syndicalists, communists, and all the socialists who considered themselves to be left of the Social Democrats. The Extreme Left was a fairly distinctive group within Dutch society because its members tended to stay within their own circle even though they often switched from one organization to another. Party or group allegiance was slight and new organizations were created with bewildering frequency. For those not part of the movement it looked large and dangerous. In 1934 a staunchly patriotic organization—not unlike the John Birch Society later in the United States—printed a booklet listing the left-wing publications "which systematically undermine authority."¹ The list was lengthy: more than 20 newspapers, 46 publications "of a general propaganda nature", 34 labelled "agitation propaganda", at least 16 "fomenting against the monarchy and the colonial possessions", 38 "undermining the defence establishment in general"; 33 "extremely left-wing" publications were similarly accused as were 22 communist ones. The government's Central Intelligence Service was slightly better informed and had a longer list. But these numbers do not give an accurate picture of the number of people involved. Some of these publications were translations from German or
French papers, others were reprints from earlier years. The total number of publications and organizations is probably correct, but the number of people involved was quite small.

It is not possible to determine the exact number of active antimilitaristic participants in the Extreme Left. If the membership of all the different organizations (many of them local or regional) are added the total might reach 50,000. But it cannot be established whether all syndicalist and communist trade union members and all the members of the four left-of-the-Social Democrats political parties were active antimilitarists. On the other hand, if the election totals of the Extreme Left parties are taken as a guide, the number varies between 100,000 and 200,000. It can be assumed that all the voters were in favour of the respective antimilitarist theories of these parties even though they might not go out and propagandize them personally. It is debatable whether it is important to know the exact number of people that were involved. The amount of propaganda produced by the Extreme Left was enough to reach everyone in the Netherlands. In many instances it brought some kind of reaction. If it was received favourably, antimilitarism had won a convert. If it was received unfavourably, the person most likely belonged to the clerical bloc. His attention was once again focussed on "the threat from within" which tried to weaken the country; having his attention thus directed often meant that the foreign threat was forgotten.

Geographically the Extreme Left was represented much stronger north of the big rivers than in the Catholic south. Twente (the textile area near the German border), Amsterdam and the Zaan
area (immediately north of the city) were the areas where the Extreme Left was concentrated. The communists were especially strong in the capital. In general the major cities proved a more fertile recruiting ground than the agricultural areas, but there were exceptions. East Groningen and south east Friesland (both agricultural provinces) had sizeable libertarian or communist groups. The size of any group was closely related to the number of capable organizers in an area. Such men were the heart of a local organization and if they moved away a decline frequently followed.  

Most of these in the Extreme Left belonged to the working class with dock workers, construction labourers, and textile workers being strongly represented. A small number of intellectuals provided the leadership and the written propaganda. They were usually teachers and pastors but self educated men played a prominent part in many groups.

The combined antimilitaristic effort of all these people was considerable but was marred by the internal divisions. There was general agreement that capitalism ultimately meant war, that it kept itself aloft through a military establishment, and that therefore the destruction of the military had the highest priority. But the groups differed on the means that ought to be employed. Some men rejected all forms of violence but others were willing to accept it as a last resort for the working class. Within the latter group there were those who thought it useful to enter parliament, others opposed it; some entered the military to undermine the system from within, others only wanted to work from the outside.
There were seldom clear demarcation lines between the groups because the cover organizations and co-ordination committees blurred the lines. The communists were more distinguishable than the others but still worked with roughly twenty cover organizations. The antimilitaristic efforts of the anarchists and syndicalists have been traced through the International Anti-militaristic Society, the only libertarian organization of note specifically instituted to combat militarism. Of course the 30 or 40 anarchist, syndicalist, free socialist, freethinkers, etc., groups that existed also carried out antimilitaristic propaganda of their own. The Antimilitaristic Society was the focal point, however, and so were the various committees created to investigate or oppose a particular aspect of the Dutch military.

Bart de Ligt has been used as a vehicle to trace the development of antimilitaristic thought from individual war resisting, to undermining the industrial and transportation facilities, to a passive disobedience campaign against the nation's own capitalist class or against a foreign oppressor. De Ligt, an important figure in the Extreme Left, went through these stages himself and because he was the best known Dutch antimilitarist theorist had substantial influence in proliferating these views. De Ligt, moreover, represents the "internationalist" who tried to drag antimilitarism out of its narrow national confines into European and worldwide prominence.
2. The Communists

The Social Democratic Party opposed the war vigorously. The party newspaper, De Tribune (The Tribune), came out with the slogan "against the war the civil war"; the party made contact with every antimilitaristic group in the country, distributed 100,000 manifestoes entitled "War on the War", helped to create the Social-Anarchist Action which in turn was expanded into the Revolutionary-Socialist Alliance under the leadership of H. Roland Holst. The long range goal of the agitation was to use the war to bring about the social revolution; more immediate demands were a moratorium on debts and rents, normal wages for mobilized soldiers, a prohibition on the export of foodstuffs, and later, the immediate demobilization of the Dutch army.

In 1916 David Wijnkoop, one of the three leading men in the Social Democratic Party, initiated a Demonstrative Congress Against the War where in addition to the above mentioned groups the Society of Christian Socialists was present. The ensuing demonstrations in Amsterdam attracted 25,000 participants while the petition against the export of food received 77,500 signatures. The campaign against the war included the War Resisting Manifesto, at least 200 different brochures against war and militarism, and also resulted in 800 war resisters going to jail instead of into the army by 1923. The Social Democratic Party skilfully combined anti-war propaganda with a campaign against food shortages—a very real issue for city workers—and as a result received 31,000 votes (2.3% of the total) and two seats in parliament in the 1918 elections.

The Society of Christian Socialists ran its own candidate and so did the
syndicalists with their newly formed Socialist Party. Both parties polled about 8,000 votes—enough for one seat each.

Unity based on opposition to a particular war could not be extended into permanent cooperation. The Society of Christian Socialists came to an end in 1920 when a few leading figures, among them Bart de Ligt, departed. The Socialist Party fell into oblivion when a majority of the syndicalists proved willing to work closely with the communists in the former's trade union federation. The "true" syndicalists departed to start their own trade union federation. When the Social Democratic Party, renamed the Communist Party Holland in 1918, held its 12th Congress in 1921 it called for "the demolition of militarism with the aim: disarming of the ruling class and arming of the working class." This turned away many antimilitarists who no longer believed that the Bolshevik Revolution would sweep Europe and therefore saw no need to bring about an armed revolution if there was no hope of success. The Communists reinforced their isolation by their staunch defence of the militarization in Russia, which few libertarians could accept.

The Communists worked hard at their own kind of antimilitarism. Streams of pamphlets left the presses and De Tribune did not neglect many chances to hammer away at the militarism in the Netherlands. That the country was militaristic was "obvious" because a country with 6 million inhabitants could otherwise not keep control of 60 million Indonesians. "Indonesia free from Holland...NOW" was therefore a frequently heard slogan. Communist propaganda had a raucous tone and the harshness of the attacks was not very effective with the sober minded Dutch.
Constant attacks on the Social Democrats were included in what were supposed to be purely antimilitaristic brochures and gave an air of spiteful small-mindedness to what the Communists said. The split within the party resulting in the existence of two Communist parties from 1925 to 1930 greatly hurt their credibility.

The result was that the communists did not increase very much in the years after 1918. In the 1922 elections they polled 53,644 votes but women were allowed to vote for the first time so that the total voting population was much larger than in 1918. In the 1925 elections they only received 36,770 votes. For the next few years the communists were at a low ebb. The two communist parties fought for control of their trade union federation (which had 13,000 members). Efforts were made to make their trade union federation a full fledged competitor of the Social Democratic trade union federation (200,000 members). At the same time Comintern orders were followed to form cells within the Social Democrat trade unions. All of this led to a hopeless chaos on the labour front. Sneevliet, a popular man in the communist trade unions, left in 1927 to start the Trotskyite Revolutionary Socialist Party with the remnants of the Socialist Party.

A change of policy by the Comintern brought a reunion of the two communist parties and with unification returned confidence and members. On February 1, 1930 there were 1,100 party members; at the Christmas Congress in 1932 there were 5,500. This latter Congress decided to return to an aggressive antimilitaristic policy and in particular to carry out the instructions...
of the International Anti-War Congress which had met in August in Amsterdam—a most impressive gathering of 2,000 delegates representing 30 million people.\(^\text{14}\) Earlier in 1932 (March 27) the Communist Party had held its own Peoples Congress where 832 delegates—including a few Social Democrats, and several Protestants, Roman Catholics, syndicalists, etc.,--had deliberated on the best methods to prevent a war which appeared to be drawing inexorably closer.\(^\text{15}\) It was decided to form small (seven men at the most) Anti-War Committees that would be active in factories, mines, harbours, and also visit other workers at home to win their confidence. At least 75 of these committees were eventually created.\(^\text{16}\) They were an extension of communist cell forming and were especially useful for disrupting industry, hindering the transportation of war materials, and pressuring other workers into strikes and work stoppages.

Attempts to gain influence through cover organizations had varying degrees of success. The best results were obtained with the Organization for Folk Culture which showed publicly forbidden films (mostly Russian ones) to its members, branched out into theater, educational courses, trips to the Soviet Union, etc. In 1933 the Organization for Folk Culture, now part of another cover organization—Friends of Soviet Russia—had a membership of 13,000 of whom no more than 2,000 were communists.\(^\text{17}\)

The low profile in the cover organizations contrasted sharply with the official antimilitaristic propaganda of the Communist Party which was made in harsh, blatant form and struck out at the government, the Social Democrats, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and the Independent Socialist Party created\(^\text{18}\)
in 1932. The mutiny on the old cruiser *Zeven Provincien*, stationed in Indonesia and carried out by the crew out of protest against their low wages, brought a virulent communist attack on the government. Dutch communists had very close contacts with the communist party in Indonesia which had been brutally suppressed after a futile revolt in 1926. A number of the *Zeven Provincien* mutineers were Indonesians and the communists felt close kinship with them. In 1934 the communists were in the limelight because of their involvement in the revolt in the Jordaan (a workers' district in Amsterdam) where a few people were killed and about 200 injured. The government was unable to prove communist responsibility but the presses whereon *De Tribune* was printed were locked and P.J. Schmidt, leader of the Independent Socialist Party, was given a prison sentence on the pretext of lese-majesty.

The depression and the *Zeven Provincien* affair brought a polarization to the Netherlands. In the 1933 elections two new antimilitaristic parties captured one seat each. The Roman Catholic People's Party and the Christian Democratic Union were both protest groups from respectively the Roman Catholic and Protestant blocs. The Communists, with 6,000 members, polled 118,236 votes (3.18% of the total) and captured four seats. Sneevliet's Revolutionary Socialist Party obtained one seat with 48,405 votes, and although the Independent Socialist Party fell short it still received 27,467 votes. The extreme antimilitarists thus polled one-quarter of a million votes. On the other hand, the Social Democrats lost two seats and the Liberal Democrats one; both parties demanded unilateral disarmament but
refused to sanction personal war resisting. The clerical bloc did not increase but the most conservative party within the bloc, the Anti Revolutionaries, gained two seats.

After 1935 the Communists drastically changed their policy. A united front against fascism became the objective and necessitated cooperation with all left-wing parties. The years of hostility were difficult to forget, however, and the Social Democrats were especially hard to convince. They refused to cooperate with the Communists in municipal elections as the latter requested and kept aloof in politics until 1940. But in the Social Democratic trade unions the Communists were more successful. In the early thirties they had been banned because of their cell forming tactics, but in many Social Democratic trade unions this prohibition became a dead letter and individual communists were re-admitted as members. Cell forming was not practised anymore. The 1938 Communist Congress noted that whereas in 1935 only 30 per cent of party members belonged to trade unions, this percentage had now increased to more than fifty.23

In May 1936 the Communists demanded that the army, navy, and police be cleansed of fascist elements but as a major concession they accepted a (purified) defence force. The 1938 Congress went even further and changed the slogan "Indonesia free from Holland" to "Democratization of an Indonesia tied to the Netherlands". During the Congress Party Secretary de Groot called for an end to the blind hitting out to all sides and urged cooperation with all left-wing groups. The government was warned24 to safeguard the nation and to ensure that it did not become a second Austria which had just been annexed by
Germany. The party changed its name from Communist Party Holland to Communist Party Netherlands, and its newspaper from De Tribune to Het Volksdagblad (The People’s Daily) in order not to remind people of the isolationist, Moscow-knows-best, opposition-to-everything period of the party.

Winning complete acceptance and trust required more time than was granted the Dutch Communists. The Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 forced the Communists into tortuous explanations; many had difficulty swallowing the new party line but apparently few left the party because of it. Of course the Communists did nothing to prepare the Dutch nation against a German attack. It was unfortunate that the Dutch party thought it essential to follow the Moscow-Comintern line in everything. Had they continued in their pre August 1939 policies they would have been a definite asset in the defence against the German invasion. The Dutch Communists were the first to organize an underground resistance against the Germans—it was already working before the German attack on the Soviet Union—and they were tenacious opponents of fascism. Dutch Communists, like their Russian counterparts, paid a high price in lives for their earlier miscalculations.

3. The International Antimilitaristic Society and Bureau:
Principles and Organization

At the close of the war the Society had over 3,000 members. Its monthly paper De Wapens Neder had sold a total of 300,000 copies that year, and close cooperation with all other left-wing organizations made it a powerful antimilitaristic force.
The 1919 Congress rejected a resolution that the Society declare itself in favour of a communist society and work to make the revolution in all capitalist countries a reality. This brought a break with the communists. The Congress accepted a new Declaration of Principles which it hoped were broad enough to satisfy most people belonging to "the Left". Articles II and III of the Declaration stated:

II An antimilitarist is he who, without reservation, opposes militarism and believes that through individual and collective efforts the greatest possible damage must be done to it and, that general aspirations as well as every attempt by each state to maintain or increase its strength through militarism must be combated as strongly as possible.

III The Society is based on the individual freedom of all people who want to further the antimilitaristic ideal in an organizational way, and opens her arms--and MUST open them--to all who accept the Principles of Article II without considering whether they are based on the conviction:

a. that militarism is coercion and that they condemn all forms of coercion (individualists)  
b. that militarism is based on violence and that they condemn all violence (pacifists among whom Christian-anarchists)  
c. that militarism is a creation of the state and that they are working for the abolishment of the state (anarchists)  
d. that militarism is a creation of the capitalistic state and that they want, for instance, a soviet republic (communists)  
e. or from any other consideration, or a combination of considerations.

The Declaration was not thorough enough and at the Third International Antimilitarist Congress, held in the Hague from March 25 to 31, 1921, the Society accepted a few additions. It was emphasized that belief in the state had to be combated "because the state, through militarism, enslaves man and takes away the right to live." "Bourgeois pacifism" and "social patriotism" were categorically rejected but anyone, whether anarchist, Christian-socialist, communist, or whoever willing to principally fight capitalism and militarism is welcome in our ranks.
At the Congress there were many representatives from abroad and they could not accept the formulation. A second organization was therefore created which would be acceptable to all.

The International Antimilitaristic Bureau was envisaged as a central coordinating bureau of all organizations opposed to militarism: it accepted the following Principles:

The Bureau, consisting of revolutionary antimilitarist organizations, has as aim to combat militarism internationally in order to make the suppression of the working class impossible.
It tries to instill in the worker a consciousness of his economic power. It propagates the general strike and mass refusal of military service to prevent the outbreak of war. It propagates the immediate cessation of all war materials. It promotes the disorganization of armies and navies and honours the individual war resister.
It turns against any attempt at intervention in order to suppress a proletariat that has thrown off its capitalistic yoke.
It opposes all military oppression and economic exploitation of the coloured races, and tries to bring about the greatest possible unity among the proletariat of the North, South, East, and West.

As had happened with the Society seventeen years earlier, the direction of the Bureau rested in Dutch hands: B. de Ligt became chairman, J. Giesen secretary, and L.J. Bot treasurer.

Because the Bureau reserved the right of the working class to take up arms as a final alternative against its oppressor, a small group left the Congress to form a truly pacifist organization. At first called Paco—the Esperanto word for peace—the association, led by Kees Boeke, reorganized itself in 1923, moved to England, and renamed itself the War Resisters International. It worked together frequently with the Bureau even though fundamental differences prevented amalgamation. Many personal connections existed: for instance, Jo Meyer, Bart de Ligt, Han Kuysten were active members in both organizations.
Cooperation between the Bureau and the Society was, of course, very close because many leadership functions in both organizations were carried out by the same persons.

Both organizations sent representatives to the International Peace Congress held under the auspices of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), which met in the Hague in December 1922. It was a bitter disappointment for the libertarians and confirmed their suspicions that there was no cooperation possible with Social Democrat trade unions. B. de Ligt and J. Giesen managed to give short speeches before the Congress but their resolutions were ignored or rejected. Both men later wrote very bitterly about their experience. Not surprisingly both the Society and Bureau had nothing but scorn for Social Democrats and concentrated solely on libertarian groups and syndicalist trade unions.

At the 1923 Syndicalist Congress in Berlin the Bureau could not convince the International Workers Association to become a member; aims and ideas were similar enough, however, that in 1926 a joint International Antimilitaristic Committee was created. This was a press service giving information about wars, war preparations, political terror, and the suppression of races, nationalities and classes. By 1931 it was providing articles to about 120 (largely extreme left-wing) papers in 35 countries. The Society, the Bureau, and the press service opposed the militarization in Russia. In 1923 the Bureau had already passed a resolution protesting against military conscription there and repeated the resolution in 1926. Logically enough all three organizations lost their communist members.
Of the more than 30 Dutch organizations affiliated with the International Bureau—20 other organizations in 10 countries completed the membership—13 were syndicalist and 18 anarcho-communist. A few of them, such as the Religious Anarcho-Communists, carried the word "communist" in their name, but there was no connection with the regime in the Soviet Union or with the Dutch Communists.

The Antimilitaristic Society gradually lost power and influence in the twenties and thirties. In part this happened because the two syndicalist trade union federations declined respectively from 7,700 members in 1924 to a negligible 1,600 in 1940, and from 20,000 members in 1932 to 10,000 in 1940. Disappointment in the lack of strength was also responsible for the decline in the Society's membership: from more than 3,000 in 1918 to 1,250 in 1922 and 850 in 1925.

Various organizational changes and different affiliations were tried. For a short time the Society was affiliated with both the middle class No More War Federation and the communist controlled League Against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression. Attempts to form a Dutch Antimilitaristic Bureau wherein all anarchists and syndicalists would be united did not come to fruition in spite of discussions lasting several years. Efforts to form a Committee Against War and Fascism (Antifo) did succeed but difficulties with the syndicalist trade union federations meant that Antifo never lived up to its expectations. The Society recovered slightly from its low point in 1927, but according to the Central Intelligence Service its membership in 1935 was still only 800.
The Antimilitaristic Society was always suspected by the government and a large segment of the population for its anarchistic principles. Society members were subjected to harassing raids by the police, the arrest of speakers for "agitation", and the confiscation of propaganda material. But it was not the Dutch government which brought an end to the Society; internal division over the Spanish Civil War accomplished that. Part of the Society was in favour of supporting the Spanish workers with weapons and ammunition; others wanted only to send food and medicine. After many discussions a committee proposed a change in the Declaration of Principles which was accepted by a large majority. The Society declared to be against every form of organized violence, which included not only every national, imperialistic, or anti-fascist war, but also civil war. The question "Who is fighting whom?" was still important but lost its meaning if both sides became militarized and used conscription and coercion to force people to fight.

The syndicalist trade unions could not accept this position and they departed. The last contact with workers' organizations was thereby lost and the Society, supported only by the League of Anarcho-Socialists, was reduced to a tiny group of 300-400 people.

Since the International Antimilitaristic Bureau still had a Dutch executive the same "Spanish Question" became a source of conflict there. Three executive members tried to prevent the Bureau from accepting the same pacifist principles as the Society but they were outvoted by representatives from affiliated Dutch organizations. The non-Dutch groups did not accept the new
principles and they departed. Both the Society and the Bureau existed to 1940, but without strength and vitality.

4. The International Antimilitaristic Society: Influence and Propaganda

The Society was much more important than its grave organizational troubles and limited membership at first glance suggests. Its membership declined, but its monthly paper De Wapens Neder retained a circulation of 10,000 a month until about 1932, remained at 8,000 for a number of years and still sold 3,500 a month in 1940. A considerable segment of the Extreme Left must have continued to read the paper, while frequent references in other antimilitarist and pacifist papers testify to a diverse readers circle. The affinity for the Extreme Left by the left-wing of the Social Democrats ensured that ideas filtered into the party which reinforced the traditional antimilitarism of the rank and file Social Democrats. The Society was instrumental in making war resisting a popular cause beyond its own ranks. Finally, the Society tried to stimulate activity and more than once stirred up the whole left into antimilitaristic action. Such was the case in the "Groenendaal summer".

Herman Groenendaal was a convinced antimilitarist who had announced his intention to refuse military service. When he did not report as ordered, he was arrested, went on a hunger strike, and after a few days was transferred to a military hospital. From there he wrote J. Giesen, secretary of the Antimilitaristic Bureau, and asked for support from the Bureau. Bart de Ligt, Albert de Jong, and Johnny Harinck, representing
the Society and the Bureau went to the Minister of War and demanded that Groenendaal be set free. The delegation pointed out that earlier the Second Chamber had accepted the "motion-Drion" which declared that it was desirable to make allowance for conscientious objectors against military service. No specific law had been passed, however, and the Minister refused to take action in the case of Groenendaal. Thereupon the antimilitarists decided that a large scale public action would be most effective, culminating in work stoppages to "strike Groenendaal free".

On Sunday, June 26, 1921 a protest meeting with several thousand participants was organized in the Hague and when the people marched to the house of the Minister of War they were forcibly dispersed by the police. Publicity was now assured because even some right-wing papers commented on the needless violence used by the police. Bart de Ligt and Albert de Jong were arrested. In the court room de Ligt repeated part of the speech for which he had been arrested and his words found their way into many newspapers:

In the name of Jesus Christ, in the name of Marx, in the name of Bakunin, in the name of Kropotkin, in the name of Tolstoy, and in the name of Groenendaal I urge you: refuse to build military barracks and jails; refuse military service; start a general strike in protest against the incarceration of Groenendaal.

De Ligt and de Jong received respectively 27 and 29 days—the time they had spent in jail awaiting their trial.

J. Giesen recounts that at many protest meetings where he spoke the other speakers represented social democrats, communists, syndicalists, the Revolutionary Socialist Women's League, and the youth movement. On June 28 several thousand workers in Amsterdam went on strike and the syndicalists
tried to organize strikes in the other big cities. But no mass worker movement could be created because the Social Democrats decided to keep things orderly. Without their support there was no hope of success. The many local demonstrations and protest meetings held throughout the country had no direct result; Groenendaal had to serve his sentence.

There were two consequences from the "Groenendaal summer"; the government passed a conscientious objection law; conscientious objection in general came into the public interest, became a much discussed subject in the rapidly multiplying peace organizations, and provided a basis for cooperation for many pacifist groups.

The principal clause of the law which the government finally passed in 1923 stated:

He who is conscripted, or already in the military service, and has conscientious objections against the military service because he is convinced that he may not kill his fellow man, even when ordered to do so by the public authorities, can request an alternative service.

If an objector was willing to accept ambulance service he stayed eight months longer than a regular conscript; if he also objected to this he was placed in the civil service and served an extra twelve months. For every person whose objection was accepted by the special judicial committee the government could call up another conscript.

This latter point was objected to by the syndicalists because someone else would serve in place of the objector. The anarchists refused to make use of the law since this would be giving tacit consent that the government had the right to call people into military service. Various MPs, mostly Social Democrats,
objected to the limitations of the law and the narrow interpretation given to it by the minister when he introduced the bill. Even the Roman Catholic newspaper *De Tijd* (the Times) noted:  

Anarchistic individuals have not, according to the Minister, conscientious objections but only political-revolutionary opposition against the present authorities in this capitalistic state. These anarchist objectors do not fall within the confines of the law. Is the argument of the Minister correct?

Other newspapers asked similar questions and thereby the intermittent debate started which continued until 1940.

Another objection to the law, that was to be stated and restated in many forms, was introduced by the initiator of Church and Peace Professor G.J. Heering. He pointed out that only pacifists who rejected all forms of violence, including that which the police sometimes had to use out of necessity, were eligible for alternative service. But what about the people who accepted this form of violence, as well as self defence, but rejected the systematized, bestial, pre-meditated, refined violence of organized war? As Heering saw it, the end had to justify the means, and what end could justify the means of poison gas, bacteriological warfare, and the bombing of women and children in defenceless cities? Those who objected to this kind of warfare, and wanted no part of it, had no alternative but to refuse military service and spend ten months in jail like common criminals.

Heering's argument found quick acceptance among many Dutch people; it opened their eyes to the fact that those who elected to go to jail rather than into the army were not necessarily
cowards or extreme elements out to destroy the state. Many now became sympathetic to the efforts of the Antimilitaristic Society and other libertarian groups to provide some relief for those who were in jail instead of taking part in what Heering called "this idiotic criminal act." The Support Fund which had existed since 1916 to help families of jailed war resisters and had dispensed more than 100,000 guilders to 218 families by 1919, received donations from people who had previously never considered giving to such a cause. The Canteen Fund which provided incarcerated war resisters with some extra food and cigarettes also received more help. The Society had always been closely connected with these efforts and was now brought into contact with people who had always been far removed from it. This was also the case with the new Manifesto that replaced the War Resisting Manifesto of 1916 which had fallen into abeyance.

The Committee organizing the campaign of the "War Resisting Manifesto Mobilization!" and the yearly congresses that were held, consisted of people from various political and religious streams who belonged to a variety of antimilitarist and pacifist groups. The Manifesto Mobilization! declared:

We, men and women, antimilitarists, observe with gladness that under the so called draftees the inclination increases to form "peace drafts", and that the number of those who refuse to become soldiers slowly but steadily increases. We feel impelled openly to choose the side of these principled war resisters. We declare that, if we are ever forced to perform military tasks, to refuse such work, not only in barracks, trenches, warships and airplanes, but also in munition plants, factories, transport organizations—in short not to perform any work which has anything to do with war and the preparation for war. We also aim with this manifesto to prevent the mobilization of the forces of war. We call upon all those who are willing to fight for peace, to mobilize themselves immediately with us for peace, and when an outbreak of war threatens, to prevent it through concrete action.
The response to the Manifesto was good; when the first War Resisting Congress was held in April 1925 more than 1,000 people had signed the document. The Manifesto was printed on self-addressed post cards which were widely distributed. At the 1926 Congress it was announced that the number of signatures had more than doubled in one year. For many people it was not so difficult to publicly declare their position; for others, especially when employed in the civil service, it was not without risk of losing one's employment. This became especially true when the depression made work scarce and communists and anti-militarists became fair game. The Committee Mobilization! received quite a few requests to please remove a certain name from the list because the next publication of the Manifesto with that particular name still under it would mean the loss of employment. It was largely for that reason that in 1935, when a newly worded, more up to date Manifesto was put out, there were only 1,400 names listed under the old one.

The diversity of speakers at the War Resisting Congresses, and the high attendance—400 to 600 people—was impressive. In 1925, for instance, Rev. Padt of the League of Religious Anarcho-Communists, H. Schuurman of the Anarchist Youth Movement, W.H.A. Schuurman a Social Democrat, A. Hoytink an orthodox Protestant, Schermerhorn, Giesen and de Jong representing the Antimilitaristic Society and Bureau, Heering from Church and Peace, and Rev. Hugenholtz representing several middle class peace groups, all spoke at the Congress. Later Congresses were equally representative of the many Dutch peace organizations.
A number of committees designed to help conscientious objectors and war resisters were created. The Anti Conscription Committee tried to synchronize the efforts of the many peace organizations working to force the government to end conscription. Until 1930 this Committee had a long cumbersome title; with the name change came a different emphasis. Instead of trying to change the government, it now tried to inform all youths of draft age and their parents about the moral principle behind war resisting, the duration of the jail term that could be expected, and the kind of treatment that was meted out.

The Society was an active participant and supporter of the Anti Conscription Committee and the initiator of the Committee to Study War Resisting which tried to obtain documentation about the treatment of war resisters while in jail. In 1931 the Committee was expanded to include one member from Church and Peace, and one from the Youth Peace Action; efforts were made to get a member from the Mennonites and from the Remonstrant Church. The treatment of the prisoners was of great concern to the Society since many war resisters came from its ranks. There is little doubt that in the years shortly after 1918 war resisters were treated with less than kindness; they were given the same consideration as criminals, but with the difference that quite a few guards thought they had to "re-educate" them. Medical provisions were less than adequate in jail and De Wapens Neder constantly voiced this as well as such stories as the forceful feeding of Groenendaal and the three fellow prisoners who followed his example. A similar incident occurred a few years later when 24 war resisters went on a hunger strike.
According to De Wapens Neder, at least two prisoners died in jail because of improper medical treatment and one went insane.  

In the Committee for Guidance for Conscientious Objectors wherein Church and Peace, Youth Peace Action, the Mennonites and others cooperated, the Society would not take part. It was admitted that every effort to hamper militarism was useful, but only those who elected to go to jail weakened the establishment. The Society therefore concentrated much attention and effort on the incarcerated civilians. Each month De Wapens Neder carried the names of all those in jail, clubs were organized to write to the men, birthdays—which were, and are, elaborately celebrated in the Netherlands—were mentioned and bazaars and other activities were organized to get money for the Canteen Fund.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to calculate the definitive number of war resisters during the inter war years. The libertarian papers that published lists did not always have complete information and the names in the different papers do not always match. Heering stated that between 1915 and 1929 1,000 men went to jail rather than into the services. Judging from the fragmentary information in the libertarian papers, this figure appears conservative. If the 600 who went to jail during the war are subtracted, 400 men over a period of 11 years preferred 10 months in jail over the army or navy. In the 10 years that followed, the names in the libertarian papers show an inconsistent number, varying from 15 to 50, being held in jail at any one time. During the middle thirties the numbers were lowest but they increased sharply in the months prior
to the German invasion. The decline probably reflected the decline of the libertarian groups since it was from their ranks that most of the war resisters came. The increase in the later thirties is noteworthy because prison sentences were lengthened, first to 18 then to 30 months as the draft was enlarged in 1938 and a general mobilization called in August 1939.

There are accurate figures for conscientious objectors who did alternative service. Between 1924 and 1938, 609 men petitioned the government, 393 had their petition approved, 89 had it rejected, and the remainder withdrew their petition for unspecified reasons. The figures show a gradual increase each year, from less than 20 in each of the first 5 years of the law to more than 50 in each of the 7 years before 1939. When the mobilization was called, 397 men petitioned the government; only a few cases were considered by the committee before the Germans invaded so that no accurate picture can be gathered as to how many had sincere objections. A point can be made that this latter group was the fruit of 20 years of antimilitaristic propaganda. These men had all been in the service before, were older, had read and heard the arguments put forth by the pacifists, and decided that they did not want to serve in the military. The obvious counter argument is that for the first time it looked as if the Netherlands would become part of the war and that the men were anxious to save their skin and keep out of it. Perhaps this is true for some of them, but the number of war resisters also increased in the final months and these men knew they could expect 30 months in jail.
By the end of the twenties the Antimilitaristic Society was giving serious thought to whether it need not find new methods to combat militarism. Propaganda against military service was out of date considering the complete national involvement in any new war. Was it not more sensible to concentrate on industry because without it the military was powerless? Two viewpoints came to the surface: one was that a small group such as the libertarians could do little to disrupt the industrial process of the nation, the other insisted that small revolutionary groups could disrupt a great deal. A final decision was not reached although most people agreed that more accent should be placed on refusal to work in industries connected with the military. However, not much could be undertaken beyond spreading printed and spoken propaganda urging refusal of all work in such establishments. During the depression, such a message was hardly effective in a country with almost half a million unemployed people eager to take every available job.

After Hitler came to power in Germany the Society had to face a much more realistic and aggressive argument from the "militarists" than had hitherto been the case. A large part of the nation—two major and a few minor political parties, a few large pacifist groups and many small ones—had been in favour of unilateral disarmament. With the presence of a fascist country next door many began to reconsider their ideas. But the Society was consistent in its antimilitarism and was quite voluble in giving its assessment of the situation.
As the Antimilitaristic Society saw it (and its view was representative of most libertarians), there was no reason to call fascism the big ogre or to portray the international situation as a case of democracy versus dictatorship. It was quite obvious from the last war that the allies had only fought for their own interests, had made a peace treaty which only benefited themselves, and had not disarmed as promised. Moreover, they had shown themselves to be quite barbarian by starting a hunger boycott against Germany after November 1918. France had remained a completely militaristic nation since 1918 and had done everything possible to keep Germany down. There was no point in knocking down German militarism with French and British militarism; at best it would bring a few years of uneasy peace before war started all over again. Bombing and poisoning Berlin, Hamburg and the Ruhr could not produce a better civilization for Europe. The so-called democracies were trumpeting propaganda against Germany and the Soviet Union, but every democracy would make an alliance with either of the two countries if national interest was served by it. The real enemy in all countries was militarism. It was not possible to destroy militarism from without, it must be done from within by the people themselves: through propaganda, upbringing of children, education.

In a sense the fascist leaders were more honest than the democratic ones: the former clearly told the people that guns were chosen over butter; the latter did not tell the people but made the same choice. Democracies were just as aggressive as other systems. Who took Germany's colonies and kept them after 1918? Who intervened in Russia from 1919 to 1921?
There was no intrinsic difference between democracies and fascism because both were forms of capitalism. In the final analysis the workers were the ones who would lose; they would be sent to fight and die—on both sides. The workers now making the weapons would end up killing themselves with these weapons. "We antimilitarists are no friends of fascism, but neither are we taken in by the propaganda of the democracies." 63

The message of the Society did not make a great impression even though a few of the predictions proved quite accurate. At Munich the democracies did make a "deal" with Germany; Britain very nearly reached an accord with the Soviet Union in 1939; the workers (and their families) did get killed by the very materials they produced.

The apparent failure of the Society and the Bureau should not be taken to mean that the whole movement had achieved nothing. The many war resisters who preferred jail over simple submission, the thousands who contributed money out of their all too meager income, the many hours spent selling brochures and De Wapens Neder—often harassed by police or Orange-minded Dutchmen—spoke of a conviction and sincerity not attained by many self-righteous patriots. Perhaps most important is the pacifist theory that slowly developed over the years. Little has been said about it because the theory did not stand in close relationship with the organizational and propagandizing aspects of the Society. Perhaps this was the greatest weakness of the organization—it was too negative. All actions and propaganda more or less said, "let us do away with militarism, then capitalism will crumble and we can build a new society." The
major means of doing away with militarism was refusal to serve; it meant that the 20-year olds had to carry the burden. And there were not enough libertarian youths to carry out the task. By the time the accent was changed to the industrial sector, the depression made every available job a highly desirable treasure. Consequently, it was unrealistic to expect workers to refuse jobs that had to do with the military. The biggest handicap for the Society was that it could not shake its sectarianism; just like the small orthodox denominations and sects which were so detested the libertarians remained in their own little corner and refused to cooperate unless the others would underwrite the same goals and ideals they had. The International Antimilitaristic Society wanted too much; had it worked with the Social Democrats and others demanding unilateral disarmament, the excellent organizers and propagandists within the Extreme Left could have achieved much more. Perhaps the scales could have been tipped within the Netherlands and the army could have been disbanded: it would not have prevented the German invasion but it would have saved many lives and a great deal of destruction in 1940. Bart de Ligt, the theoretician of the libertarians, eventually realized this and tried to move in that direction in the years just before his death. For him and for the Society this change came too late.
5. Bart de Ligt (1883-1938)

In the history of Dutch antimilitarism Bart de Ligt takes a special place. He wrote prodigiously; between 1914 and his death in 1938 more than 500 articles, pamphlets, brochures, reports and books appeared in print: almost all of them concerned with the question of peace, bringing militarism to an end, and creating a new society where brute force would have no place. Starting as a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church he joined the Society of Christian Socialists and became one of the initiators of the War Resisting Manifesto of 1915 for which act he was put in jail for a few weeks in 1916. By this time he had already been banned by the government from the southern part of the Netherlands for preaching antimilitaristic sermons. He had an active part in the formation of the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance and he took a strong stand against the Social Democratic Workers Party for its petit-bourgeois mentality and its acceptance of the war.

During the war de Ligt studied and wrote a great deal and became convinced that the church was not the place for him. In 1917 he stopped preaching and two years later he left the Society of Christian Socialists because he could no longer call himself a Christian. The transformation came in part because of his studies of Bakunin and Kropotkin and in part because of the Bolshevik Revolution. It appeared as if a new world was being created and de Ligt felt very much in tune with the ideas that were propagated. To prepare for the expected change in Dutch society he participated in the formation of the League of Revolutionary Socialist Intellectuals which tried
to win larger groups "through practical and moral arguments" and thereby reduce "the violent character of eventual social crisis as much as possible." Anarchists, syndicalists, neo-Marxists, and Christian socialists worked together in the League and the government feared them sufficiently to take all sorts of measures to neutralize the influence of the intellectuals. As the reaction took hold in the Netherlands, however, many intellectuals left the League; the official organ, De Nieuwe Amsterdamer (New Amsterdam), lost most of its supporters and had to stop publication.

For de Ligt it was essential that the relationship between method and aim always be in harmony; he could therefore no longer support the revolution in Russia when it started to use methods reminiscent of the Czarist regime. For that reason he started to work more and more with the Antimilitaristic Society and in 1921 helped to create the International Bureau. These organizations fought against war and reaction by appealing "to what is the most revolutionary within revolutionaries: responsibility, awareness, reasonable judgement, and solidarity." The end could never justify the means; the means themselves had to reflect the envisaged goal.

De Ligt's importance lies in the fact that he elevated antimilitarism from its narrow party or ideological confines to a sound and worthy ideal which had its foundations within the very essence of humanity. Ideas from Hegel, Fichte, Ruskin, Tolstoy, Ghandi and numerous other thinkers were incorporated in the doctrine of nonviolence which he stated and restated countless times. His constant fight against
militarism could be reduced to the thesis that each human being was a unique individual and that militarism always tried to reduce that individualism to a conforming grey mass of instant obedience. The individualistic personality of each man had its roots and obtained its strength from the community. War resisting, therefore, became a "representative act" by an individual which exemplified what lived within the whole community. Man was a historic being; as a force of reason and morality man fought through millions of generations and billions of individuals to arise above the purely instinctive, animalistic life. Man became conscious of himself as a reasonable, morally responsible being. It was therefore not worthy of human beings that one suppress the other and exploit him for his own purpose or that of a small group. Capitalism was condemned by de Ligt because its very existence depended on the exploitation of one class by another. Imperialism was even worse because it literally enslaved whole peoples and cultures for the benefit of colonial masters. Militarism was the natural result of a system that maintained itself by force. The military was "sold" to the people as being "necessary" for the maintenance of national independence while in reality this chauvinism was nothing but a tool used by a small group benefitting from war and militarism.

For two reasons antimilitaristic organizations were considered essential by de Ligt. First, the existing military structure in all countries was so strong and permeated each national life so greatly that only strong, positive action had any hope of success. He rejected bourgeois pacifism as passive,
without principle and only interested in preventing an outbreak of war without willing to destroy the roots from which war and militarism drew their strength. Secondly, antimilitarists were conscious of their individual uniqueness which needed a free community and society to live and develop in and were aware that the whole society desired the same. Each antimilitaristic act was a manifestation of what lived, often unexpressed, within the soul of each people. Each war resister who went to jail broke down the power of the military regime and at the same time prepared for the revolution which would create the new society of free individuals.

De Ligt frequently expressed his whole idea in the phrase *geestelijke weerbaarheid* which translates literally as "intellectual defence" but also means "spiritual preparedness". It was this very lack of spiritual preparedness that turned him so vehemently against the Social Democratic Workers Party. It practised pure opportunism with the whole antimilitarism question and he lashed out against such hypocrisy. 72

By the thirties de Ligt had become the most important theoretician of the antimilitarist movement. In 1927 he wrote that war resisting and the fight to end conscription was not enough; in fact, considering the military development, there was a certain danger in it. More and more countries were thinking of a professional army because large numbers of men were not necessary anymore. The center of effort had to be transferred to the economic sphere; people must refuse to work in any establishment connected with the military. Pride, honour, love for the fatherland must become associated with pacifism,
antimilitarism, conscientious objection, and war resisting. Pastors and teachers were most important in this respect because they could instill the new values in the people. He reminded his readers how from 1915 to 1918 whole congregations were swayed by their pastors to sign the War Resisting Manifesto. There was no point in continuing along the way suggested by the Social Democrat trade union congresses (in 1920, 1921, 1922) and call a strike in the event of mobilization. Governments could prevent such a strike call, raise "the fatherland in danger" cry, or put the country under martial law. There was nothing to expect from the League of Nations either. The disarmament plan was similar to what had happened to prostitution. At first it was outlawed by law; when that did not help it was regulated by law. This did not make prostitution any less prevalent, nor any nicer.

Democracy was not primarily a political system for de Ligt, but instead had to be thought of as a social-cultural relationship which meant liberty, equality, fraternity. But it was not the equality of military uniformity. It meant the possibility for everyone to develop according to his own nature and ability so that the unique personality of each person could come to full fruition. It allowed each the right to be unequal: multiplicity was the aim. The real content of democracy was therefore anarchy: self governing individuals with a free economic, social and cultural association, in conscious discipline forming a true community.

In such a society there was no place for brute force, but de Ligt did not reject all violence. In his correspondence with Ghandi de Ligt said:
I do not maintain a dogmatic anti-violence standpoint; I objectively recognize the right of every oppressed class or race to free itself with the help of weapons. I admit that a people that defends itself forcefully acts better from a moral standpoint than if due to cowardliness and lack of character it would not defend itself.

When precisely such an act would be acceptable according to de Ligt's view was difficult to determine. When Einstein changed his view on war resisting in 1933 de Ligt did not think his reasons valid and thought that treating the Germans as they treated the Jews was not going to solve anything. In a long article in November 1933 de Ligt asked whether armed defence against Hitler should be tried. The last sentence read,

"Therefore we agree with Heering [of Church and Peace] that the modern war has stepped out of the bounds of what is morally permissible and acceptable and that we can therefore not accept it for any purpose."

The apparent contradiction in the foregoing statements was explained in an article about the civil war in Spain. De Ligt accepted the right of the workers to defend themselves and was saddened that the spontaneous worker movement had not erupted throughout the whole country. But he strongly criticized the attempts to militarize the revolution by introducing conscription. This brought an end to the spontaneous revolution and resulted in one military elite fighting another. The key to the whole question was the individual's own will. If he was conscious enough of his own will, he would decide for himself whether or not to fight. No one had the right to force him.

Apparently de Ligt overlooked that such freedom of choice, and enough time for an individual to become aware of what he should or should not do, is not always available in time of war or revolution. This very lacuna in his reasoning was in no
small part responsible for the split in the Antimilitaristic Society and Bureau over the Spanish Revolution. The same kind of dichotomy in his reasoning about the moral permissibility of modern war would have had to be faced by him had he lived long enough. If the conqueror used terrible weapons and methods, should he be met in kind if there was no other deterrent?

The foregoing paragraph does not suggest that de Ligt was a theoretician far removed from reality. He had taken part in too many demonstrations, had been in jail twice, had stood too close to reality not to realize the difficulties involved. Very early he recognized that the accent should be shifted from war resisting to refusal to produce and transport military goods. The Achilles' heel of the military was in the economic sector. From his studies of Ghandi he obtained the idea of working out a system of nonviolence for the Western World. A detailed program for the anti-war forces included a general strike in case war threatened and a complete boycott of the functions of the war making government. In 1929 his "Plan of Campaign Against all War and all Preparations for War" was given to the War Resisters International for study; in 1933 the final version was published in pamphlet form. The following year he explained his plan in a "100 minute" speech before the Congress of the War Resisters International in Dingwell Park, England. Thereafter "the Plan" was printed in various publications and several languages.

"The Plan" described the individual and collective activities that ought to be undertaken during peace time to prevent war and mobilization. If the latter two situations already
existed, other duties were suggested to prevent their continuation. Teachers, mothers, youths, technicians, journalists, production workers, etc., were all given specific tasks. Sabotage was quite acceptable providing no loss of life took place. There was to be no compulsion of any kind:

The deeds to be accomplished and the attitudes to be taken...are dictated to no one. They are instanced in order that individuals and collective bodies may become conscious of the numerous possibilities within their reach today to make all and every war impossible. The cases mentioned should especially stimulate men to put into the service of this new fight their maximum energy, devotion and courage.

The one problem de Ligt could not solve, and this was the case with all pacifist or antimilitarist ideas, was to convince enough people in all countries that the prevention of war was a worthwhile and urgent goal.

As has been noted, the implementation of de Ligt's ideas was discussed within the Antimilitaristic Society and other libertarian groups. Once the plan was published it gained numerous adherents in many of the middle class pacifist organizations and youth groups. Especially some of the latter were in favour of carrying out a plan modified to fit the Dutch nation.

Being a convinced anarchist did not limit de Ligt's mission field. His active participation in the Antimilitaristic Society and Bureau, in the League of Anarcho-Communists, in the War Resisters International, etc., speaks for itself, but he also held speeches and lectures before women, youth, religious, and middle class groups who could not accept his anarchistic viewpoints but were nevertheless willing to listen to his antimilitaristic theories. When libertarian groups declined after 1933, he concentrated more than ever before on large,
international antimilitaristic organizations. He was instrumental in the formation of the Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix, worked for the creation of the Rassemblement Internationale contre la Guerre (RIGM) and had an active role until his death in the Groupement Pacifiste International (GPI). In these later years he acted much more as a theorist and organizer than a representative of Dutch antimilitarist organizations.

De Ligt's name was mentioned in almost all the Dutch pacifist and antimilitarist publications and his ideas were valued highly by them. But the Social Democrats and Liberal Democrats rejected his theories. For them antimilitarism meant something very different than for de Ligt. In many ways de Ligt stood closer to the middle class groups (whose capitalistic society he rejected), and to the religious groups (although he had become an agnostic), than to the Social Democrats (who also aimed at a new society). It was unfortunate that de Ligt had such a strong antipathy against the Social Democrats. They did look hard for political advantages and, as will be shown, some of their leaders viewed antimilitarism opportunistically, but most of the rank and file were sincere in their antimilitarism. If de Ligt, as one of the most influential spokesmen of the Extreme Left, could have established some kind of rapport, Dutch antimilitarism would have been much more powerful. But de Ligt and the Extreme Left felt far removed from the Social Democrats and the leaders of the latter felt the same about the Extreme Left. It meant that Social Democrats pursued their own antimilitaristic goal and rejected every other approach but their own.
Chapter IV: The Social Democratic Workers Party

1. Pitfalls of Disarmament

From the moment of its birth the Social Democratic Workers Party tried to achieve a socialist society through the lawful, democratic process. (The "near revolution" had been a regretful mistake which would not be tried again.) In 1918 the Social Democrats became the second largest political party in the Netherlands. For such a party to demand unilateral disarmament had far reaching consequences. Party members had to be convinced that such a policy was not detrimental to their other interests. Party executives had to consider whether such a demand was likely to lose votes and hamper party growth. Finally, the desires of the rank and file had to be balanced against what was politically achievable.

Social Democrats were proud of the advances they had made since 1894 and worked diligently to enlarge their power and influence within the Netherlands. Party membership increased from 27,000 in 1918 to 53,000 in 1929 and 82,000 in 1933. In those respective years the party polled 200,000, 800,000 and 800,000 votes which gave it 22, 24, and 22 seats in the 100 seat Second Chamber. Party members consistently captured between 1,000 and 1,500 seats in municipal governments. Social Democrats had the biggest trade union federation with 150,000 members in 1918, 200,000 in 1927, and 300,000 in 1932 which was as much, and sometimes more, than the combined total of the Protestant and Catholic trade union federations. These
figures were a great source of pride, especially since they were augmented by other achievements. Social Democrats had their own press, had several large daily newspapers—circulation of Het Volk increased from 45,000 in 1923 to 109,000 in 1931 by which time the second paper, Voorwaarts (Forward), sold 95,000—had their own vacation and study centers, their own radio broadcasting organization and numerous choir, drama, and other cultural associations.  

Relations between the party and the trade union federation were so good that many workers thought their union membership automatically made them party members. The party frequently had to point out this misunderstanding in order to get workers to join the party. Many people felt that their movement was a great, closely knit family which would continue to go forth from strength to strength until the final goal, a socialist society, was achieved.

The very size, achievements, and optimism of the rank and file accentuated the risk of a policy of antimilitarism. Much had been gained and therefore much could be lost. Social Democrats were very much aware that they lived in a hostile environment; the clerical majority considered them a threat to everything they believed important. The hatred of religion which the pre-war Social Democrats had nurtured was much abated by the twenties, but the clericals remembered. The dislike for the House of Orange had also lessened, but the Rooie (Reds) were clearly not good Dutchmen if they could not embrace the Royal House. Social Democrats naturally enough felt themselves apart from the clericals, but at the same time did not
feel themselves any worse Dutchmen than they. In the first years after 1918 the need to prove their loyalty was not strong, but when dangers outside the borders multiplied, and when the election figures proved that the party had reached its culmina-
ation point if it could not attract voters from other blocs, the need to show that they were as much part of the nation as others intensified. There was already so much that separated the "Reds" from the majority that a policy of antimilitarism added one more barrier to their acceptance in the national community.

There were three pitfalls in accepting antimilitarism. The first was the obvious one: a country that makes itself defenceless can easily be conquered, even by a small force. The party was not ready to accept this natural consequence for a number of years, but had difficulty explaining that national disarmament did not mean leaving the country open to all invaders. The explanations were never convincing.

A second danger stemmed from the peculiar nature of Dutch politics. In 1913 Social Democrats had rejected participation in government; after 1918 party leaders began to regret this decision because it was politically harmful. Being perpetually in opposition gave a feeling of impotence. Forcing one's way into government could only be accomplished by having a policy acceptable to potential coalition partners, or making substantial advances in elections. In both instances the national disarmament policy appeared to be an obstacle. For political reasons the demand should be minimized or abolished, but party officials dared not suggest this because the rank and file was too imbued with antimilitarism to accept it.
The third pitfall was of a very different nature. If the party came out in favour of antimilitarism would not many individuals "do their own bit" for the cause? And could this individualism not threaten party cohesion? Individual war resisting was propagated by the Extreme Left as the answer to end militarism. But was it fair to ask young Social Democrats to go to jail for ten months? More importantly, could the party retain control if many young men went to jail and older ones refused to report for re-training exercises? Apart from the question of legality there was the question of discipline. Could the party survive without strict discipline? These immediate and potential problems were recognized to a greater or lesser degree by the leaders and they were not anxious to broach the subject of antimilitarism. They were forced to do so because of the promise made at the Arnhem Congress (1915), pressure from the rank and file, and the activities of the international trade union federations.

2. The Official Position

Pressure from below started at the 1919 Easter Congress where five locals wanted the party to accept unilateral disarmament and six urged that the slogan "not a man or a cent for the military" be endorsed as party policy. The Congress spent all its time discussing the "almost revolution" of November 1918 and the military question was held over. The following year more, and more insistent suggestions were forwarded by the locals and the executive promised that a policy statement would be forthcoming shortly. By this time the Second (Bern-Geneva)
International had made its position clear. A boycott against Hungary had failed but a strike—largely by British workers—had prevented weapons and ammunition from reaching Poland. At the international congresses of the Transport Workers, the Metal Workers, and the Miners there had been pledges of strikes or boycotts to prevent war. The Special International Trade Union Congress held in London in November 1920 declared: "above all things, militarism must be combated in every form," and promised "international mass-action in the assault on reaction, in declaring war against war, and for the realization of a new social system."³

On the heels of these developments the party executive issued a brochure explaining its position.⁴ It was pointed out that opposition to militarism could not rest on ethical principles alone but also had to be viewed in concrete political terms. How would such a policy affect Dutch workers? Considering the determination of the international workers' organizations to enforce peace through mass strikes, taking into account that there was now a League of Nations, and, perhaps most importantly, realizing that defending the Netherlands was impossible and that any effort towards this was wasted money, the party executive proposed that national disarmament become the party's policy. The pre-war demand that national disarmament be tied to international disarmament was dropped; the party would exert itself to make formal education free from nationalistic and militaristic propaganda. The 1921 Congress made this the official party policy.
For the party leaders unilateral disarmament was, and remained, more a political and financial question than a humanitarian one. Party discipline weighed heavily and they saw no hope in the "individualistic humanitarian emotionalism" of the antimilitaristic groups on the Extreme Left. Disarmament could only be achieved through rational argument, sensible programs, and within the confines of the law. On the one hand such an approach proved effective: the whole weight of the disciplined party could be employed. On the other hand, there was a danger in this approach. Attracted to the "humanitarian and emotional" attitude of the groups on the left, the rank and file Social Democrats could at times only be held in check with great difficulty. When called upon for demonstrations, protests, or petitions, most members responded with enthusiasm, but when the party asked for no more than propaganda they found this difficult to accept. At times confused, the rank and file nevertheless was convinced that disarmament was the only road for the Netherlands. Over the years, one good reason was piled on top of another in support of this vision until it seemed incomprehensible that any well-meaning person could see it differently.

Shortly after the party had accepted unilateral disarmament the first political snag presented itself. It came in the form of a motion in the Second Chamber introduced by the Independent W. Wijk, "that the Netherlands if attacked by another power need not defend herself."\(^5\) Introduced solely to embarrass the Social Democrats, they voted against it, but the motion still confronted them with the logical result of their disarmament
demand. Once there was no armed force, there would be no means of defending the country and therefore no point in trying it. But the Social Democrats were not willing to accept this and in tortuous arguments tried to explain it away.  

A more immediate concern for party and trade union officials was the desire of Social Democratic youths to refuse military service. Several locals introduced resolutions that war resisting be accepted as official party policy. But this was not the view of the leaders. G.W. Sannes, who introduced the executive resolution on disarmament at the 1921 Congress, explained that individuals who undertook this deed should get moral support, but no financial help from the party. War resisting was a personal matter and the party did not have the right to demand it because too many in the party were not faced with the draft themselves. Mass refusal of all Social Democratic conscripts did not make sense at this point; it would only be useful when the situation was close to war.  

Sannes' ideas, somewhat refined and expanded, became official party policy but did not satisfy everyone. At the 1923 Congress various locals demanded a clearer explanation. The Workers Youth Federation—the Social Democratic youth organization—urgently requested specific guidelines because many members were faced with the draft and did not know what to do. Their personal sentiment was to take action—i.e. become war resisters.

These were the years of agitation and demonstrations against an increase of the navy, for the release of Groenendaal, against the narrow framework of the conscientious objection law. In December 1922 the Dutch Social Democrats hosted the Peace
Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) which declared:\(^8\)

It is the duty of the proletariat in all countries to carry on the war against war and against every cause of war, using every means, direct and indirect, inside and outside parliament.

And in another Resolution stated:

Practical measures can be taken on a more extensive scale than has hitherto been the case against war, in favour of disarmament and against the introduction of militarism in those countries which so far have been free from all militaristic tendencies.

In light of these activities and resolutions it was natural that youthful enthusiasm sought a meaningful deed, and refusal to serve in the military forces was the most obvious act.

But Social Democratic youths were not encouraged to act. Party and trade union leaders insisted that the struggle against militarism could only take place within the larger framework of the working class against the capitalist class. Only the international trade union movement had the (economic) power to defeat militarism. Individual war resisting was basically anarchistic and as such unacceptable in the organized fight of the Social Democrats. In certain instances the act was a personal expression of principles and was respected as such, but no official sanction could be given. In addition to the "anarchism" reason there was another. If large numbers of the Workers Youth Federation refused military service, the armed forces would soon be filled with reactionary youths and this would facilitate the use of the army against socialists.\(^9\)

Many Social Democrats were not convinced and it became necessary for Albarda, who took over as parliamentary leader when Troelstra retired in 1925, to return to the question.\(^10\)
The gist of the argument was the same as previously mentioned but Albarda's elaborations created more confusion than clarification. Concentrating on the conscientious objection law, Albarda stated that an act had to be purposeful as well as beautiful, but that a conscientious objector only demonstrated the latter. It made no sense to fight for a broader law which would allow exemptions for political reasons because the reservoir of young men was large enough that the army would become the instrument solely of the right. Now that the army had the same composition as society roughly one-quarter of those bearing arms were Social Democrats. The government would think twice before using this army against socialists, or to start a war.

Albarda's arguments about the law only confused the issue. To say that one-quarter of the army was Social Democratic because one-quarter of the votes went to them was inaccurate because the combined trade union and party membership amounted to less than half the votes polled by the party at elections. A contemporary rebuttal was given by P.Jh.J. Kies, the first Dutch professional officer to become a Social Democrat. Kies explained¹¹ that if Albarda was correct about the broader conscientious objection law the government would immediately introduce such a law enabling all left-wing elements to stay out of the military. The government did not do so because dislike for military service permeated all segments of the population so that the military forces could never be kept up to strength.
Albarda's rebuttal to Kies was weak and he did not reply to an article by the anarchist Constandse who put his finger on the tender spot by claiming that Albarda had to write something because the questions and comments sent to *Het Volk* were embarrassing. This judgement was substantiated in a little pamphlet by G.K. van der Horst, a Social Democrat who had signed the "War Resisting Manifesto Mobilization!". He pointed out that the heart of the problem was not whether war resisting was anarchistic, but whether agitation alone could get social democrats anywhere. The executive appeared to subscribe to this, but the belief was fallacious. Lack of concrete action meant a regression for socialism. Discontent about the inactivity was also evident among certain youths; the more spirited among them kept demanding that social democrats take positive action.

3. Efforts in Parliament

Critique about the inconsistency between theory and practice was limited during the twenties largely because of the activity of the Social Democratic parliamentarians. With the aid of the Liberal Democratic League and a small number of anti-military Roman Catholic MPs the government was forced to reduce the size of the yearly draft, shorten service time, and cut the defence budget in half. Although gratifying, Social Democrats did not think that it was enough and the flow of pamphlets and articles denouncing the waste of money continued.

An excellent target was the Fleet Law of 1923. At the same time that the cabinet lowered the wages of civil servants to
reduce public expenditures it introduced a proposal to enlarge the navy. It was an issue ideally suited for the propaganda machine of the party. Het Volk carried up to three articles a day about the Fleet Law and militarism, pamphlets were distributed and a petition was organized. Within a month 1,132,228 signatures of adult citizens had been collected and were presented to the government just before the vote was taken. There were 60 right-wing members in the Chamber who supported the government but it was known that a few Catholic MPs were against the Fleet Law and a few others were hesitant. The day after the vote Het Volk reported the voting procedure as if it had been a soccer match: the law had been rejected 50-49.

It appeared as if the goal of national disarmament was drawing closer. In 1921 the party had gotten an amendment to the Constitution accepted that the king could not declare war without the approval of parliament. The new militia law, fixing the draft at 19,500 men, had been passed by only a two-vote margin (50-48), and the Fleet Law had been defeated. In 1924 the Liberal Democratic League accepted unilateral disarmament as party policy, and several one-deputy parties could be expected to support such a measure. Roughly one-third of parliament was thus in favour of disarmament and either some wavering Roman Catholics had to be won over, or the disarmament parties had to be enlarged at the next elections. To be well prepared for this event the 1924 Social Democratic Congress appointed a Committee to look into all aspects of militarism in general and the Dutch situation in particular. But the election came earlier than expected (in 1925), and had to
be fought without the findings of the Committee. The results of the election strengthened the belief that national disarmament could be realized through the parliamentary method. The three big clerical parties—the "armament bloc"—lost five seats, while the "disarmament bloc" gained six—four for the Social Democrats and two for the Liberal Democrats.

But the clerical bloc was still too strong. The defeat of the Fleet Law brought the fall of the government, but after a crisis lasting a few months the re-shuffled Cabinet reappeared with the Anti Revolutionary leader, Colijn, next to the Roman Catholic Premier Ruys de Beerenbrouck. Efforts to form a coalition government of Socialists, Liberals, and Roman Catholics failed since Mgr. Nolens, leader of the latter, would only consent to this "as a last resort". Colijn became Premier in 1925 to be followed in 1926 by the Christian Historical Union leader de Geer.

Although stymied in their desire to form a government, Social Democrats continued their efforts for unilateral disarmament. The Constitution demanded that a defensive force on water and land be maintained, so that a simple discarding of the whole military establishment was out of the question. The Social Democrats introduced a bill which proposed a security force of 3,200 men (200 for the navy) who were to be drafted for 4 months (NCOs 8 months, officers 12), and be subject to recall for 10 years. Voluntary forces were forbidden; existing military barracks, depots, training areas, etc., were to be leased out or sold and the revenue used to pay the pensions of those who would lose their jobs.
In the explanatory memorandum to the disarmament bill the Social Democrats contended that during the war the Netherlands spent two billion guilders on its army and navy while a government committee declared in 1919 that the existing forces could not defend the country. Since that time all sorts of new weapons had been developed which were too expensive to buy or build, and therefore there was no point in spending about 100 million a year on defences that were useless. Denmark was already working on a plan to cut back its armed forces to a border guard and a few surveillance ships and there was no reason why the Netherlands could not do the same. The new security force would cost less than 20 million guilders—a substantial saving at a time that the government was considering cutbacks in a number of areas.

While the bill made its slow way through parliament the Committee to Study the Military Question published its findings. It proved to be a good sized book of 240 pages. After the more or less traditional opening blaming wars on capitalism and imperialism the resolutions on militarism of the Second International Congresses were reviewed, as well as those of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) Congresses in Hamburg (1923) and Marseilles (1925). Both called for disarmament and the latter had lauded the efforts on this behalf by Social Democrats in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

The Committee broke new ground when it explained the reasons for the unilateral disarmament demand. That the Netherlands was impossible to defend was a major consideration, but even if all military experts agreed that the country could be
defended, the Committee argued that it should not be defended. A "successful" defence would cause such destruction and terror that the end did not justify the means. Given these two points it followed that all arms had to be done away with because armed forces "attracted" war and therefore invited either of the two results. The Committee was aware that the possibility existed that the Netherlands would lose its national independence for a time but thought this risk justified:

Without questioning, or minimizing the value of national independence for the working class, the loss of independence is not the greatest evil that threatens the people under the present circumstances.

It was acknowledged that this was a new position which was substantially different from 1914. In circumlocutionary language the Report explained that the change came from the experience of the last war and the still continuing developments in ever more terrifying weapons (especially gas). Peace could not be guaranteed in the present world and risks had to be taken: one of those risks was that the Netherlands could lose its independence for a short time. That the party had voted against such a standpoint as late as 1921 was passed over in silence by the Committee.

When analyzing the Report curious inconsistencies come to light. To say that the Netherlands could not be defended and therefore need not spend 100 million a year on this useless endeavour, made sense. But to state that arms "attracted" war was folly in the Dutch situation because for the past 100 years the country had been neutral but had always been armed. Even more contradictory in this connection was the opening paragraph of the chapter dealing with Indonesia:
The geographic location of Indonesia is such that complete defencelessness would not be tolerated by the surrounding powers, nor by the international sea traffic. Removal of all military power could even be a reason for war. Therefore, there can be no thought of complete disarmament in the foreseeable future. What can be demanded is that the defence of the Indies will be so undertaken and motivated that it will not conflict with the demand for the disarmament of the Netherlands.

The Report did not explain why in Indonesia arms did not attract war, but conversely, kept war away. Nor was it justified why occupation of the Netherlands could be tolerated, but occupation of Indonesia could not.

As was to be expected, the Committee did not favour war resisting. It concluded: "the modern labour movement cannot accept personal refusal to serve as a method of battle against militarism." But the qualification was added that "in war resisting there can be a social motive which we, Social Democrats, recognize as having value for the future." 27 What this value was was not mentioned.

The contradictions and shortcomings in the Report are important to note for a number of reasons. The Social Democratic party and trade union federation were antimilitaristic in part because it was the official policy of the Labour and Socialist International, but also because many Dutch people, especially in the working class, were by nature antimilitaristic. In that sense antimilitarism was older than the Social Democrats and they simply built upon an existing mood and incorporated it into their ideology. The party wanted to stay within the law and still provide an organized attack upon Dutch militarism—all of which had to be fitted into the framework of party discipline, working class solidarity, and
class war theory. It necessitated some strange twists in logic which were not always very convincing but were nevertheless accepted by the majority of party members. Those who could not accept it left the party, usually as individuals but in 1932 several thousand departed to form a more radical, more antimilitaristic socialist party. The majority of the rank and file remained; they lived as much in a closed world without alternatives as did the orthodox Calvinists. To leave the party meant venturing forth into a strange and hostile world: to the left into one of the communist or syndicalist organizations, or to the right. Neither side provided an attractive alternative for the majority of the rank and file and they remained docile followers as long as they were assured that the party and trade union leaders knew best and were looking after the big problems. If the "bosses" had to make some strange jumps for political or other reasons this had to be accepted as long as the final goal could eventually be obtained. Judging from the advances that had been made, there was no reason to think that the leaders did not know what they were doing. Thus the inconsistency between theory and practice was blandly accepted.

It meant, however, that the thousands of party and trade union members were denied specific, logically consistent guidance on the antimilitarism issue. Only the momentum of its belief carried the party forward. People went through the motions of obeying the government while convinced that it was acting incorrectly and improperly. Young men joined the ranks and older men went to re-training manoeuvres, both with antipathy in their hearts but without the fighting spirit necessary
to refuse and break down the system. Of course the desire to "do a good job" and actively work to make the defence of their country a reality was totally lacking. When the Social Democrats accepted the necessity for national defence in 1937 there was no quick and wholehearted support of the government and its defence efforts. The habit of superficial and lackadaisical obedience was too deeply ingrained to be quickly changed to eager and full-hearted fighting for the fatherland.

The Social Democrats' disarmament bill finally came up for a vote in parliament in the spring of 1927. As expected, it was defeated (51-32) because it had been too extreme to be accepted by anyone but the Liberal Democratic League and one Roman Catholic. The defeat was compensated by a few victories. Two MPs, Posthuma and Boele, afraid of the left-wing elements in the armed forces, suggested that the army be reconstructed to allow more "dependable" volunteers who would be guaranteed civilian employment after their tour of duty. The Minister of War incorporated the idea in his modernization plan for the army. Strong action by the Social Democrats gained sufficient support so that defeat would have been certain and the Minister withdrew the proposal. The Social Democrats also managed to prevent a lengthening of service time in the navy from 8 to 14 months, an increase in service time for "pre-trained" conscripts (see Ch. VIII) from 6 to 8 weeks, and the dispatch of sailors to Indonesia without their own consent. Roman Catholic MPs supported the Social Democrats against these bills and kept the hope alive that ultimately enough Roman Catholics would vote in favour of national disarmament.
4. Party Problems

During these military debates an incident took place which once again brought out the contradictory position of the Social Democrats. The Minister had asked Zadelhoff, one of the Social Democrat MPs, whether his party would cooperate if the government found it necessary to call a mobilization. Zadelhoff answered that he hoped a war could be prevented by a mass civilian strike in conjunction with a strike of the military. When pressed further he became non-committal and finally refused to answer the question. The bourgeois press pounced upon the dialogue and declared that the Social Democrats would not participate in a mobilization to save the country from invasion. It was a touchy subject because many Dutch people believed that the Great War had been kept outside the Dutch borders in 1914 because the country had promptly mobilized. Within the party pens were set in motion and both Het Volk and Voorwaarts received many enquiries from readers. Sannes answered with an article in Voorwaarts and Albarda in Het Volk while the latter had a special article about it in its Scientific Supplement. Kies, the unofficial military expert in the party, added a brochure to the growing pile of papers. In it he argued that it was only natural that the party oppose mobilization since it wanted only a security force of a few thousand men, taught that arms attracted war, and preached that war was the greatest evil that could befall mankind. Others were equally bewildered by the explanations of the executive and at the 1928 Party Congress 26 locals sent in amendments demanding the party clearly state its position.
Before the Congress met, party and trade union officials worked out a compromise resolution. Albarda held a long conciliatory opening speech at the Congress emphasizing the complexity of the problems involved in ridding the world of war and militarism. "Disarmament" was a war-cry and the designated end goal; it did not delineate the tactics for each situation. The essence of the speech was that the party's action in time of mobilization would have to be judged within the framework of the then existing situation. The Resolution reaffirmed the party's antimilitarism and assured continuing opposition to violence and war. Point four stated:

The party and her representatives cannot give support to a policy which moves towards war or creates the possibility of war; such a policy will be combated with all strength; therefore, she cannot support a mobilization which could lead to war or create the possibility of war.

The duplicity in this statement--how could one know beforehand whether a mobilization could lead to war?--was compounded by the next point which mentioned that under certain circumstances a mobilization of limited scope by security forces might be necessary to keep a war outside the borders.

The rank and file accepted the Resolution but the contradictions were not resolved. If the Report on the Military Question had been correct--it had been accepted by an earlier Congress--in stating that the Social Democrats would accept occupation of the Netherlands, there was no harm in putting this in the Resolution. The issue had been sidestepped by talking about a limited mobilization of security forces. Such a force did not exist: only a regular army and navy existed. That there would be time for Social Democrats to decide whether
or not to participate was folly in view of what had happened in 1914. A growing number of people recognized these contradic-
tions and wanted clarification. Other political news and ac-
activities kept the question at bay for a few years but pres-
sure mounted from the left-wing within the party.

Much of the antimilitaristic news came from Denmark; Dutch Social Democrats were greatly interested in the Danish exper-
iment to reduce the armed forces to a security force. The preparation for the League of Nations Disarmament Conference was often in the news and kept the hope alive that inter-
national disarmament would become a reality. Great indignation arose in 1930 when the government introduced another Fleet Law. Social Democrats and other groups organized another petition against it and collected a total of 1,546,420 signatures. There were 8 million people in the Netherlands of whom 5 million were adults so that almost one out of three opposed an increase in the navy. Since the parties in parliament favo-
ouring disarmament held one-third of the seats, the petition showed beyond any doubt that one-third of the people supported them in this. That the bill could not be stopped in parliament was not important: the future was on the side of disarmament. Albarda coined a very popular slogan: in a speech in 1930 he assured his listeners that in case a mobilization threatened to lead to war, Social Democrats would save the people and the country through "valiant disobedience".

Left-wing Social Democrats were not satisfied, however, and they continued their agitation. Edo Fimmen, at this time Secretary to the International Federation of Trade Unions,
cited Albarda's memorandum to the resolutions of the 1922 IFTU Congress. He had then written that Dutch Social Democrats had the duty to use all means, legal or illegal, to prevent war or the preparations for war regardless whether it was a so-called defensive war or offensive war. Now the leader of the party would not guarantee that Social Democrats refuse cooperation in each and every mobilization. At the 1931 Congress so many locals sent in amendments to the 1928 Mobilization Resolution that they filled 12 pages—all demanded clarification and most wanted absolute rejection of any mobilization. 37

For party and trade union executives the matter was not so straightforward. The depression showed no signs of lifting, fascism was growing stronger, clerical party politicians had reacted strongly against the Fleet Law action and Albarda's speech. Colijn had called for closer cooperation among clerical parties to keep the threat of anarchy under control. The Christian Historicals had used similar words. Catholic newspapers had agreed with this analysis and were certain that the once considered Red-Catholic coalition could not take place until the Social Democrats gave up their standpoint of deciding for themselves whether or not to cooperate in a mobilization. 38

Albarda was therefore very careful in his speech at the 1931 Congress. 39 He asked whether the Resolutions of Rome and the Hague (by the International Trade Unions) could still be carried out. He concluded affirmatively, providing a much greater international peace effort was undertaken. He professed to be encouraged with the many amendments to the Mobilization
Resolution because the anti-war sentiment spoke loud and clear in each of them. "With such people," he declared, "wherein the revulsion against war lives so deeply, it is impossible to make war." Nevertheless, the amendments worried him a little because the sentiment expressed was not wholly subject to reason. But the mood of the Congress was such that there could be no turning back and the new Resolution asserted that the Netherlands ought to disarm regardless of the international situation; that armed defence was equivalent to self-destruction; that parliament and not the cabinet must have the power to call a mobilization; and that Social Democratic cooperation in a mobilization would be determined by them and would depend upon the existing situation.40

Unqualified rejection of every mobilization had been demanded by the extreme wing of the party and they were not satisfied with the accepted resolution. At the 1932 Congress matters came to a head. The extremists departed to form the Independent Socialist Party. At its inception the new party counted 4,000 members; by the end of 1932 it had increased to 7,000.41

There is no doubt that the creation and rapid growth of the Independent Party worried Social Democratic leaders and halted for the time being the drift to the right which they had thought desirable. Suddenly there was much more emphasis on antimilitarism. Three new bills were introduced in parliament: the Special Voluntary Militia (see Ch. VIII) was not to be called up unless parliament concurred; political, armed organizations were to be forbidden; no mobilization could be called without parliamentary approval.42 The bills were defeated
but a new development diverted all attention away from this latest defeat.

As a solution to the rapidly deepening depression, the government could think of nothing better than a reduction of expenditures. Lowering wages of civil servants and military personnel not only brought severe criticism from the left but created unrest in military ranks, especially in the fleet in Indonesia. When a mutiny broke out aboard the cruiser the Zeven Provincien, the Social Democratic press immediately jumped to their support. A sympathetic Social Democratic historian was moved to write later, "In this terrible affair the MPs, the party executive, and the party press stomped with their wooden shoes through the china cabinet." In part it was the years of antimilitaristic propaganda making itself felt, in part it was the frustration with the frighteningly high number of unemployed workers, but mostly it was the influence of the Extreme Left and the example of the Independent Socialist Party. Social Democratic leaders were afraid that they would lose control if they did not follow the antimilitarism of the members.

The sympathy for the mutineers and the very sharp attack on the government brought immediate counter measures. All Social Democratic papers were forbidden in military establishments. The mutiny was made a law and order issue in the election and cost the party two seats. The government passed a series of laws designed to combat a number of developments thought detrimental to the safety of the nation. Political and private groups were forbidden to wear uniforms in public—an effort to stop the growing number of fascist, communist and socialist
"defence groups". Civil servants could not belong to certain organizations; the long list—more than 50 were enumerated—included virtually every Extreme Left, Communist, and Fascist organization. The Social Democratic Workers Party, the trade union federation and all their associated organizations were forbidden for civil servants in the Department of Defence. The Social Democratic radio organization—the VARA—was forbidden to play the International, while a law was passed prohibiting broadcasts "which directly or indirectly undermine religion, morality, authority, and national strength." The Social Democrats were incensed with these prohibitions and by being virtually put on a par with the Extreme Left. Could the government not see any difference between Social Democrats and others? Every effort was made to have the restrictions lifted but they remained in force until 1938.

5. Propaganda

For the government and the majority of Dutch people it was not always easy to distinguish Social Democratic antimilitaristic propaganda from that made by the communists and the libertarian groups. The socialists used less vituperative language and produced fewer pamphlets, but these "deficiencies" were more than compensated for by the more diverse communication media at their disposal and the more consistent attacks. 

It was seldom that Het Volk, Voorwaarts, the satirical monthly De Notenkraker (The Nutcracker), and other regular publications appeared without an article pointing out the lunacy of having a Dutch defence force, equating militarism
with dictatorship, contrasting high military expenditures with low unemployment allowances, or explaining that the people of all nations wanted disarmament but that their capitalistic governments and arms manufacturers did not. Such messages were preached for fifteen years, became less frequent after 1934, but never ceased entirely. Social Democratic papers had a much wider circulation than those of other left-wing groups: they were available at newspaper stands, in railway stations and public libraries and therefore brought the antimilitaristic message to a much wider public.

The newspaper message was augmented by pamphlets which varied from the horror photo book distributed by the trade union federation, the strident demands for national disarmament by Zadelhoff, to the calm words of Albarda explaining the Danish plans to do away with the armed forces. The whole cultural sphere of the Social Democrats was ingrained with antimilitarism. The novels of H. Roland Holst, Jef Last, A.M. de Jong; the poetry of Adama van Scheltema, Freek van Leeuwen, Garmt Stuiveleng; the speaking choruses, the choirs, the popular songs and the plays all brought the anti-military message. The popular children's comics in Het Volk were frequently imbued with the dislike for war, imperialism and the military. The very large demonstrations the Social Democrats could call together—40,000 to 60,000 were no exception; special trains and buses were used to bring the people to the meeting site—always had a few speakers or slogans enunciating the antimilitaristic tenor of the party.
Once radio became a communication media for general use the antimilitaristic message could be carried much further. From the beginning radio was state operated on two transmitters but programming was in the hands of private organizations. At first there was the "neutral" AVRO which received one of the two transmitters while the orthodox Protestant NCRV and the Roman Catholic KRO shared the second transmitter. The Social Democrats formed their own broadcasting organization (VARA) and a small, modern Protestant group created the VPRO in order to bring its own viewpoint. Initially the amount of time allotted to each group was determined by the number of dues paying members it had and the VARA, starting in 1926 with 500 members, quickly increased to 30,000 in 1929, 70,000 in 1930, and 140,000 in 1932.51 During the twenties there was much friction over the "radio question" and after lengthy debates in parliament the government allotted each of the "big four" 20 per cent broadcasting time. The remaining 20 per cent was used for news, general programs, and a few hours for the VPRO and other small groups.52

Before 1930 the Social Democrats could not spend as much time on antimilitaristic radio propaganda as they would have liked because the little time available had to be used for other purposes as well. The anti-military speeches were therefore frequently printed in pamphlet form which could be requested by listeners and distributed to likely converts to the cause.53 After 1930 more time was available but the government instituted a Radio Committee which supervised all programs and could delete whole or parts of programs thought not
suitable. Antimilitarism as a point of view could be presented but rash and blatant attacks on the Dutch armed forces were often cut. Propaganda therefore took the form of ridicule, making a laughing stock out of the Dutch defence efforts. As late as 1939, long after the Social Democrats had changed their policy, complaints were lodged about VARA skits poking fun at the saluting practices and the amateurish and awkward organization and discipline in the Dutch army. It took a long time before the Social Democrats rid themselves of their ingrained antimilitaristic mentality.

6. The Influence of Religious Social Democrats

Religious Social Democrats started as a small group which grew around the in 1902 started monthly De Blijde Wereld (The Happy World). The paper was initiated by a few young, modern Dutch Reformed pastors mostly living in the province of Friesland. This northern province had a rather distinct population with its own language and was largely agricultural. The social conditions were very backward and harsh and agricultural workers frequently staged riots and strikes. The young pastors were, for religious and humanitarian reasons, on the side of the labourers and sought ways and means to solve "the Social Question". They believed that the only chance of being rescued from the poverty and deprivation came from the Social Democrats. They joined the party and persuaded a growing number of Protestant workers to follow their example. Although the party never expressed itself officially as being anti-clerical, the sentiment was sufficiently strong in the rank and file
that the **Blijde Wereld** group had a long uphill struggle before it was accepted and finally appreciated and respected.

The **Blijde Wereld** group—in 1932 the name was changed to **Tijd en Taak** (Time and Duty)—exerted considerable influence. It worked together with the Religious Socialist League and with the Workers Community "the Woodbrokers" who had a small settlement in Bentveld. W. Banning, one of the leaders of the Woodbrokers, took over as editor of **Tijd en Taak** in 1932 and through the paper urged a greater socialization and more determined antimilitarism than the Social Democratic Workers Party was practising. One of the typical articles in the **Blijde Wereld** clearly explained the position of the group:

> Disarming is, we admit it, a gamble. It is possible that our country will be overrun by an enemy force if we do not possess our own army. But an army is also a gamble. It will have to be used if we are attacked and more blood will be shed, more will be destroyed, than if we are defenceless against an enemy force. In the first gamble the hands of our people will remain clean from the blood of our fellow man; they will not be tormented by the thought that they killed, that they became accessories to this mass-murder which is called war.

This point of view was adhered to after the official change of the party in 1937 and the position of the religious Social Democrats was so strong that the party leaders had to tolerate it.

Banning, by virtue of his connections with the Woodbrokers and with **Tijd en Taak**, as well as through his own skill and personality, held a position of authority within the party. He was a member of the committees which in 1933 and again in 1937 investigated the policy changes that ought to take place. In both years Banning strongly urged the retention of the disarmament policy. When that ceased to be policy in 1937,
Banning remained an antimilitarist, as did the whole Tijd en Taak group. They were allowed to stay within the party providing they did not attempt to change the official party line. To a certain extent this nullified the official party change because those who could not support the new policy found support within their own party from the religious socialists.\footnote{56}

The religious Social Democrats made their viewpoint known to the whole country and the clerical community thought this in certain aspects more pernicious than the "official" Social Democratic propaganda. There were several religious antimilitaristic organizations of which Tijd en Taak members would not, for a variety of reasons, become members but which they did support. These groups concentrated on the Dutch religious community, using Scriptures to show that Christians ought to be pacifist. Tijd en Taak enlarged this religious antimilitaristic community, showed that diverse religious and social groups could work for the same goal, and enabled these religious groups to bring their viewpoints on the air courtesy of the VARA. The old myth that the Social Democrats were anti-religion and could not be trusted was harder to substantiate with the Tijd en Taak group being part of them.

7. Return to the Fold

It is important to note that the Dutch Social Democrats always took the directives and suggestions from the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions quite seriously. Many prominent Dutch party and trade union members held, or had held, responsible positions
in the Internationals. The natural Dutch propensity for antimilitarism was thus augmented by complimentary messages from the international organizations. Since they were slow in seeking other means of fighting fascism besides antimilitaristic propaganda and boycotts the Dutch party did not get early encouragement from the Internationals to change policies.

For Dutch Social Democratic leaders antimilitarism gradually became a burden which they wanted to shed. As early as 1928 Albarda wrote that the Social Democrats should get out of the corner of eternal opposition because "our programs are getting the character of protest manifestations instead of serious work programs." Since there was no solution to the conflicting viewpoints between the Social Democratic rank and file and the Roman Catholics—the only possible coalition partner—matters remained as they were. The loss of two seats in 1933 reopened the discussion. At an executive meeting where national disarmament was discussed Albarda said, "this good draught-horse appears to have become crippled during the election campaign." Strangely enough, Albarda could understand that the French socialists had departed from their disarmament demand because of their neighbour, fascist Italy, but he did not draw the same conclusion for the Netherlands. Others at the meeting also wanted to change the official policy. Such a step seemed too drastic, however, and a motion was accepted that a Review Committee would investigate which party policies and programs ought to be changed.

When the Committee issued its report in October, 1933 there was no basic change in the antimilitarism position. The existing
disarmament policy ought to be maintained for six specific reasons: 62 1) the Netherlands could not build a defence force capable of maintaining the independence of the nation; 2) to propose rearmament would give millions a feeling of false security; 3) the cost of rearmament was so high that many essential programs would suffer; 4) an alternative, such as a return to the pre 1914 slogan advocating the armed nation/popular militias, was an outmoded concept in the day of rapid-fire artillery, aircraft, and chemical warfare; 5) what was needed was a security force to fulfill League of Nation duties, protect border areas, and defend democracy; 6) if the disarmament demand was dropped it would be impossible to remain out of the arms race.

Only three of the fourteen Committee members believed that the disarmament demand ought to be dropped. The whole Committee was against support for the government in its efforts to protect the civilian population from gas attacks. 63 The Defence Department should have nothing to do with instructions for the population regarding air bombardments because the municipal authorities should handle that. The Defence Department should only be concerned with the security forces to prevent border crossing and should be given anti-aircraft artillery and defensive fighter planes for this purpose. The Committee noted that in 1933 the Congress of the Labour and Socialist International had put the critical point for war not at the time of mobilization, but earlier, at the point where a national government refused to accept arbitration. The Congress urged the international labour movement to act at that critical
time—those within that country with a strike, all others with a complete boycott of that country. The Committee urged that the next Social Democratic Congress adopt these measures and thus discard the 1928 and 1931 Mobilization Resolutions. Three members of the Committee could not accept this suggestion because it could well lead to a defensive war (even though it was not mentioned in so many words) and they were not willing to take that risk.

The Resolutions accepted by the 1934 Congress superseded the 1928 and 1931 Resolutions. The whole mobilization problem was now solved since the workers would get into action if a country refused to accept arbitration. Any mobilization in the Netherlands would presumably be to enforce the League of Nation sanctions. The new Resolution reiterated that disarmament was the only method of ensuring peace.64

For the party leaders the past anti-military successes had turned sour and they were not too happy with the Review Report or the 1934 Congress Resolutions. During a meeting of the party executive Albarda declared that in the event Hitler's troops would try to cross the Dutch borders he would go and fight in spite of his 56 years. He did not want to disarm; national disarmament could only take place as part of international disarmament. Vliegen, another member of the executive, shared this view.65 A curious ambivalence evolved here—do not disarm but maintain the disarmament policy; fight against Hitler but without accepting the principle of national defence—which was to last until 1937.
It is true that party and trade union leaders had to take the whole picture into consideration—that party growth, unemployment, better working conditions, more pay, etc., had all to be balanced out against each other. But it is not unfair to say that the Social Democratic rank and file experienced their opposition to the military more intensely, more passionately, and to a certain extent more honestly than the party leaders. Few Social Democrats would have been able to talk about national disarmament as a draught-horse for vote getting purposes the way Albarda did, and even fewer were willing to discard it because it did not serve its vote getting purposes anymore. Thousands of Social Democrat proletarians were still imbued with the old, pre-war dislike for all things military and their instinct told them to reject every aspect of it. They had been taught that party discipline was important and therefore had followed their leaders in the demand for national disarmament without giving in to their revulsion and refusing military service. The majority continued to accept their leaders' advice, also because the threat of Germany was rather obvious. It was still indicative of the deepest feeling among Social Democrats that after four years of fascist rule in Germany and three years of careful preaching by Social Democrat leaders, fully one-sixth of the party and trade union rank and file voted against dropping the unilateral disarmament demand in 1937.

With the elections in 1933 the period of Premier Colijn's "adaptation" (aanpassing) started. In practice this adaptation to the depression meant that all levels of government
had to save on all possible expenditures. Wages were reduced time and again, work provisions for the unemployed were minimal and payment to the chronically unemployed abysmally low. On the other hand, the guilder was kept tied to the gold standard long after most other currencies had left the standard thus making Dutch exports too expensive. For a trading nation as the Netherlands such a policy was disastrous; unemployment remained frightfully high long after it started to decrease in other countries. The guilder was finally taken off the gold standard when the last countries still on the standard, France and Switzerland, devalued their currencies. Unemployment reached 350,000 in 1932, 400,000 in 1933, 470,000 in 1935, remained around 400,000 until 1938 and was still at 330,000 in December 1939 when full mobilization had withdrawn many from the labour market. The figures are those for the official (registered) unemployed in December of each year; the summer figures were about 100,000 lower but many, especially in the agricultural areas, never appeared on the official registration forms.\textsuperscript{66} The Social Democrats produced a "Labour Plan" (Plan van den Arbeid) based on a massive injection of government money into labour intensive industries and socially useful work. Simultaneously a large campaign was launched against National Socialism (both in Germany and at home) in the hope of keeping the working class from accepting the promises of work so easily dispensed by it.\textsuperscript{67} Demonstrations, meetings, and extensive propaganda were employed to convince the government to adopt the Labour Plan and the workers to reject fascism. The latter effort was quite successful; the former
was an utter waste of time and energy. Colijn and his Cabinet remained convinced that nothing could be done but to adapt to the situation and "to ride out the storm" by drawing the belt a little tighter.

By concentrating all their propaganda on the shortcomings of the government in relieving the depression hardships it was easy for Social Democratic leaders to downplay anti-military propaganda. They were aided in this by the government which did absolutely nothing to upgrade the defence capabilities of the country. Only the annual Defence Budget was a reminder to the party that it was still, in principle, opposed to any kind of national army. Albarda admitted in the budget debate in February 1936, "the gains of fascism and national socialism in Europe bring big changes for the military question, also for the Netherlands." Neither he, nor the other party executives, drew any further conclusions from the statement. All agreed that it was a difficult matter but apparently no one could think of a solution. It was left to the 1936 Congress to appoint a Committee to investigate whether or not disarmament could remain part of the party program.

The sixteen men on the Committee came to the conclusion that the international workers' organizations could not be depended upon any longer to prevent war now that the support of the German and Italian workers had been lost, and that the League of Nations had failed so badly on a number of occasions. Nevertheless, the League of Nations was the only organization potentially able to guarantee a lasting peace and the Netherlands had no choice but to strengthen the League. All measures
of the League, including sanctions and boycotts, should be supported. A minority on the Committee did not want to include military sanctions unless all military establishments in all countries were under League control. A majority was also in favour of collective security outside the League framework and thought the Dutch army should be made strong enough to hold an invader until help could arrive. This help would undoubtedly come because it was in Belgium, France, and England's own interest to come to the aid of the Netherlands. Again a minority (four members) disagreed because it would only result in an arms race and more power for the military. The Committee urged the acceptance of the nation's defence forces, and the possible need to strengthen these forces, but urged extreme caution. Social Democrats were to judge each defensive plan on its own merits; the cost of national defence should not go beyond the tax-paying capacity of the nation; money should be spent as efficiently as possible; maintaining the defence forces should not result in any curtailment of economic, social or cultural services; no caste or special interest group should be allowed to gain influence in the army; the militia should be as large as possible and the professionals as few as possible; conscientious objection should be given a wider meaning than had hitherto been the case.

Four members of the Committee would not discard the disarmament policy even with all the hedging qualifications the majority demanded. Instead, they wanted a security force to stop invading bands of soldiers, and a force which would be at the disposal of the League of Nations. The whole Committee
was at pains to explain that the Dutch party was the last Social Democratic party in the world which still had national disarmament in her program; there was no alternative but to change. Because a minority of four could not accept the majority report, they issued a report of their own and both were to be presented to the next Congress. Until that time no one was to publish anything to influence party members.

After a long debate the 1937 Congress accepted the majority report with 1509 in favour, 328 against, and 49 abstentions. It is quite conceivable that the vote would have been much closer had Albarda not written an article in the February issue of De Socialistische Gids (The Socialist Guide)—before the Congress started but too late for the minority to answer in print—which made it appear that there was dissension among those in the minority and that two of them actually stood quite close to the majority. Albarda's strong and emotional speech before the Congress and the previous publication ensured that a good majority was obtained but the 328 who opposed still made up a sizable segment.

Accepting the Report was indeed a big change for the Social Democrats but the number that had opposed, and all the qualifications in the Report, clearly showed that the party was not mentally prepared to fight to the last man for the Netherlands. The "conversion" of the Dutch Social Democrats was half-hearted: reason said it had to be done, but emotionally the people could not really accept it. This judgement is born out by the 1937 election booklet. Unlike the bookworks printed before other elections, this one was reasonably thin, but the
part dealing with militarism was as large as in other years. Before previous elections, the military bills before parliament, the debates, the interpellations, and the amounts of money wasted were glowingly recounted. The 1937 booklet did not discuss such things: the Report of the Committee was restated, and how the changing political situation in the world had forced this change upon the party. Once again the point was made that the Netherlands could only be safe in a collective security system and could never defend itself. It was the tone of the brochure that reflected the mentality of the party as much as the words that were used:

For many it is a tough decision to say goodbye to national disarmament and to take a positive standpoint on the question of defence. They were good years when we were able to fight for national disarmament with full enthusiasm. It has cost all of us, without exception, great difficulty to test our old and dear slogans to the new realities...

We are a small people, weak in comparison with the big powers now facing each other. But in the fulfillment of our modest part in the duty to safeguard international justice and prevent the outbreak of war we may not fall short.

The nostalgia in the first paragraph is clear and so is the quiet resignation in the second; neither needs to be condemned, but if the Netherlands wanted to remain a free country something more positive and determined needed to be heard.

Another example that the Social Democrats were not wholly convinced that the Netherlands should defend itself was given in the Second Chamber in December 1937. All but four Social Democratic MPs voted in favour of the Defence Budget, but when a week later a bill was introduced to enlarge the draft to 32,000 men and to lengthen service time to 11 months, it was deemed too much. Albarda argued that a training period of 5-1/2
months was quite long enough and that the additional 64 million guilders would mean an "insurmountable hindrance to the social and cultural uplifting of our nation." The extra millions for new material should not mean that the workers had to bring sacrifices of "neglected old age pensions and postponed improvements in unemployment care and education." For these reasons the party voted against the bill. It was passed; in February 1938 the First Chamber also passed it and the first reinforcement of the Dutch armed forces could take place. Two weeks later the Germans marched into Austria.

Everyone was now convinced of the seriousness of the situation and other defence measures were not opposed by the Social Democrats—not least of all because very little was, in fact, done. Premier Colijn once again had to face a cabinet crisis in June 1939; he managed to put it together again (his fifth cabinet), but the Chamber did not give its confidence. D.J. de Geer (Christian Historical Union) was given the task of forming a new cabinet and succeeded in bringing men from his own party, one Anti Revolutionary, Roman Catholics, Liberals, and two Social Democrats into a new government. Less than three weeks after its formation the cabinet had to call a general mobilization because Hitler had invaded Poland.

Being part of the government did not resolve the conflicts for the Social Democrats. Their negative attitude against defence was officially done away with but nothing positive was introduced in its place. A final example of their myopia was delivered on November 7, 1939 when they decided to organize Mobilization Clubs to maintain contact between the
mobilized soldiers and the organized workers movement. Commander in Chief General Reynders protested vigorously against this decision, pointing out how such clubs had undermined discipline during World War I. Minister of Defence Dijxhoorn sided with the Social Democrats and the clubs were brought into existence.

After almost twenty years of antimilitaristic propaganda the introduction of Mobilization Clubs was really a small matter but nevertheless symptomatic of the conduct of the Social Democrats over these years. They had always been caught in a web of facts and ideas which did not provide any escape. On the one hand was a reactionary, capitalistic government that was considered militaristic while in reality it did no more than insist upon the bare minimum for defence and administered that in a less than professional manner. On the other hand were the groups on the left who rejected the right of the government to train a man to kill his fellow man and therefore urged youths to stay out. With these two groups on either side of the Social Democrats, it was difficult to walk the straight and narrow path towards the final goal: a new world where brute force would not be used to settle differences between individuals or between nations. Convinced that their ideal was worth struggling for, they were nevertheless very sensitive to the charge from the Extreme Left—that they had given up their socialist ideals—and from the right—that they did not care about their fatherland. For two decades the Social Democrats had refuted these charges and had tried to walk the direct, legal path to their goal. In doing so, they
had contributed nothing to vitalizing their country in case it proved necessary to keep an adversary outside the borders, but instead had used their large organization and extensive propaganda means to propagate the idea that the country could not be defended. All the effort and propaganda closed the circle: in 1940 the country could not be defended partly because the Social Democrats had always opposed any measure to make the contrary come true.
Chapter V: The Religious Groups

1. Introduction

Antimilitarism created political and practical problems for the Social Democrats but for religious groups it often brought profound and fundamental differences with people of the same faith. For the left antimilitarism was part of their ideology and the problems stemmed from the practical application of the theory, not about the correctness of it. For religious antimilitarists matters were quite different. In almost all cases such persons were first religious and later became antimilitarists. Most of them belonged to one of the two religious blocs but neither Calvinistic churches, nor the Roman Catholic Church, accepted that antimilitarism could be based on religious foundations. Dutch churches had not been confronted with such Biblical exegesis for a long time. Traditional Anabaptist and Mennonite pacifism was already dead by the 19th Century and the pacifist revival of the Zwijndrechtse Nieuwligters did not last much beyond 1850. The few cases of conscientious objection to military service on Biblical grounds had not been well known and had established no pattern.

The small groups of Christian-socialists and Christian-anarchists were a new development but were not taken seriously by the churches. The Synod of the Reformed Church declared in 1920 that a member of the church must not belong to an organization based on the principles of class struggle and the Roman
Catholic Church had passed a similar decree. A clear demarcation line was thus drawn between believers and socialists. In the opinion of the major churches (with the exception of the Dutch Reformed Church) Christian-socialists, whether separate groups or part of the Social Democratic Workers Party, had placed themselves outside the clerical blocs.

Almost all churches adhered very strictly to their particular dogmas; once a group within a church came to hold different ideas about certain Biblical exegesis it usually meant the formation of a new denomination because no church would tolerate a wide divergence from the official interpretation. Religious pacifists were accused of erroneously using Scriptures; they were therefore a danger from within and once their numbers increased to more than a few it was necessary to cut them off from the church before others became infected. Before that point was reached a great deal of talk, mutual use of Bible texts, examinations of Dutch history, and chauvinistic and pacifistic slogans had been exchanged. It was an unquestioned axiom that churches did not want war and worked for peace; but to suggest that the church should take this position to its logical conclusion and work to end all military forces was considered an anathema since it would leave the nation and the church defenceless in a world full of enemies. It also negated the belief in a just war which the Roman Catholics and the orthodox Calvinists held to be permissible.

As is frequently the case, those on the extremes formulated their arguments in the simplest manner. For some religious antimilitarists it was enough that there was a commandment
"thou shalt not kill"; for many orthodox Calvinists it was sufficient that there was written, "the authorities do not carry the sword in vain". Others recognized that neither text could be used unsupported to determine a standpoint involving very complex decisions and possible situations. Many religious antimilitarists were very thorough in the defence of their position. In time the proponents of a national defence system who were not calcified in a simplistic "black-white" frame of mind brought in well thought out and formulated reasons to support their viewpoint. Especially in the Dutch Reformed Church and some of the smaller non-orthodox churches attempts were made to come to grips with the problem and to explain it in terms of Biblical exegesis and history of the Christian Church. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed Church, and a few small orthodox sects the simplistic answer remained sufficient.

The complex theological arguments that were used by those wishing to maintain a defence force need not be recounted; it was largely a defensive action born out of the necessity to clarify the official church position against the attacks of the religious antimilitarists. Most of the serious works dealing with the position of the church on war and violence date from the late twenties and early thirties and were all to a greater or lesser degree stimulated by the major work in favour of religious antimilitarism, The Sin of Christianity.

Religious antimilitarists can be divided into two distinct categories: those who opposed war but did not strive for another world, and those who saw their religious antimilitarism as part of their overall desire to change society wherein the
"Social Question" took a large place. Organizationally they can be separated into those who formed an antimilitaristic group within their own church, those who preferred to join a religious antimilitarist society free from all denominational connections, and those who joined a religious antimilitarist political party.

2. Social Religious Antimilitarism

The rather cumbersome title is used only to distinguish those religious antimilitarists who placed the accent on the social question from those who did not concern themselves with this. The earlier mentioned Society of Christian Socialists was the best example of the socially conscious religious antimilitarists, but the organization did not last beyond the close of the war. Its members came largely from Protestant churches—who frequently forced them out of responsible positions in church and school—and saw pacifism as a necessary element in their quest for a Christian-socialist society. When some of the better known members, among them Bart de Ligt, left the Society it declined rapidly. The surviving members either joined the small—600-700 members—Religious Socialist League, or united themselves in the League of Religious Anarcho-Communists. The latter existed for about a decade before losing its religious character and renamed itself League of Anarcho-Socialists. During this decade the religious anarcho-communists were really the Dutch section of the War Resisters International; once the religious aspect was lost the War Resisters International created its own organization in the Netherlands.
A few other small groups, such as the Christian League Against Militarism, and the Christian-Socialism Community existed from time to time but their short life and limited membership showed how difficult it was to maintain a group based on Christian and socialist concepts without denominational or political support. Only one small Christian-anarchist group appears to have existed for a long time. Called "Brothers in Christ" it was a loose grouping around the paper Komende Tijden (Coming Times) which also served a few other organizations. Close contact with the religious-anarcho communists, the Antimilitaristic Society and Bureau was possible through personal links: J. Giesen, H. Boschma, and J.B. Meyer were active in all these organizations. In a few localities Christian anarchists and socialists worked together with the established church. But this only happened when there was a sympathetic pastor or priest, and a non-orthodox congregation present.

The previously mentioned Religious Socialist League worked closely with the Woodbrokers and through them came into contact with the Blijde Wereld/Tijd en Taak group. Few League members joined the Social Democrats even though they agreed with many of the social aims of the party. They thought the disarmament demand did not go far enough but supported it as the first step towards complete pacifism. The League did not expect much from the churches and concentrated on working with the small social-religious groups. The influence of the League, which had many well-known personalities in its ranks, was therefore not as great as it might have been.
3. Political Religious Antimilitarists

The Society of Christian Socialists was not the first or the only group of religious socialists to exert political leverage through entrance into parliament. In 1905 a Christian Democratic Party was started, in 1912 three groups formed the Christian Social Party and elected one representative in 1918. It failed at the next election and was renamed the Protestant Peoples Party in 1925. In 1926 all but one of the "Social Protestant" groups united in the Christian Democratic Union, were unsuccessful in the 1929 election but elected one representative in 1933 and two in 1937.9

The Union was the Protestant counterpart of the Roman Catholic Peoples Party. Both were small parties, condemned, vilified and ridiculed by their respective larger denominational brothers, and both formed a home for the religious dissidents who believed that the major parties had departed from the true principles. Aware that they would never become major parties, the members were satisfied with being able to proclaim their standpoint. The introduction of the Christian Democratic Union Constitution and Program stated the matter simply:10

Almost all of us grew up in Anti Revolutionary and Christian Historical circles but left because we did not feel at home anymore. These two profess to be Christian but in the Social Question, the International Question, and the Colonial Question they advocate political solutions which are Christian in name but in reality are merely conservative. Because we cannot accept the Social Democratic Workers Party on these three points either, we have our separate party.

Regarding the Colonial Question the Christian Democratic Union demanded that Indonesia be given its independence. The International Question should be solved by working for a peaceful
solution of all differences between countries. To use war to settle international disputes was sinful. International disarmament was the ideal, and therefore one had to start with national disarmament. If other countries did not follow the example it was on their conscience, not yours. All forms of military conscription were opposed in principle; consequently there should not be any punishment for those who refused to participate in sinful military training.\textsuperscript{11}

These principles were very much the same as those of Church and Peace and many people belonged to both organizations. A few Democratic Union members belonged to the Mennonite Church, and a few others to the Remonstrant or another "modern" denomination, but most were drawn from the Reformed or Dutch Reformed churches. A small number of Reformed people disagreed with the dogmatic, conservative, conventional-historical approach to religion and politics; they welcomed the Union as a religiously sound, and socially enlightened party. The number of such people increased as a result of a difference over Biblical interpretation which led to the departure of 27 pastors (and their congregations) who started a new denomination. It was largely from this group of progressive-Reformed people that the Union drew its members.\textsuperscript{12}

The Democratic Union did not shun confrontation with the parties and churches of the Protestant bloc. Such conflicts often became national news and kept people interested for weeks. A good example of this was the case of Fedde Schurer who received a treatment not uncommon for orthodox religious antimilitarists.
Schurer was a teacher in a Protestant school, was a member of the Christian Democratic Union, and held an election speech in April 1929 wherein he outlined his party's antimilitaristic principles. Before long the school board provided Schurer with questions they wanted him to answer:

Did he accept the war against Spain [1568-1648] as a fight for freedom forced upon our fathers and as a religious war to defend the Church of God? Did Schurer accept the wars of Israel as wars of the Lord? Was it Schurer's intention to urge war resisting?

When the answers proved not completely satisfactory another set of questions was given. Eventually it was decided that Schurer could no longer teach in the school because he was Biblically incorrect, did not adhere to the guidelines of Calvin's Institutes, and did not want to give up working with "moderns" in Church and Peace who subverted the true religion.

It was useless for Schurer to appeal the decision because local Protestant school boards had the right to demand that teachers be of the same opinions and beliefs as the parents who sent their children to that school. For Schurer and the Democratic Union, however, it appeared a very good issue to give some publicity to the cause of antimilitarism as well as freedom of speech and political allegiance. Schurer went to the National School Committee; lawyers were brought in from both sides; the Democratic Union lent support with some very able people; Church and Peace sent a petition signed by more than fifty pastors; the national press gave the matter full coverage. As had been expected, the decision of the school board was upheld.

If the Union had hoped to convince Reformed people that they ought to re-examine their position on war it proved an idle
hope. During the sixteen months that the question Schurer dragged on, numerous articles appeared in orthodox-Calvinist papers aimed at keeping the flock thinking about antimilitarism in the right way. The paper for the Reformed youths stated in a book review about *All Quiet on the Western Front*:  

Do not read this book. If parents are brought out of their equilibrium by this book, how much bigger the danger for young people whose ship of life cannot yet stand up to all winds and teachings.

Remarque's book became very popular and was lauded by antimilitarists and pacifists. Orthodox Calvinists thought it a very dangerous influence which warranted more scathing views. An article in *De Standaard* admitted that there were just and unjust wars and that the Christian ought to be able to distinguish between them. The just wars were a duty; the unjust were sin. A few weeks later the same writer wrote:

Of course we pray that God will protect us from war and all its sorrows. We do everything that is permissible to prevent war or to keep it from us. But if war is put upon us as a holy duty to defend what God has given us in trust, may God then give us the strength to be heroes and heroines, worthy of our renowned forefathers.

The Anti Revolutionary weekly, *De Houten Pomp* (The Wooden Pump), in answer to a few kind comments in the Social Democratic press about the Christian Democratic Union, felt it necessary to publish a cartoon portraying the Union as a little man in the claws of a big red monster entitled, "social democracy". Few Reformed people read any other kind of papers than the ones from "their own people" and there was therefore little chance that the Union could exert much influence.

Christian Democratic Union efforts in parliament were also futile. After 1933 the major disarmament parties slowly
departed from their earlier positions and the tiny Roman Catholic Peoples Party and the Union could do little on their own. Voting against the Defence Budget, stating and restating their position did not change anything. The Peoples Party did not win a seat in the 1937 elections, the Union gained one more. Protestant religious pacifism appears to have held out longer than Roman Catholic religious pacifism. That these dissidents greatly weakened the over-all will of clericals to resist an invader cannot be assumed. At the most they formed a nucleus of pacifists who augmented the groups found among the Extreme Left, among the "modern" churches, and within the religious segment of the Social Democrats.

4. Small Religious Antimilitarist Groups

There is no point in going through the long list of small religious antimilitarist groups and discussing their activities in detail: a short enumeration is useful, however, to show that the religious segment was as divided as their Extreme Left counterparts. The Mennonites—who probably numbered no more than 50,000 between the wars—organized the Mennonite Labour Group Against Military Service. Buoyed up by a renaissance which sought to return to the pacifist principles of the 16th and 17th Centuries, the group actively propagated the antimilitarist message. It cooperated closely with Church and Peace and the well known Mennonite pacifist history gave a genuineness not present in other groups. Pressure was exerted for the institution of a conscientious objection law and once the law existed there was no difficulty in getting the judges to give
alternative service to Mennonite youths because the long-standing position of the church was well known and respected.

Other small groups did not warrant a separate existence. The Netherlands Association of Christians to Combat War, for instance, only existed for three years—from 1924 to 1927—when it joined Church and Peace. Others, such as the Committee of Christian Women of the Association for the League of Nations and Peace followed a similar path or ceased to exist.  

A different development took place with the Reformed Society for Realistic Peace Action. Officially organized in 1932, the groundwork already prepared in 1930, it consisted of a small group of Reformed people who accepted the same standpoint as Church and Peace but wanted to stay within their own church and work from within. Their efforts to convince fellow congregation members, consistories, classes, and even the synod were fruitless. Given the prevalent mentality within Calvinistic circles such attempts were bound to fail. The organization did not grow much beyond 300 members and only managed to maintain itself because of strong support by Church and Peace. The Reformed Society did not dispute any of the doctrinal points of the church and acknowledged that a defensive war was justified on Biblical grounds. The point was, however, that it was impossible to determine what was a defensive, preventive, or an offensive war; furthermore, the modern weapons, the chemical and bacteriological means employed were such that many innocent people would get killed. The use of such means could not be justified even when used against an invader; it was better to reject all wars than to use the bigger evil to stop the smaller one.
Another attempt to exert pressure for peace was the creation in 1926 of the International Union of Antimilitarist Ministers and Clergymen. Church and Peace had initiated the idea in the hope that sufficient clergy could be persuaded to work for peace in their own congregations so that churches could unite internationally for this goal. When the Antimilitarist Ministers and Clergymen held their first International Congress in 1928 in Amsterdam they accepted the following resolutions:

I. To protest in a fundamentally antimilitarist manner against the sin of war and preparation for war
II. To protect the conscientious objector as one who maintains the pure Christian attitude
III. To convince the Christian nations that they ought to disarm and, instead of the sinful risk of war, ought to accept in reliance on the assistance of God the risk of peace.

There were 116 representatives from 10 countries in Amsterdam; at the next Congress, in Zurich in 1931, there were 131 representatives from 11 countries, but in 1937 only 8 countries were represented. The clergymen, like so many laymen, were willing to relinquish pacifism in the face of growing fascism.

One segment of the small antimilitarist groups can be described as "moderately religious." The Christian Student Peace Society was one example of these. The students expressly stated that only lawful and acceptable methods would be employed. War resisting or passive disobedience were not considered ethical. Their activity was slight and their standpoint rather broad and superficial. In contrast, several "modern" Christian youth and student associations to be discussed in the Youth Chapter were much more radical and active.
Sometimes it was possible to prevent a split within an organization over the question of antimilitarism by setting up a special committee to deal with the subject. The Dutch Youth Society solved its difficulties in this manner. The Committee for Peace Activity of the Youth Society produced a pacifist paper every two months starting in 1930. The Committee for the section Groningen duplicated the example with a technically better paper from 1935 to 1940. All members of the Youth Society did not need to take a stand on antimilitarism, or agree with the work of the committees; all they needed to do was practise some Christian toleration for society members who held different views.

The small size of the Dutch section of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation was indicative of the difficulty Dutch believers had in joining interdenominational groups. Church and Peace had a viable existence, but it was the only interdenominational group that accomplished it. The Dutch section of the International Fellowship existed since 1919—the organization had been formed in Great Britain in 1914—but was not large enough to produce its own paper until 1936. The ultimate aim of the Fellowship was,

To present Christianity as a creative way of life; to stand against war, exploitation and violence; to bring about in personal, social, economic and international relations, justice, righteousness and peace.

Apparently it did not convince enough Dutch believers that it was an organization worth joining because the Dutch section never became very large.
It is not unfair to say that in terms of the size of the religious community actual peace, pacifist, or antimilitarist efforts were considerably less than the efforts of those who did not view themselves primarily in a religious connection. There were only two religiously based pacifist organizations which became sufficiently large and influential that they warrant an in-depth study. The first was the largely Protestant Church and Peace, the second the Roman Catholic Peace League. Church and Peace was strongly antimilitaristic; the Peace League called itself pacifistic which meant that it recognized wars as being just or unjust, thought the League of Nations the most suitable institution for the maintenance of peace, and worked more for the legislation and regulation of war than for the abolition of war.

5. Church and Peace

Church and Peace, founded in 1924, considered modern war a violation of God's Word. All violence was not necessarily sinful, nor was all killing necessarily forbidden—the punishment of criminals, for instance, might well necessitate taking a human life—but the organized, premeditated, systematized murder of a modern war was contrary to God's commandments. Initially Church and Peace was an association of clergymen and their congregations. An open letter by Rev. J.B.Th. Hugenholtz to 5,000 rabbis, pastors and priests initiated the association. A meeting was held on October 8, 1924 where the participants accepted the resolution which formed the foundation for the organization:
The group of religious leaders and congregation members against war and war preparation are of judgement:
that only through the working of Christian principles is salvation to be expected for peoples, nations, and civilizations,
that the permeation [of Christian principles] is not only counteracted through the influence of sin, but also through the maintenance of sinful habits of which war is the most pernicious,
that war not only mocks all justice, but also that the nature of modern methods of warfare offend the religious-moral consciousness in an intolerable manner,
that it is worth every sacrifice to oppose this crime with the moral truth that it is better to suffer injustice than to do injustice,
that therefore we take up the fight against war and war preparations and call upon all Christians within and without church organizations to participate in this so that the names of Jesus Christ and His Heavenly Father will no longer be blasphemed by the nations in this terrible manner as has happened in the years gone by.

Initial response from the Dutch churches was hardly overwhelming. When the first issue of the monthly organ, entitled *Kerk en Vrede*, came out in May 1925 it reported that total membership consisted of 150 people of whom 85 were pastors and evangelists. One of the clergy was a Roman Catholic priest, about 17 or 18 were members of the orthodox churches or from the orthodox wing of the Dutch Reformed Church, and the remainder were "modern".

Professor G.J. Heering, one of the initiators and leaders of Church and Peace, published a book in 1924, *The Sin of Christianity*, which became a major theoretic, philosophic and dogmatic foundation for the association. Heering rejected the contention that the government, as a God instituted authority which carried the sword (Romans 13) had the right to conscript youths and maintain a military force. He called this view simple-minded and purely Calvinistic which could not be substantiated from the Bible. A Christian was first and foremost
responsible to God and He had ordered him not to kill. If a
government ordered an individual to kill another human being,
the responsibility rested with the individual. To connect God,
the Netherlands, and the House of Orange in a holy trinity
which ought to be defended by the Dutch people had nothing to
do with Biblical truth but everything with chauvinism, colonial-
ism, and capitalism. It was impossible to safeguard the
spiritual values of a nation by training it to bomb cities,
developing and storing chemical and bacteriological weapons.

To say that the Netherlands would never start a war could hard-
ly be maintained in the light of the history of the Atjeh war.

Heering believed that the Christian Church had come to accept war. It did so because the church-state relationship
had become much too close, the original Christian thoughts and
values had been lost, the New Testament was wrongly interpreted,
and century old traditions were still enforced through natural
and artificial means. Christians should not let themselves
be panicked by the "Red danger", and should certainly not
lower themselves and employ "Red" methods. Christians must
serve the state when it exacted such service, but the state
did not have the right to demand that people kill each other.
Lawlessness and riots need not be accepted, but the use of force
to stop them should be no more than necessary and could not be
compared to the methodical, premeditated slaughter of modern war.

Church and Peace developed into a conscientious and radical
organization. It was only concerned with one goal. Whereas
Social Democrats and others thought of political advantages
and economic gains, Church and Peace discarded all other
considerations and concentrated on ending militarism as the main source of war. The War Resisting Congresses were attended and supported even though most of the people there were atheist libertarians; cooperation with the Youth Peace Action provided a link with the youth movement; Social Democrats were lauded for their disarmament position and were criticized for their stance against war resisting.\textsuperscript{32} As a member of the No More War Federation, Church and Peace was in contact with the middle class peace organizations. As a religious association, Church and Peace sought connections with as many like-minded institutions as possible. The meetings of the World Council of Churches, the International Committee of Antimilitarist Clergymen and other such organizations were attended and supported. Such ecumenical conferences as Peace Through Religion, held in the Hague in 1928, received full cooperation even though it must have been felt that little concrete result would come out of it.\textsuperscript{33}

Primarily Church and Peace was directed towards the Dutch religious community and it was from this quarter that most of the opposition came. The statutes of Church and Peace were sent to 44 classes of the Dutch Reformed Church. Seven said they were in agreement, eleven rejected them, and the remainder refused to commit themselves.\textsuperscript{34} The orthodox churches reacted strongly to criticism of their position that "war will always be with us", and that the church's only task was to preach the Word. Further enmity was created by the Church and Peace habit of placing large notices listing the political parties which had disarmament in their program and urging voters to
choose candidates from these parties.\textsuperscript{35} From time to time there were optimistic articles in \textit{Kerk en Vrede} about the growing awareness among orthodox youths of the incompatibility of Scriptures with war\textsuperscript{36} but the organ also had to report often that opposition was increasing. The April 1929 issue cited excerpts from the Reformed youth paper rejecting the World Council of Churches and all those associated with it; the following month \textit{Kerk en Vrede} reported that the main speaker before a meeting of 400 Reformed pastors had warned against pacifist organizations; he reaffirmed that the church had only to preach the Word and must not get involved in other activity.

Orthodox newspapers were quite vehement in their condemnation. Church and Peace members were stigmatized as "anarchists, false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, friends of communists", and similar epithets.\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Kerk en Vrede} faithfully reported all attacks made upon her and the paper might well have been correct when it wrote that the attacks stemmed from fear that the traditional values and beliefs were changing in favour of the new doctrine expounded by the Christian antimilitarists.

A similar fear of being undermined by Church and Peace was probably one of the reasons that the Roman Catholics started their own pacifist organization not long after Church and Peace was initiated. Although the Catholic initiative was welcomed\textsuperscript{38} it meant that Church and Peace would remain a Protestant association; only the "Old Catholics" remained. They were more in tune with the Protestant organization than with the mentality permeating the Roman Catholic one.\textsuperscript{39}
In spite of the aloofness of the Roman Catholics and the opposition from the Protestant churches, Church and Peace continued to grow. In May 1929 the association numbered 3,772 members and the monthly paper sold 6,000 copies; two years later there were 7,639 members of whom 327 were clergymen; in 1932 there were 9,028 members. In 1933 the paper started to appear twice a month and had a circulation of over 10,000.

Church and Peace saw as its main purpose to weaken the existing military structure and to this end all possible help was given to war resisters. Heering proudly announced that 1,000 men between 1915 and 1929 had gone to jail rather than be conscripted. A special fund was maintained for them while for conscientious objectors all possible information was provided about the conscientious objection law. A discussion was started whether or not it was justified to refuse payment of taxes which were designed for defence purposes; in keeping with the principles of the association it was left up to the individual. The same was true for war resisting and conscientious objection; no youth was ever urged to take such action. The possibilities were explained and what principles a Christian should maintain. It was left up to the individual whether or not he should act accordingly.

Church and Peace also collected signatures against the 1930 Fleet Law. The 80,000 that were collected did not reflect its organizational ability or influence because the Social Democrats' campaign was started earlier and many people had already signed there. Church and Peace was sincere and honest in its propaganda and believed in putting all its cards on the table. When the
general meeting in June 1931 accepted a resolution that members could not obey the authorities if they, by walking the path of war, left the path of God, a notice was sent to the government that in the event of war it could not count upon the cooperation of Church and Peace members.\textsuperscript{43}

Around this time the discussion about civil protection against air attacks, especially with gas or bacteria, was at its height. Church and Peace rejected all cooperation with municipal or military authorities to familiarize the population with these weapons or to build adequate public shelters. Such efforts "militarized" the people, gradually drew them into the mentality and sphere of "we have to learn to live with it", and took away the horror aspect of such weapons. A characteristic sentence by Heering was frequently cited by Church and Peace members, "I would rather choke in this world than that I save my life in such an unshackling of the hell...."\textsuperscript{44}

The few years before 1933 were a high point for Church and Peace. The depression had not yet reached its height; fascism was only in power in far-away Italy; pacifist and antimilitarist organizations proliferated and cooperation among them was frequent and wide-spread. A small poll among local Church and Peace branches brought to light that they worked together with local chapters of the International Antimilitaristic Society, Workers Youth Federation, Social Democratic Workers Party, World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic Peace League, and the Association for the League of Nations and Peace.\textsuperscript{45}

Within Church and Peace the various churches were well represented by their clergymen; they were Mennonite, Old Catholic,
Remonstrant, Dutch Reformed and Reformed. A questionnaire by the Rotterdam branch showed membership to be largely "modern", however. Of the 214 people who returned the questionnaire, 107 belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church (there was no distinction made whether orthodox, center, or modern), 62 were Remonstrant, 12 were Mennonite, 3 were Lutheran, 15 were Evangelical or Reformed while 15 had no church affiliation. Rotterdam was not very orthodox; in areas where this was the case a greater percentage of Church and Peace members were orthodox.

Emphasizing the religious affiliations is important because the clerical governments based many of their decisions on a religious foundation. De Savorin Lohman and de Geer, leaders of the Historical Union, wrote many articles that according to Scriptures a defence establishment was a national duty. When de Geer said in a speech that war was sin, but refused to add the corollary that nations therefore ought to disarm, Church and Peace published a special pamphlet to point out this inconsistency. Earlier Colijn had written five articles in De Standaard using the Old Testament and Calvin's teachings to show that a defence force was a God-given duty. When he later gave a one-sided view of the world situation, minimized the possibility of another war, and suggested that gas was not such a terrible weapon against which protection was possible, the wrath of Church and Peace descended upon him in full force. Since being an orthodox Calvinist and voting Anti Revolutionary or Christian Historical was virtually synonymous, the antipathy towards Church and Peace became very strong. This feeling was
increased when the Reformed Society for Realistic Peace Action was created in 1932. It was an additional threat and had close ties with Church and Peace; the big danger should therefore be combated more vigorously.

Official political efforts to curtail its influence took the form of making the organ forbidden literature for the military in 1933, and in 1938 making membership in Church and Peace an offense for civil servants. A different kind of official action was conducted by the Reformed Church. In 1934 the Classis Leiden ruled that church members could not belong to Church and Peace because it was wrong Scripturally, contradicted the Heidelberg Cathechism (Lord's Day 39) and the Dutch Confession of Faith (Article 36). For two years the question was debated in other congregations until in 1936 the General Synod of the Reformed Church declared that church membership was irreconcilable with membership in organizations who accepted anti-militarism in whatever form. Individual churches were to censure members who continued in their error and if necessary excommunicate them. This was a powerful weapon because the church was not only a religious, but also a social center. Excommunication usually meant that friends and acquaintances were also lost. Not surprising therefore that the Society for Realistic Peace Action appealed many times in Kerk en Vrede for support. But the bigger organization was also being hurt. Church buildings which local groups rented to hold testimonial meetings were being refused. A gradual drop in membership was making itself felt although the decline was not very sharp: in May 1938 there were still more than 7,000 members and in
August 1939 slightly less than 6,000. The war and the mobilization of the Netherlands did not accelerate the decline; in April 1940 almost 5,500 people of whom 325 were clergy, were still members.  

Church and Peace never had any illusions about national socialism—as some Dutch churches had in the beginning—or what it stood for. The Great War, the Peace of Versailles, and the conditions thereafter in Germany made the growth of fascism possible which only meant that one sin (the war) had begotten many others. Christian churches had been guilty of participating in the war and the German and Italian churches were either cooperating with fascism or abstained from all protests or legal opposition. There was little reason for Dutch Christians to look askance at other countries because the way their own "Christian" government had brought an end to the mutiny of the Zeven Provincien did not differ from the methods used by the fascists while the popular "Orange Fury" against all socialists was very similar to brown-shirt activity against the Jews.

In an apparent contradiction, Church and Peace did not forbid its members to join the Dutch Fascist Party: it did put the statutes and principles of the two organizations side by side and clearly expected individuals to draw their own conclusion as to their incompatibility.

In October 1935 Church and Peace rejected military sanctions against Italy. It readily admitted that it was powerless in the face of aggression but pointed out that those who lived by the sword would die by the sword. If the Netherlands would be overrun by the fascists there was little that could be done
about it. Believers ought to be convinced that "we have to
die, but not to kill" and that it was preferable to be a slave
than to kill others. Being a slave did not mean that the mind
and spirit were enslaved and that was the criterion that
counted. The association therefore did not want to take a
standpoint on the National Passive Resistance which was being
propagated by certain pacifist and antimilitarist organizations.
Individual members were, of course, free to act as they
thought best.

Leaving its members free to act as their conscience demand­
ed was very characteristic of Church and Peace and resulted in
part from Bart de Ligt's influence. He, the agnostic anarchist,
had been in large measure responsible for the creation of Church
and Peace. The principal organizers had been strongly affected
by de Ligt's articles and sermons condemning the church for
cooperating with the military, for blessing weapons, for
praying to "their" God for victory. It had been a lasting
impression; Kerk en Vrede articles continued to hammer on the
unholy alliance especially when carried out in such blatant
form as using church buildings to show military propaganda
films or having speeches in favour of the military.

The government was slow in recognizing the influence of
Church and Peace. The Central Intelligence concentrated so much
on the left that others were forgotten: Church and Peace was
not mentioned until 1934. It was 1935 before the Central
Intelligence "discovered" that it had 8,000 members and that
13 per cent of all Protestant clergy belonged to the organi­
ization. This was a worrisome development since pastors had
considerable influence over their congregations and it concerned the most dependable (the religious) segment of the population. The private watchdog, the Committee Against Unilateral Disarmament, was certain that Church and Peace was communist infiltrated but could not quite prove it. It did have proof that in 1939 there were still eighteen army and navy padres belonging to Church and Peace and what sinister advice did they give to the unsuspecting soldiers and sailors?

Some of these accusations were no doubt spurious, but there is no question that Church and Peace was much more active and influential than the government realized. Because it was a clerical government it tried to stay clear of problems which could grow into religious confrontations. Denominational difficulties could grow into political antagonism and endanger the often shaky coalitions. The churches and a few private organizations were therefore left to fight the pacifist influences of religiously based associations. That it became a question for synod to deal with, and that there was a pacifist group within the Reformed Church indicates that many orthodox Calvinists were being forced to think about the matter. They had to determine their standpoint anew in the face of new arguments presented by such groups as Church and Peace. It brought a little doubt and indecision into a group which twenty years earlier had been assured and convinced.
6. Roman Catholic Pacifist Theories

The first antimilitaristic sounds from Dutch Roman Catholic circles were heard at the close of the Great War. They had the familiar tenor that military barracks were a danger for the souls of the youths and they chided Roman Catholics for not taking the Pope's (1917) peace message to heart. A radical-pacifist question was asked at the end of one pamphlet. Could a modern war still be allowed? The cure should not be worse than the ailment; even though wars were justified, could justice not be obtained in any other way, was justice possible after a war such as this? The Premier, Ruys de Beerenbrouck, commented that efforts to end conscription deserved support but he did not take any steps to implement it. It took almost three years before pacifism was dealt with again and once more it was an argument against conscription. The evil influence of the barracks was discussed at length and the writer concluded that the state did not have the right to impose conscription during normal times. The blueprint for a peaceful world was in the Pope's peace message: end conscription, use the Court of International Arbitration, make use of boycotts and sanctions.

In spite of the opposition to conscription by many Roman Catholics there was no official effort made to end it by the Roman Catholic State Party. When the authoritative Catholic newspaper, De Maasbode (The Meuse Messenger), reviewed the parliamentary debates on the conscientious objection law it refused to say whether Roman Catholics could have conscientious objection. Not until the following year (1924) was a
brochure published which definitely stated that Roman Catholic conscripts had every right to call upon the law. The writer, A.Th. Bart, argued that the government did not have the right to institute a longer alternative service for those granted exemption, and that military men should not sit on the committee to judge conscientious objectors.\textsuperscript{65} Such progressive thought filtered through Roman Catholic society very slowly; it was 1934 before the first Roman Catholic youth made use of the conscientious objection law.\textsuperscript{66}

Bart's radical standpoint was symptomatic of what was taking place in the Catholic world outside the Netherlands. In 1924 F.M. Stratmann, a German Roman Catholic priest, published the first major work about war and the position of the church. The book received immediate attention and was translated into Dutch in 1926.\textsuperscript{67} It proved to be the vanguard of many pacifist works by Catholic writers, mostly from Austria and Germany—e.g. F. Keller, Joh. Ude, M.J. Metzger—who were considerably more radical than the Dutch Catholic hierarchy.

7. The Roman Catholic Peace League

It was partly to combat this Catholic radical pacifism, to curtail the attraction Church and Peace might have, and to work for the rather different peace message coming from Rome that the Roman Catholic Peace League was created. The League quickly became something of an elitist organization with all the big names in the Catholic world as members. The Constitution and Statutes of the League were sufficiently general that few people could object to them. They emphasized the historical
peace role of the church, demanded that individual Catholics adhere to the "love thy neighbour" commandment, and promised that the League would follow the Peace Program of Pope Benedict XV. The main points of this Program were that conflicts between countries should not be settled with brute force but with moral justice to be achieved through simultaneous international disarmament and the end of conscription. The official brochures from the League were very learned, had many historical and theoretical observations, but could offer no practical solution other than cooperation with the League of Nations.

The best way for individual Catholics to work for peace was as follows:

The Catholics in the Netherlands, organized in a political party, exert their influence on the local party offices. These in turn exert pressure on the Members of Parliament and these on parliament itself. Parliament in turn explains to the Cabinet what the people want. The government works through its delegates in the League of Nations and only there can the real work of peace take place.

Such a viewpoint was very much in keeping with the hierarchical tradition of the Dutch Roman Catholic Church and party. The men in positions of authority took note, via the customary channels, of the needs of the lower echelons, and then did what they thought best. Definite standpoints were avoided when possible so that each situation could be judged in the light of the general principles of the church. The election programs of the State Party were a good example of this. The 1922 Party Program only stated that "the organization of army and fleet must be confined to what is necessary for the maintenance of neutrality and national independence." The moral and spiritual values of the men must be safeguarded and there had
to be clergy on board each ship and with each unit. The 1929 Program only added that the 1923 Fleet Plan "had been carefully tested to the Party Program." In 1933 the text of Pope Benedict's Peace Program was added. The rather vague and well-meaning words enabled the party to act as it saw fit and since the need to maintain the coalition with the Protestant clerical parties was paramount an official antimilitarist position was out of the question.

Since the Roman Catholic Peace League stood so close to the Catholic hierarchy it differed considerably from Church and Peace in aim, method of operation, and membership. Whereas the latter was made up of people from many churches, the Roman Catholics belonged to one church; the Protestant organization rejected all modern wars, the Catholics made a distinction between a just (and therefore permissible) war and an unjust war but had always disliked the military in general. The heterogeneous Church and Peace members did not belong to one political party; the homogeneous Roman Catholic members were expected to vote for their State Party. Both organizations opposed conscription. The Protestants deduced from this that men ought to become war resisters or conscientious objectors; the Catholics rejected war resisting outright and only gradually accepted that Catholics could hold conscientious objection to military service. Church and Peace was indigenous and received most of its theoretical underpinnings from Dutch people while the Roman Catholics received their impetus largely from abroad. Church and Peace concentrated on winning (preferably orthodox-religious) members to its point of view as well as
convincing the government; the Peace League had a host of other considerations.

Priding itself on its "many hundred thousand indirect members" the actual work of the Peace League was limited to sending international peace greetings, speaking in favour of the 1932 Geneva Disarmament Convention, cooperating in a few peace exhibitions, holding meetings, and publishing its monthly paper *Pro Pace*. The latter was augmented in 1935 by the *R.K. Vredeskrant* (R.C. Peace Paper), a bi-monthly newspaper about peace providing current information for "the common man" rather than theoretical discussions. It had a circulation of 60,000 but its contents were as mild and gentle as the whole tenor of the Peace League. *Pro Pace*, started in 1929, was directed almost exclusively by the clergy and most articles were written by them. League of Nations' efforts, and those of the past and present Popes, received the lion's share of attention. To capture and hold the youths, the Roman Catholic Youth Peace League was created. It had its own paper, but was no more than a semi-autonomous part of the adult Peace League.

To those outside the Catholic world it was not always clear what the position on national defence was. The small Roman Catholic Peoples Party was actively antimilitaristic; its spokesmen were frequently present at antimilitaristic congresses, were busy in the committees to aid conscientious objectors or war resisters, and gathered money for the Canteen Fund. Youths who found the Peace League too conservative started the Catholic Youth Peace Action. Separated on religious and dogmatic grounds from the "regular" Youth Peace Action it
was in reality not that far removed. The Catholic Youth Peace Action in theory was based on the same pacifist principles as the other Catholic organizations, but in practice was much more radical. It was well known that certain Catholic MPs had voted against an increase in the draft (1921), had opposed the Fleet Law (1923), and had rejected Minister Lambooy's military modernization proposals (1927, 1928). To non-Catholics the pacifist efforts of the Roman Catholics looked impressive. The League prided itself on having locals in all the big cities in the (Catholic) south as well as 70 correspondence chapters in smaller towns and in addition it counted all the members of Catholic associations which had joined in group membership. For the uninitiated it was not always clear that Peace League members were not as active and determined as, for instance, Church and Peace members while the objectives were definitely less ambitious.

8. Catholic Dissidents

Although the majority of Dutch Catholics were conservative by nature, antagonistic towards the left, and greatly concerned with the maintenance of law and order, it was not possible to contain them all within the confines of the State Party and the Peace League. Bishops and priests fulminated against the socialists and the Roman Catholic Peoples Party, but the latter could not be destroyed. With the help of the Old Catholics it captured one seat in 1925 and again in 1933. By the latter elections there were several other Catholic political parties, largely because Catholics were forbidden to belong
to the Social Democratic Workers Party and the Communist Party on penalty of exclusion from the holy sacraments. The depression and growing international tensions were the main reasons that the repeated warnings by the bishops to maintain unity—which could only mean support for the State Party—were not adhered to.

The unity within the State Party was never as great as the Church hierarchy would have liked. In 1924 a group of progressives wanted to reform the party and formed the so-called "St. Michael clubs". The clubs multiplied quickly and pressure became so strong that the party was forced to make a number of seats available to them. Party discipline was weak in the Netherlands and the progressive wing of the State Party aggravated this tendency. The inability of the party to deliver the vote for the Fleet Law and Lambooy's modernization proposals were only two examples of this. The Social Democrats placed great hope on the progressives—not only that they would support the disarmament bill but also that they would agree to a Red-Catholic coalition government.

It was from among the dissidents within the State Party and from the Peoples Party that most of the Catholic antimilitarism came. Many of these people were partly driven by the old "barrack fear" of pre-war times, but others placed themselves on the "war is sin" principle of Church and Peace. The literature written by some of these men was critical of the party's position, was in favour of Catholics using the conscientious objection law, was heavily influenced by the writings of German and Austrian Catholic antimilitarists and angrily blamed the
Dutch Catholics for ignoring these views. If these views were incompatible with Catholic teaching, the Church ought to point this out; if these antimilitarists were correct, the Dutch Catholic leaders ought to propagate these ideas and act in accordance with them. But very little was said officially and the ironical situation presented itself that the ideas of Keller, Ude, and Metzger were lauded by the Protestant Church and Peace but were ignored by the Catholic Peace League.

Optimism about early Roman Catholic peace efforts was much greater among agnostics such as Bart de Ligt, or Protestants such as G.J. Heering than in dissident Catholic circles. The latter realized that they were a small minority in a group which encompassed one-third of the Dutch population; the former appeared to have viewed the dissidents as the tip of the antimilitaristic iceberg in the Catholic ocean. Heering devoted the first Church and Peace brochure to Catholic pacifism. He also had to report that when he went to Maastricht—in the solidly Catholic province Limburg—to explain the position of Church and Peace Gorris, head of the Peace League, publicly warned Catholics not to attend. That so many people came to the meeting in spite of the warning was for Heering a favourable sign of the incipient antimilitarism among Catholics.

Antimilitarism never captured the mainstream of Catholic society as Heering had hoped; it remained limited to dissident groups. Men such as W.C. Setteur and others became well known for their antimilitaristic work but they were, and remained, a small minority. In the later thirties the Catholic Youth Peace Action showed the most initiative and drive among Catholic dissidents.
Working closely with the Flemish Youth Peace Action, the Roman Catholic Youth Peace Action attempted to create an International Roman Catholic Front of all Catholics in Europe. A special paper, *I.R.F.*, was set up for this purpose alongside the Catholic Youth Action's own paper *Vredes-Aktie* (Action for Peace). Under the influence of Keller and Ude, as well as the Flemish Youth Peace Action where war resisting was held to be very important, the Catholic Youth Peace Action gradually became a radical-pacifist organization. In February 1934 *Vredes-Aktie* wrote that "war resisting in our time, and seen from Catholic morals, is a holy duty." By this time the paper had already been declared forbidden literature for Dutch military personnel.

From a practical antimilitaristic point of view the formation of the Roman Catholic Peoples Party and Youth Action were probably mistakes—both would have been more effective had they remained within the larger organizations. The St. Michael clubs had shown that a radicalization of the State Party was possible. That the progressives did not remain effective came in part because the more impatient ones left to form or join the Peoples Party or Youth Action. The one vote of the Peoples Party in parliament could do little; a stronger progressive bloc within the State Party might have done more. The same argument holds for the Catholic Youth Peace Action and is based on the fact that the Church hierarchy wanted above all else to preserve the Catholic unity against the divided Liberal, Socialist, and Protestant blocs. Rather than allow the unity to be shattered they might have been willing to
accept a more radical stance on the military and defence questions. Once the extremists formed their own associations, the hierarchy recoiled from the radical notions and became more conservative. The State Party and Peace League, therefore, worked more as a ball and chain on the legs of the "militarists" than a brake to stop the defence preparations of the nation. That slowing down the already agonizingly slow defence preparations was to turn into a serious impediment in 1940 was not recognized during the twenties and thirties.

From the information in this chapter it is clear that the antimilitarists and pacifists in the religious sector of the population were far fewer than those in the left and Extreme Left. Had it not been so the Netherlands would have had no defence establishment at all. The fact that both the Protestant and Catholic blocs had sizeable pacifist groups indicates, nevertheless, that no part of society was free from the sentiment. Because the people who wanted a military force were not eager to pay the required money and were less than determined to have a strong defence force, any action hindering the build-up compounded the weakness of the country. Church and Peace did it through straightforward propaganda, telling the nation it could not count upon its 10,000 members, and sowing a certain amount of doubt among the Protestants as to the righteousness of their cause. The Peace League did it by stigmatizing soldiers as a necessary evil, by insisting that only the bare minimum in effort, financial offers, or material sacrifices should be expended on an essential, but
still undesirable undertaking. Both the large and small groups contributed, each in their own way, to the unpreparedness of the nation in 1940.

The large and small religious pacifist and antimilitarist groups show that these beliefs were not the sole prerogative of the socialist bloc, but were also present in the two religious blocs, albeit to a more limited degree. The next chapter will show that these beliefs were also present in the fourth bloc, the neutrals. Each of the four blocs of Dutch society was thus afflicted, only the degree and intensity of the affliction varied.
Chapter VI: The Peace Movement

1. Introduction

In its broadest meaning "the Peace Movement" included all groups and individuals working for peace but usually the word was used to describe the middle class organizations active in this endeavour. As has been mentioned in Chapter I, the word "middle class" has to be used with caution because of the many vertical groups based on religious principles. The groups now to be discussed would have quarrelled among themselves as to who was middle class because they also disagreed as to who actually belonged to the Peace Movement. The Extreme Left, the Social Democrats, and the religious groups except the Roman Catholic Peace League never used the term when referring to themselves. The groups who did feel that they belonged to the Peace Movement usually contained a large percentage of professionals, businessmen, shopkeepers, etc., while the two women associations clearly did not belong to the working class. There were a few trade unions affiliated with the Peace Movement but they formed a small minority of the total membership. Another reason to link the Peace Movement with the middle class is that few organizations were concerned with religion. The "neutral" bloc was not synonymous with the middle class but many people without religious affiliations (except the socialists, of course), or those belonging to the latitudinarian wing of the Dutch Reformed Church, were lower middle, upper middle, or middle class.
As was the case with the chapter on the Extreme Left, there were so many groups in the Peace Movement that only a limited number can be investigated in detail. As late as 1938 there were well over 50 Dutch organizations, associations, or committees working to bring about a permanent world peace. In 248 cities and towns at least one chapter of a national organization was located. The three big cities—Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague—had a minimum of one dozen (sometimes competing, sometimes cooperating) chapters. At least 25 regular peace publications appeared each month and many more did so on an irregular basis. In the later thirties nearly 100 new books and brochures advocating peace, pacifism, or antimilitarism were printed each year while the number of reprints from earlier years far surpassed this number.\textsuperscript{1} The Committee Against Unilateral Disarmament reported in November 1937: "The number of executive councils of national, regional, and municipal antimilitarist organizations in the Netherlands amount to more than 400."\textsuperscript{2} In 1936 the Committee tried to compile the number of antimilitaristic meetings and gatherings and counted 279 between September 1 and December 18. These figures do not include humanitarian, religious or political groups advocating pacifism without being organized primarily for pacifist or antimilitarist purposes.\textsuperscript{3}

It is clear that the Peace Movement was a widespread and multifaceted movement without clear demarcation lines on the right or left. It only had the tenuous common ground that its members were generally from the middle class.
2. The Liberal Democratic League

The Liberal Democratic League was unique in being the only middle class political party of note to embrace antimilitarism and demand that the Netherlands disarm unilaterally. Officially the League accepted unilateral disarmament in 1924 but it had been moving in this direction for a few years already. Although a much smaller and weaker party—five to seven seats in the inter war years—than the Social Democratic Workers Party, the League's "conversion" created a certain amount of upheaval.

Politically the League stood between the liberals of the in 1921 created Freedom League and the Social Democrats (they joined the latter in the newly formed Labour Party after World War II). Historically the Liberal Democratic League was part of the 19th Century Liberal Party which had broken into three parties in the 1890s; occasional cooperation among the three groups had been possible but all attempts to reunite them had failed. The radical liberals stayed in the Democratic League, the others found each other in the Freedom League. The Weltanschauung of the liberals differed considerably from the clerical parties: freedom (Freedom League) and moderate state socialism (Democratic League) instead of authority, family, church. Placing the emphasis on liberty or fraternity was enough to keep the liberals apart, especially because voters and party members came from different backgrounds: the Freedom League was the party of the businessmen, the Democratic League of the intellectuals. In the mid-thirties both parties consented to join a coalition government with clerical parties. For the Democratic League it meant the end of its official antimilitaristic position.
Before the Great War the liberal position on the military had hovered between Social Democratic demands and what the government wanted. After the war the party began to pay much more attention to the high cost of the defence establishment. Irritation with the government's bungling brought more and more criticism and demands to reduce cost intensified. It was Professor D. van Embden, the Liberal Democratic League representative to the First Chamber who became, and remained, the big antimilitarist spokesman for the party. Initially theirs was a critique of the wasted money; from there it progressed to an anti-defence force position because the Netherlands could not be defended. Somewhat later the moral argument was added that defending the country was irresponsible since thousands of innocent women and children would die for a lost cause. Van Embden started his attack in April 1923 with a few articles in the widely read newspaper De Telegraaf (The Telegraph) and elaborated in a brochure shortly thereafter. Limiting himself largely to the proposed Fleet Law, he called it useless since the navy could not defend the Netherlands or the colonies. If the present plans of the Dutch government and those of other governments were carried out, the situation in 1930 would look as follows: England would have 22 battleships, 52 light cruisers, and 204 destroyers; Japan would have 11 battleships, 59 light cruisers, and 109 destroyers; the Netherlands would have no battleships, 2 light cruisers, and 12 destroyers. Submarines and heavy weapons would show a similar disparity. The Dutch government continued to think in 17th Century terms about ships, fighting, and military glory,
instead of spending money more effectively on cultural, social, and educational projects.

A year later, during the discussion of the defence budget in the First Chamber, van Embden took on the army. His speech was printed in pamphlet form and at least 50,000 copies were sold. Van Embden wrote that a saving of 50 or 60 million guilders could justifiably be made by changing the defence forces into a small security force. Dutch people were now spending 17 per cent of their national budget on an insurance premium in the form of defences which the government justified—on totally false grounds—with the old example of 1914. The government acted deceitfully when it stated in support of the defence budget:

The maintenance of our defence forces has ensured our neutrality in the most actual manner. Had we been defenceless [in 1914, our neutrality] would certainly not have been respected. The considerations which led to the respecting of our neutrality will also be operative in the future.

Such a statement could not be supported historically or theoretically; it ignored the example of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro—all small states with armies which were drawn into the war. Had Belgium been without an army, the German troops would simply have marched through without fighting. Dutch military experts agreed that only Fortress Holland could be defended and this would create an exact duplication of the situation of Fortress Antwerp in 1914. No invader could afford to leave an army in a defensive position on its flanks. It had to be destroyed.
Apart from the strategic argument van Embden also cited many other reasons which made it impossible to defend the Netherlands. France had 3,000 airplanes, the Netherlands had 112; Great Britain had 27,000 men in the air force, the Netherlands had 400; Americans and Britons spent millions on chemical warfare research, the Dutch could only afford a few thousand. When H. Colijn was Minister of Finance in 1922 he declared that the Dutch military was too expensive; in 1923 General Snijders, Commander in Chief during the war, wrote that the Dutch forces could not have withstood a serious attack during the war; a government committee wrote in 1919 that the army was wholly inadequate. Each year the Dutch fell further behind and it was time to stop running down the same road without asking where it was leading. To this end van Embden introduced a motion that the government institute a committee of military men and civilians to answer the question whether or not the independence of the nation could still be safeguarded by means of a defence force.

The radical, but not unreasonable motion by van Embden was opposed by the government but the rebuttals to his speech were weak and timid. The motion was defeated 19-10 (only the Liberal Democrats and Social Democrats voted in favour) but the fact that 20 members—two-fifths of the total—absented themselves for the vote indicates that many were in doubt.

Outside the Chamber reaction was quite vehement. General Snijders challenged van Embden to a public debate which was held on September 30, 1924 in the Hague. Public interest was so great that it resulted in a pro and con disarmament
demonstration which disrupted Snijders' speech several times. Widespread newspaper coverage ensured that national interest was fully aroused and that an anti-van Embden brochure by Captain A.J. Maas from the anti-aircraft corps received considerable publicity. Maas tried to show that van Embden had misquoted figures, had incorrectly cited sources, had used "experts" of marginal quality, and had invented many of the horror stories of chemical and bacteriological warfare.\(^\text{12}\)

Unfortunately for Captain Maas van Embden won the first round by publishing the text of the League of Nations Report on Poison Gas.\(^\text{13}\) Many of the figures van Embden had used came from this Report; that Captain Maas had not seen the Report only proved how ill informed many military men were, or how they tried to hide evidence that was contrary to their opinion. Van Embden also revealed that the latter was true for the Dutch government as well. When the Report had been sent to the government by the League of Nations with the request that it be given wide publication, nothing was done. When the Democratic League urged in parliament that the League's request be fulfilled the government answered that the Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant had published part of the Report with comments by the medical expert of the paper. Van Embden showed that many experts in the field, as well as other newspapers, had complained about the partial publication and the snide remarks by the medical correspondent who was a young doctor recently out of medical school. Returning to Captain Maas, van Embden convincingly uncovered the weakness of the military argument. The Netherlands was so small that at best a 20 or 30 minute warning was available in case of an
air attacks on major cities. In that time the population had to be warned, had to be guided to non-existent shelters, or provided with non-existent gasmasks. Van Embden severely criticized the military authorities for minimizing the danger and purposely keeping the civilian population in ignorance about the consequences of a gas attack.

The Democratic League was now firmly in the unilateral disarmament camp and stood very near the Social Democratic position. The two parties reached that position from very different fundamentals. Nevertheless, both wanted to reduce the military forces to a security force and argued for a broader interpretation of the conscientious objection law. Individual war resisting was rejected by both; the Liberal Democrats recognized the importance of passive disobedience as practised in the Ruhr in 1923 but were less certain than the Social Democrats that workers could prevent the outbreak of war through strikes and boycotts. Nor would the Liberals concur that capitalism was the sole cause of war. Striving for the moral improvement of humanity was commendable but it was too slow and war was bound to break out before the aim was realized.¹⁴

Proponents of a defence force frequently charged that the Liberal Democrats tried to "sell" disarmament through horror stories. The charge was not really fair because many people wrote about the possible effects of chemical warfare—as many wrote about the effects of the atom bomb in the last decades. It was true that van Embden was frequently concerned with the subject and did not spare the gruesome details.¹⁵ There is little doubt that his frequent juxtapositioning of the Nether-
lands' and other countries' military statistics was infuriating for those wanting a Dutch defence system because the comparisons made the Dutch effort look ludicrous. His endeavours to de-mythologize the effect of the 1914 Dutch mobilization were not successful; constant references to it by people who ought to have known better continued unabated.16

By 1930 van Embden had reached the position that national defence was morally impermissible.17 In the League of Nations, states had agreed to respect each other's national soil; in the Briand-Kellogg Pact they all promised not to start an aggressive war. But everyone showed his suspicion and disbelief by maintaining and increasing a national army. Having an army meant having to know about other armies by means of espionage, bribery, lying, etc. Even in so-called defensive wars governments had to mislead their own people, resort to press censorship, news fabrication, false reports from the military, etc. In short, an army was morally impermissible. This position was maintained by van Embden and a small number of Liberal Democrats until the outbreak of war, but a majority of the party changed its ideas in the thirties.

In 1934 most of the Liberal Democratic MPs voted in favour of the Defence Budget—understandably since the party had just accepted two ministerial posts in the cabinet. But the general party meeting had unanimously voted in favour of maintaining the disarmament policy. Such apparent contradiction was possible, according to one party member, because as condition for taking part in the government the party had demanded, and the government had agreed, that considerable cuts be made
in the Defence Budget. Such a dichotomy could not be maintained, of course, and in early 1936 the party executive rewrote the national disarmament clause but in such a way that van Embden could still claim that nothing had changed. The possibility of a double interpretation was removed and in the 1937 election the Liberal Democratic League came out in favour of national defence within the framework of collective security.

Weighing the effect of a decade of Liberal Democratic propaganda is difficult. The party did not have as large and effective a propaganda machine as the Social Democrats. On the other hand, it was a middle class party and as such its opinions carried more weight with the middle class. That the party did not grow much beyond its starting number—five seats in 1918 and 1922; seven in 1925 and 1929; six in 1933 and 1937—showed that few converts were won or lost with the disarmament demand. The stiff reaction from the military and others does suggest that they thought it necessary to combat the Liberal propaganda as much as possible.

The Liberal Democrats urged women to take part in politics; no female candidate was elected to parliament but many women interested in politics turned to work for pacifism and disarmament as a viable alternative. The 3,000 member Liberal Democratic youth organization was quite active in antimilitarist propaganda. Its counterpart from the Freedom League was about as large and on the specific urging of the Liberal Democrats worked with them on many peace actions.

All such efforts were fruitless unless parliament could be persuaded to do away with the defence forces and this was not
achieved. In the final analysis, therefore, Liberal Democratic effort did little more than what the Social Democrats accomplished: no definite change in defence policies, but a barrage of propaganda which convinced many Dutch people that it was hopeless to resist an invader. This "defeatism", although not openly mentioned, was rather clear in the behaviour of many people in the government and in the nation before the war started and during the war itself.

3. The Association for the League of Nations and Peace

The Association believed that those who urged war resisting, conscientious objection, strikes, boycotts, or unilateral disarmament were not really pacifists. As the Association saw it:

...many consider unilateral national disarmament a danger, not only from a national but also from a pacifist standpoint. They believe that such a one sided disarmament will expose the Netherlands to an attack which cannot but bring a reaction [in the form of] an inflamed nationalism much intenser than would be desirable for the healthy development of pacifist ideas.

In another context it was stressed that "when war threatens and the fatherland calls, the call must be obeyed above all others." If the Association can be considered to be part of the Peace Movement—they themselves did—it must be on the extreme right wing. It would not become a member of the No More War Federation, could not work together in a peace exhibit with other groups, and generally went its own way.

The Association did work hard to make the work of the League of Nations better known. Discussions and propaganda evenings were organized, a special film about the League was widely
shown; May 18 was designated as League of Nations Day and after much publicity became a generally acknowledged day with speeches and discussions while in the schools much of the day was reserved for talking about the work of the League. Education was a special concern of the Association and efforts were made to lessen the accent on nationalism in the teaching of Dutch history, and making the children more familiar with the aims of the League of Nations. A competition was held each year for the best essay about the League. Another competition was held for those in teachers' college and for young teachers. All this was carried out in a formal manner and with great decorum as befitted an organization which had more than 8,000 members and counted ex-premiers and other highly placed persons among them. Nothing radical was undertaken and even the inference that the Association could say anything critical of the armed forces was carefully guarded against.

Nevertheless, children who were taught about the League of Nations and its work for peace were much less likely to be interested in the military than those taught to play soldier in a "Hollandized" version of the Hitler Youth. The analogy to the 1970s is easily drawn. Children who are encouraged to collect for Unicef are less likely to be militaristic than those urged to take cadet training in school and sent on field manoeuvres in the summer. The point will not hold in all cases, but in general it will stand up to closer investigation.

Moreover, the Association was not as pacifistic (in the Dutch sense) as the leaders thought. It has already been mentioned that within the Association there was a Committee of Christian
Women who worked together with Church and Peace. In 1930 the monthly publication Ons Leger (Our Army) warned that a number of local branches of the Association worked closely with several antimilitaristic groups. This information is substantiated in the literature of various antimilitaristic organizations. The Association might have limited itself to emphasizing peace and international cooperation, but in many cities and towns it had a more radical tenor. In an "un-military" nation as the Netherlands, the total effect of the Association was to draw attention away from the needs of the defence forces, and strengthened the opinion that all international problems could be solved through peaceful compromise.

4. The No More War Federation and Affiliated Groups

For about a decade the No More War Federation became the embodiment of the Peace Movement. Created in December 1924, it was an attempt to establish a peace cartel as was being done in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States of America. Associated organizations needed to subscribe to only one of the Six Principles of the Federation:

To combat military violence [used] as a national source for power.
To disarm nationally as well as internationally.
To solve international differences through reconciliation, mediation, or compulsory arbitration.
To democratize, strengthen, and enlarge the League of Nations.
To further peace-mindedness through education.
To abolish the restrictions among people in respect to trade, industry, language and culture.

It was hoped that the character of the Federation "could be antimilitaristic without binding her members to any particular starting-point, direction or principle." And that it would
be possible to bring "moderate as well as radical peace friends, pacifists as well as antimilitarists in contact with each other." The monthly organ of the Federation, De Nieuwe Koers (The New Direction), therefore carried as subheading, "Organ of the Peace Movement in the Netherlands."

The rise and fall of the Federation was accomplished within one decade. Within four years 27 organizations had joined, but in 1930 Church and Peace departed because "impure elements" had crept in, and less than a year later the International Antimilitaristic Society withdrew because "the musty bourgeois atmosphere dominated" and the Federation would not cooperate in the destruction of the state. In 1931 the Federation still had ten pacifist or antimilitarist, seven humanitarian, and two religious organizations as members as well as four political parties and four trade unions for a combined membership of 70,000. Three years later the Federation ceased to exist and a Contact Committee tried to coordinate the efforts of all the different groups. It proved even less successful than the Federation: in typical Dutch fashion each went his own way in his own manner.

Nevertheless, the significance of the Federation should not be underestimated. De Nieuwe Koers provided information about all the various pacifist and antimilitarist activities undertaken by the many groups and thereby gave an impression of the amount of work that was being done. Until 1929 the paper was also the official organ for the Youth Peace Action which tried to be a central coordinating agency for the youth movement the way the Federation was for the adults.
De Nieuwe Koers reported the creation of the National Peace Action which provided publicity material to all other organizations and held yearly propaganda tours with cars through the Netherlands. The National Peace Action supplied everything that could be used in making propaganda: stickers for envelopes, postcards with anti-war messages or graphs showing the numbers killed and wounded in the Great War, flysheets with various messages, large placards urging the Netherlands to follow Denmark's example or telling people to vote for parties with national disarmament in their program. Full length commercial anti-war films such as All Quiet on the Western Front or The Big Enemy could be rented, including the projector and operator. The National Peace Action also made a number of films by cutting and splicing regular news films showing such scenes as pastors or priests blessing new weapons, archbishops visiting the front, etc., interspersed with scenes from War Resisting Congresses or the Social Democrat's big disarmament demonstration in September of most years. This material was not only important to spread the peace message but was also essential as a source of income. Adequate finances was a major concern for all antimilitarist organizations.

A more moderate project was the Peace Chamber in the Hague which served as a permanent anti-war exhibit as well as a central library for peace research. It never lived up to its expectations: about 4,000 titles were brought together but visitors numbered about ten a day.

In 1936 a reorganization took place; the National Peace Action, the Peace Chamber, and the Press Service were
combined in the Central Peace Bureau. The aim was "to strive for a just international society with all lawful means" which was to be achieved by providing a service, through the collection and distribution of documents and study material, and through the formation and maintenance of a central machinery for the Dutch Peace Movement.

The supervisory council of the Peace Bureau had many well known names: Banning, van Embden, Heering, Hugenholtz, Roland-Holst, Ramondt-Hirschmann, etc., but the times were against the Peace Movement. No amount of central coordination or heightened efficiency could arrest the slow decline. Financial contributions lessened, interest in brochures and pamphlets declined, visitors to the library were few and requests for books fewer. The Peace Bureau existed up to the time of the German invasion but the optimism of earlier years had long since departed.

When the No More War Federation was still functioning at top capacity it provided announcements and information about the new committees that were created. Some of these have been discussed in connection with the Antimilitaristic Society, but others were oriented towards the people in the Peace Movement.

The Committee for Guidance for Conscientious Objectors gave information to youths and their parents about the workings of the law and the procedures that had to be followed. A definite need was met by this Committee; in 1938 it received 400 letters of which 153 asked for information; the combined respective figures for 1936 and 1937 were 500 and 200. The Committee tried to reach the parents of would-be conscripts by sending out a form which they could fill out and send to the Minister of Defence. It stated that the parents objected
to the conscription of their son who was still a minor and
to having him trained to kill. The parents did not prevent
him from going because he would then be prosecuted under the
law, but they strongly protested against this lawful infringe-
ment on parental authority.42

Another committee concerned itself with making propaganda
for political parties who had national disarmament in their
program.43 Information sheets were distributed in the hundred
thousands; they urged voters to vote as they liked as long as
it was for one of the parties advocating disarmament.

In addition to news about the foregoing, De Nieuwe Koers
listed the names of the war resisters serving their sentences,
gave information when the next War Resister Congress would be
held and reported on the proceedings.44 Notification was given
about border meetings with Belgian and German peace organi-
zations45 and the paper encouraged contact with the Flemish
pacifist organizations, in particular with the Flemish War
Veterans.46 When the Dutch parliament dealt with matters that
concerned the Peace Movement the Federation was not lax in
urging its member organizations to support any protest action
thought necessary. Non-affiliated organizations were written
about and unstintedly lauded when their conduct deserved it.
Peace activity in foreign countries was covered in detail.
Perhaps the most important work of the Federation was the
creation of Peace Circles. These were local chapters of the
Federation who tried to coordinate the activities of all other
local chapters within their area. Apparently they were quite
successful in bringing a united local action in favour of peace
and pacifism.47
Until its extinction in 1938 De Nieuwe Koers was also the official paper of the General Dutch Women's Peace League, the Dutch section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the World Peace Parliament, the Committee for Guidance for Conscientious Objection, and the Peace Scouts of the Netherlands. In 1935 the National Peace Action added "General" to its name and took over De Nieuwe Koers as its official paper. The complex variety of peace organizations defied attempts to coordinate them and the General National Peace Action also ended in failure, only to be taken over on a more limited scale by the aforementioned Central Peace Bureau.

The decline of the No More War Federation resulted in part from a shortage of money, a recurring theme with all pacifist and antimilitarist associations. Almost all the money had to come from donations, money raising efforts, or the sale of papers and brochures. As the depression deepened, the sources from the twenties dried up, new ones were difficult to find, and the challenge became greater because more attacks were levelled at the peace groups as Germany became more militarized. Another reason for the failure was the growth of specialized organizations such as the brochure-providing National Peace Action and Peace Chamber. Since the Federation also provided brochures there was direct competition with the National Peace Action.

In the early thirties another association, the Committee to Mobilize for Peace, was founded to provide fly-sheets and short pamphlets for the Peace Movement. Local organizations could order the sheets from the Committee and for a little extra
money could have a few lines added at the bottom to announce a meeting, film, etc. Extensive use was made of this service. In 1933 more than one million sheets were sent out (and presumably distributed by local groups); in 1934 one and one quarter was reached and in 1936 almost one and one half million. Thereafter the numbers decreased; for 1938 the total remained just under one million. 48

Competition for the No More War Federation also came in the form of Peace Groups who evolved out of the Peace Research Bureau started by W.L. Warmelo. A retired artillery officer, he became a pacifist and was considered an authority on the inside working of the military as well as an expert on chemical and bacteriological warfare. It was generally recognized that no organization could be maintained without a monthly newspaper and from 1930 to 1940 Vrede (Peace) was the official organ of the Peace Research Bureau and the Peace Groups. 49

The Bureau was very concerned about the effects of the new forms of warfare and wrote about them frequently. This was true to a certain extent of all pacifist and antimilitarist newspapers, but Vrede emphasized it much more. Except for their frequency and length, articles about the destructive capacity of new weapons differed very little from what could be found in other publications. Vrede did spend more time and effort describing what took place in the military in other countries—probably out of necessity because there was little news to report about the Dutch military forces. Vrede tried to remain impartial and without comment published news about other peace groups as it was sent in by them.
The No More War Federation ceased to exist in 1934; *De Nieuwe Koers* continued as the paper for the other organizations but financial difficulties necessitated that in January 1938 it amalgamated with *Vredesstrijd* (Struggle for Peace), and *De Vrienden van India* (Friends of Indonesia) into one paper which received the name *Vredesdaad* (Peace Act). The paper was sufficiently strong financially to appear every three weeks. The tone of the new paper was subdued, not so much as a result of the change of papers than of the change in the times. The weariness which the paper exuded was also noticeable in other pacifist papers: they were fighting a losing battle against war and they did not know what to do about it.

5. National Passive Resistance

In the last few years before the outbreak of war *Vredesdaad*, *Vrede*, and other pacifist papers allotted much space for the discussion of national passive resistance. The initial idea had been worked out by Bart de Ligt as has been mentioned, but it was largely the Youth Peace Action who activated the discussion. The youths wanted all pacifist and antimilitarist groups to work out detailed plans for passive resistance within their own locality and also on a national scale. The young people thought this the best way to prepare the nation mentally, physically, and materially for the coming war. Quite a few meetings and discussions were held about the subject: the opinions were rather divided. The Social Democrats and Liberal Democrats were against the whole concept, only the Christian Democratic Union was favourably inclined. Church and
Peace refused to take an official position and left its members free to act as they thought best. From the reports of the Committee Against Unilateral Disarmament and the Central Intelligence it appears that many Church and Peace members were in favour as was the majority of the Women's Peace League.

In 1937 a bi-monthly paper was started to popularize the passive resistance concept. Entitled Nieuwe Weerbaarheid (New Preparedness), the name paid homage to the phrase Bart de Ligt used so often when discussing the need for antimilitaristic preparedness. The first number had as subheading, "Journal for Radical-Pacifism" but in subsequent numbers this was changed to "Journal for Fighting [Strijdbaar] Pacifism". Most of the collaborators on the paper came from the Extreme Left or had been part of a radical youth organization but had become too old for it.

A speech in 1937 by Dr. Frans Daels before the Flemish Veterans added another dimension to the concept. Daels advocated a complete national defence without military means. A civil defence system would be organized in peace time and would destroy or remove everything an invading force would need or could use. The planning and execution had to be so complete and detailed that the invasion or occupation of a nation would be technically and morally without any benefit.

Daels' idea compounded the difficulties. Initially national passive resistance was envisaged as bridging the gap between those who wanted disarmament regardless of the consequences and those who wanted disarmament but did want to miss the "safety" of arms. Superficially Daels' plan solved these
differences, but many doubted whether such a civil defence could be accomplished without military means. Others thought that a "scorched earth" policy would not stop a modern army, while still another group believed that an invasion should be endured as a consequence of their pacifist beliefs.

The subject was complex because it was not just a futuristic idea to be carried out when the enemy crossed the border. Specific plans had to be made including how to react to the government's efforts to safeguard the public against air attacks. Air raid drills and black-out trials were held in certain municipalities. By a law passed on April 1, 1936 each individual had to conform to the rules and regulations of his municipality and had to carry out the drills and exercises ordered by the local authorities. Refusal to cooperate could mean a fine or a jail sentence. Those in favour of passive resistance disagreed whether all cooperation should be refused, or whether passive resistance against their own and foreign authorities should begin when war had started. A final consensus was not reached. The invasion brought an end to the discussion and the war moved so quickly and was finished so suddenly that no passive resistance took place. National passive resistance started much later as part of the resistance movement and became something quite different from what had been envisaged in 1938 and 1939.

6. Women's Organizations

There were many women's organizations in the Netherlands but only a few were specifically founded to oppose militarism. The women in the Left and Extreme Left seldom undertook separate
actions; their fight for peace ran parallel with that of their men and they joined them in combined action. The woman's prime task was to instill a loathing for the military in the children and they carried out this task with a will. The orthodox religious women held quite different views and in several pamphlets by and for these women the situation was carefully explained. Scriptures made clear that self defence and a resulting war was justified if the alternative was living with a lie and injustice. The Eighty Years War against Spain was always upheld as the example. Nationalism was good because God gave each nation its place on earth and one ought to be proud of it. Therefore, those "down the weapons" followers of Bertha von Suttner were incorrect in their aims. Socialist and Communist women erred completely because they preached class hatred and class war while supposedly supporting world peace.

Since right and left absented themselves, the women's peace organizations belonged to the center. Until 1930 only two large associations existed; thereafter a few small ones appeared which were usually dedicated to one specific ideal. The Christian Women Committee and the Mother Action consisted of Association for the League of Nations and Peace women who wanted to accent proper child care and education. Nationalism and the military should be downplayed in formal education. The Committee for Peace and Disarmament was the Dutch chapter of the Liaison Committee of International Women's Organizations and emphasized the role of the League of Nations. The World Women Committee Against War and Fascism section Netherlands was more radical and urged the formation of peace groups,
solidarity actions, and boycotts against Japan for making war on China. These and other groups were small and not very influential; the two important women's peace organizations were the Dutch section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the indigenous General Dutch Women's Peace League.

Both leagues were started during the Great War in order to bring it to an end; both believed that women had a special role to play because of their feminine characteristics and also because war brought a special kind of sorrow to women which it did not bring to men. It was reasoned that woman was by nature more peace loving, that she was the mother, the bearer of life; that man had a fighting instinct and was much more willing and able to kill. Moreover, the woman was primarily in charge of the upbringing of children and as such very concerned with instilling the peace ideal into the future generation. No woman wanted to bring up her child to have it killed, or teach it to kill the children of other mothers. War placed a special burden on women because it left them to carry out the daily, non-heroic activities while the men were fighting; war left them behind as widows without means of support; war denied husbands to many girls because the young men were killed.

Different emphasis and working methods, and the fear of the Dutch League that it would be swallowed up by her larger international sister were the main reasons that the two leagues never joined. The Dutch League limited itself to Dutch affairs while the other had as its main mission field the international arena. The two leagues formed a federation in 1929 and started
a fund to aid those who lost their job because they refused to produce war materials or aid the military in any other form. Apart from seeing each other at the many peace meetings and congresses the two leagues only cooperated in one other project.

The Women's Silent Peace March was started in 1934 on the initiative of the Dutch Women's Peace League and grew into an impressive manifestation for peace. Held in one of the major cities on May 18, it was an attempt to bring together women of all religious beliefs, social classes, and divergent philosophies for a silent protest against war. In 1934, 3,500 women participated; two years later the number was 12,000 and continued to increase in the following years. But this one day effort could not be extended into permanent cooperation.

The International League for Peace and Freedom was quite willing to participate in the Silent Peace March but felt that its real work was in the international sphere. Women from twelve countries met in the Hague in April 1915 and formed the International Committee for Women for Permanent Peace. The name was changed at the First Zurich Congress in 1919 where the breadth of interest of the International League was admirably displayed. The as yet unsigned Covenant of the League of Nations was criticized and substantial amendments proposed: membership should be open to all states, a food blockade should not be used to enforce League decisions, there should be an immediate reduction of armaments and the abolition of conscription in all member states leading to total disarmament. Subsequent international congresses concerned themselves with international relief work, the rights of minorities, the abolition of opium
traffic, the reparation of prisoners, etc. International recognition of the League for Peace and Freedom came in the form of the (shared) Nobel Peace Prize for its President, Jane Addams, and an additional grant of 2,000 Norwegian Kronen to the League in 1937.

The League only employed legal means to gain its objectives and worked with the existing governmental organizations even when there was little hope that the desired end could be achieved. Cooperation with left wing elements was therefore infrequent. Judging from the many brochures about itself and its work, the Dutch section was very much in favour of keeping things that way. Of course this did not prevent the League from doing constructive work; the Report of the Study Conference on the reasons, nature, and means to prevent war, undertaken on Dutch initiative, was an impressive document with many sensible suggestions. When an international action was organized to collect signatures in favour of disarmament, the Dutch section gathered 90,000 names in 1932 and 100,000 in 1936. The Dutch section belonged to the No More War Federation and initially used De Nieuwe Koers as its publication. Eventually the nearly 3,000 Dutch League members wanted to have their own paper so that Vrede en Vrijheid (Peace and Freedom) appeared alongside the international publication Pax International (which also appeared in a Dutch translation) and De Nieuwe Koers.

The International League did not become as popular and influential as the Dutch League because its work seemed too far removed from specific Dutch interests. Moreover, many
of the International League members had been working for female emancipation during the Great War and belonged to the upper-middle and upper class. The mentality of the latter continued to dominate and made it too elitist to become a mass Dutch women's organization. The effect on the Dutch nation was therefore very much like that of the Association for the League of Nations and Peace and the Roman Catholic Peace League. There was little pressure on government and people to do away with the military forces, but the emphasis on peace, cooperation, international disarmament, etc., created an atmosphere wherein the voices for a strong defence effort could not penetrate.

The General Dutch Women's Peace League had a rather different approach and emphasis. Created in December 1914, the League existed to 1940 and worked "to promote world peace, both among nations and among individuals." Starting with 375 women, the League eventually obtained almost 10,000 members in 53 chapters. The working method was the usual one--literature, meetings, protests and petitions--with an emphasis on the education of youths and children to protect them from militaristic and chauvinistic influences. The prevention of the sale of military toys and games was an important facet of this work. Political parties were requested to outline their position regarding the military, national defence, and conscription. Propaganda was made for all parties opposing this "militarism".

The central direction of the Dutch League was at first middle-of-the-road with the International League being more radical; by the early thirties the positions were reversed.
When the fund was started to aid workers who refused to work for the military, the Dutch League initiated a correspondence with the Antimilitaristic Society which resulted in cooperation with and guidance from the libertarians.  

Of the many campaigns conducted by the Dutch Women's League, the most novel was the "pilot-project". The aim was to convince civil airline pilots that they should never bomb cities. Since Dutch civil pilots were automatically reserve military pilots it was a clever idea to curb the destructive power of the Dutch air force because military pilots were few in number and not enough were being trained. Civil aviation was very much in the public interest through the pioneering flights of the KLM to Indonesia. A. Viruly, a well known KLM pilot and the author of popular books on flying, announced that he wanted to be released from his military reserve function because he no longer believed that the Netherlands could be defended and did not want to be instrumental in causing needless death and destruction. Whether or not the Dutch Women's League was responsible for Viruly's decision is not known but the pilot-project and other activities were considered sufficiently radical and damaging that in 1938 the organization was forbidden for civil servants.

A great deal of work was done by the League to obtain a broadcasting organization. The whole Peace Movement felt stifled by its dependency on the Social Democratic VARA, the modern Protestant VPRO, and the neutral AVRO to send out peace programs. The VPRO was very small and could ill afford to give away air time; the VARA was not eager to broadcast pacifist programs not originating from Social Democrats; the AVRO only sent out
programs dealing with international disarmament congresses. Eventually enough members were obtained to receive a few broadcasting hours each month and the Humanistic and Idealistic Radio Organization (HIRO) was born.\footnote{64} There were frequent altercations with the Radio Committee which judged each program before it could be sent out. When the Committee once again rejected a speech, and notified the Dutch Women's League too late to allow an alternative program to be prepared, the League took the matter to court.\footnote{65} Apparently it was the Committee's favourite method of preventing the pacifist groups from sending out their announced programs.\footnote{66} In such an event little could be done except print the speech and try to sell it on an already flooded brochure market. HIRO only existed for a few years: the financial burden became too great. After the demise of the No More War Federation the Peace Movement became too fragmented to continue the united effort necessary to ensure a regular broadcasting service.

7. Conclusion

The list of Peace Movement groups could be extended with the Peace Pledge Union, Anti-War Group of Nurses, Haverkamp, Peace Scouts, School and Peace, Goodwill Day Committee, Les Amitiés Internationales, War Resisters International, etc. On paper the Peace Movement looked large and powerful even though the fragmentation is painfully apparent. To those involved in the movement it did not always look so impressive. The National Peace Action declared in a pessimistic letter in 1932, "In the Netherlands there are less than 150,000 people
Such an assessment was rather typical of a Dutch association—it repudiated those who used a different approach. The Social Democrats counted more than 70,000 members that year; two years earlier the No More War Federation said that its affiliated organizations totalled more than 70,000 members. Not all the Federation's affiliates were peace groups but that did not mean that these people did not work for peace. The National Peace Action count also ignored the trade unions: the Social Democratic unions had more than 300,000 members and the Syndicalists 20,000. This brings up the question of "weight". Were only the members of peace organizations important in preventing war? Social Democrats rejected such an idea and pointed out that they alone had the economic power, through their trade unions, to prevent a war from breaking out.

Another means of measuring the antimilitaristic mentality is to look at the number of votes the peace parties polled. For fifteen years roughly one-third of the Dutch people voted for such parties. That this figure reflected not only party loyalty was indicated by the campaigns against the two Fleet Laws. In this connection it is also important to think of the staggering number of brochures, pins, cards, broken-rifle insignias, etc., that were being sold. That only people belonging to peace groups bought them is impossible: the great majority of the people could not be moved to join a peace group, but many were willing to show their inclination by buying these materials.

It is not possible to determine the exact number of people belonging to peace organizations. Membership figures from
the Extreme Left and the Peace Movement are not complete, and in any event do not show the people who belonged to more than one organization. Nor is it possible to determine the extent and sincerity of antimilitarism by the number of brochures sold or the millions of flysheets distributed. That they were all read is doubtful, and if they were read it can never be discovered how much they influenced the reader. Without accurate figures, however, it is still permissible to assume that the latent antimilitarism, or the indifference towards the military, could only be strengthened by the efforts of the Peace Movement.

The tangible effects of the Peace Movement are difficult to gauge. The quality of the people involved, and the social class they generally belonged to, gave the movement more general credibility than, for instance, the Social Democrats. The Peace Movement was more moderate, more "respectable" and therefore more acceptable to the remainder of Dutch society. That was probably the main reason that the Central Intelligence did not mention any Peace Movement group in its reports until 1935.68 The late recognition was in sharp contrast to the nearly neurotic fear of everyone "left" in Dutch society.

A similar one-sided reaction will be encountered in the next chapter. Communists and libertarian youth groups were watched much more closely than non-left groups and the propaganda emanating from the latter was combated much less vigorously. As a result, the antimilitaristic propaganda from the small "Independent" groups was as least as effective as that from the large left-wing organizations.
Chapter VII: The Youth Movement

1. Introduction

The youth movement is a complex subject; all the variations covered in the previous chapters are found again in this one. Special coverage is warranted, however, because there are distinct differences. Almost all adult organizations had an analogous youth organization, but the youths did not always walk in the footsteps of their fathers. The youths distinguished themselves in their idealism, in their imagination, and in their rejection of the "old" society. Very similar to the young people of the sixties, they blamed their parents for making a world which had made a World War possible and they were determined to create a new society incapable of producing such a holocaust. Unfortunately, they were just as divided as their fathers in their ideas about this new society and in the manner it ought to be brought about. Youthful impulsiveness resulted in frequent splits; new organizations were founded with remarkable ease with the purpose and intent usually less exact than in adult associations.

As is typical of youth, movements were started with zeal, but with time such movements became institutionalized. In the process much of the early ideology, enthusiasm, style of living (in clothing, hair length, etc.), and manner of speech was lost and the idealistic youths became rather serious young men and women not very different from the older generation and its organizations.
Youth associations working for pacifistic or antimilitaristic goals can be broadly categorized as left-wing or Independent. The latter could be "modern-religious", humanist, or atheist, and differed primarily from left-wing groups in the rejection of socialism or communism as the ultimate goal for society. It was sometimes a thin dividing line because many Independent groups rejected--wholly or partially--the world and lifestyle of their parents and were often driven to accept at least some of the left-wing standpoints.

A distinction can be made between largely adult directed, and youth controlled organizations. The term "youth group" can also be misleading. The maximum age for membership varied considerably: some groups set the limit at 18, 21, or 23, but there were groups with a maximum age limit of 25, 30, or even 35. In the latter it is hardly possible to speak of youth groups.

An antimilitarist or pacifist conviction often had far reaching consequences for youths. For a young antimilitarist to remain true to his principles he frequently had to become a war resister and serve ten months in jail. If he was lucky he convinced the Committee that he was a conscientious objector, but this still meant an extra year's service in an alternative position. Apart from this there was in many cases disapproval or opposition from parents or other family members.

2. The War Years

During the Great War left-wing youth gave rather diverging answers to the question, "What ought we to do?". One of the oldest youth groups, the Sower, tried to maintain an independent
position between the Social Democratic Workers Party and the newly formed Social Democratic Party, but finally came out in favour of the latter. In line with communist thinking of the time, personal war resisting was rejected as useless since the military had to be subverted from within. The Social Democratic youth organization also rejected war resisting but for very different reasons: the party had accepted mobilization as a necessity for keeping the country out of war and Social Democrats should therefore do their duty. Youths in both groups were sympathetic towards war resisters, however, and tried to lighten their burden while they were in jail.\(^1\) War resisting was kept in check by both parent organizations as much for political reasons and from fear that youthful enthusiasm would get out of hand and the party would lose control.

Syndicalist youths, on the other hand, were very much in favour of war resisting because it was the best means of breaking down the military system. The various groups came together in the Federation of Syndicalist Youth Associations which was largely centered in Amsterdam. The anarchist youths formed the Social-Anarchist Youth Organization where the different elements disagreed about everything except antimilitarism and opposition to capitalism. These two points proved strong enough to keep the group together for a number of years after the war during which time substantial antimilitaristic activity was carried out.

War resisting was very popular in the ranks of the Young People Abstinence League—a lower middle class organization which had been formed as a counter-balance to the Student-Teachers Abstinence League which was too elitist and class
conscious. Idealistic, humanitarian, and concerned with leading a "pure" life, antimilitarism was a logical consequence for the Young People Abstinence League once war started. With a membership of less than 1,000 in 1914 and double that number in 1922 (with only slightly more men than women) the League provided almost 100 war resisters between 1914 and 1920. Although not anarchistic, the League was strongly influenced by Bart de Ligt. League members did not find it strange to hawk the Antimilitaristic Society paper, De Wapens Neder, along with their own paper Jonge Strijd (Youth Battles). Those in the Abstinence League who favoured socialism in general—if not one party in particular—joined the League of Revolutionary Socialist Youths wherein several socialist and middle class youth organizations found each other. The three main points on the program were abstinence, no smoking, and war resisting. There was too much disparity within the League, however, and it could not prolong its existence once the war was terminated.

This short description of the war-year activities is sufficient to show the diversity of the youth movement as well as the lack of strong organizational structure. Barring a few exceptions this was to be the hallmark of the youth movement for the next two decades. What typified the movement was its disapproval of any kind of violence. The antimilitaristic slogans could become quite vituperative but actual deeds against the authorities were very few.
3. The Libertarians

Dutch anarchists came closer to using violence than any other group, but the violence of the 1890s associated with the French and Spanish anarchists never gained a foothold in the Netherlands. In 1918 five young men tried to blow up a gunpowder magazine and in the aftermath of the Groenendaal action a bomb was placed in front of the house of a member of the military court. Everyone except the Social-Anarchist Youth Organization and its successor the "Alarm" group condemned this action. Only the diverse groups around the monthly paper De Moker (The Sledgehammer) indicated that they would not be adverse to such methods. But in the end no group resorted to violence, in spite of the venomous language at which especially De Moker excelled.

The Sledgehammer was not a formal organization, existed for about five or six years—from 1924 to 1929—and probably numbered no more than 500 people. The members had worked together with the Antimilitaristic Society and other anarchist organizations in the Groenendaal actions but drifted away when the expected results were not obtained. The Sledgehammer group can best be compared to the early hippies of the 1960s: there were many vegetarians among them, clothing was definitely anti-establishment, many did not smoke, they preferred what we now call "health food". Anti-capitalism and antimilitarism formed the main points in common; if one did not want to "lose face" one had to refuse military service and preferably in a spectacular manner—wait at home until the police came and then kick up a big fuss. This was the advice
Therefore, refuse all military service, kick the uniform away, throw your draft papers in the stove. Do not let yourself be trained to be a murderer, to be an obedient slave, but show that you value your life higher than that.

The editor received two months in jail for that sentence but it did not deter others from writing in a similar vein:

The struggle between old rulers and the Bolsheviks is nothing more than a competition for who will rule. We dislike both; we find all governments bloodhounds. And we say to ALL soldiers, EVERYWHERE...forget about obedience! Desert! Stay home! Burn the barracks, and the weapons, and the uniforms, destroy them all.

This paragraph got the editor five months in jail and older anarchists thought it foolish to write in such a provocative tone when the same could be said in such a way that the law could not touch you. For the Sledgehammer people such conduct was hypocritical and they continued in their own free way.

All institutions and organizations were laughed at or loaded with derision—the Social Democrats especially. De Moker published many articles inciting young Social Democrats to break with their adult-run organization. Social Democrats who became war resisters were lauded and all help was promised them, but few could be persuaded.

After 1928 the Sledgehammer group declined and by 1932 was virtually out of existence. Ger Harmsen is partially correct when he writes that this happened because the main cork on which the group floated was antimilitarism and this became less urgent for youths faced with massive and long-lasting unemployment. More important was that the Sledgehammer group did not have a maximum age limit so that the same people remained in control of the paper and they gradually became estranged from the mentality of the new generation.
From among the many anarchist youth groups the Sledgehammer has been taken as an example of the way they thought and worked. Probably more extreme than the others, De Moker did have the greatest influence because the paper was technically of a high standard and very readable in spite of the extreme opinions it expressed. Circulation of the paper surpassed group membership many fold. Between 3,000 and 5,000 copies were sold each month. That the Sledgehammer did not represent all the anarchist views speaks for itself. The federation whereof it was nominally a member, the Free Youth League, at time emphasized different views, as did the Anarchist Youth International, but the Sledgehammer group did not differ intrinsically.

The syndicalist youth groups need not be covered in detail. Unlike the anarchist groups they were largely adult led, became fragmented as a result of the communist takeover of the syndicalist trade union federation, and spent most of their time fighting other youth organizations. When the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party, and the Independent Socialist Party also entered the field with youth organizations, the area between communists, anarchists, and Social Democrats became very crowded. The several hundred young people who did belong to syndicalist organizations constantly changed their allegiance, were thrown out of one group or another, and promptly joined a different association or started a new one. In ideology they varied from very close to the communists to very close to the Sledgehammer group. They were all antimilitaristic, but the degree of their anti-militarism, and the working methods differed enough that cooperation was seldom and short lived.
4. The Communists

During the early twenties the communist youth organization created more difficulties for the Dutch military than any other group. The Sower changed its name to Communist Youth Alliance, obtained quite a few members from the dissolved League of Revolutionary Socialist Youths and became a rather strange mixture of antimilitarism. Many youths from the League had a religious-socialism background and opposed the military from that standpoint while others did so for ethical reasons. The politically minded young communists were more in favour of joining the army and subverting the structure from within, so that a multitude of approaches was possible for a few years. The struggle for control of the syndicalist trade union federation and the split within the Communist Party brought disorientation and frustration within the Communist Youth Alliance so that, until the early thirties, its membership probably did not exceed 500. 8

Alliance activities should have been no more than an irritating nuisance for the military but the neurotic fear of communism meant that matters were blown out of proportions. The Alliance spread a fake registration book—soldiers had to carry their registration book at all times—issued to "John Nationless" (Jan Zonderland). It contained the oath of the Red Soldier, the demand that Indonesia be given its independence, urged conscripts not to report when a mobilization was called, and demanded that soldiers never fire on workers. 9 When the authorities discovered a few of the fake registration books—they were exactly the same on the outside as the regular ones—
search parties went through barracks, personal possessions of soldiers were examined, and major investigations were launched to discover how the material came into the barracks. The culprits could not be found; apparently Alliance girls often gave a book to soldiers (or slid it into their pockets without their knowledge) when they came to town. ¹⁰ Other methods were possible. Daan Gouloze remembers that in one instance when street hawkers were removed from the barrack gates, they rented a boat, rowed through the canal to the back of the barracks and sold their material to the soldiers hanging out of the windows. ¹¹ When it was discovered that communist youths had given propaganda material to sailors of British and Italian war ships on a goodwill visit to the Netherlands, most newspapers published the story to the discomfort and anger of the government. Other stunts were to have a few Alliance members with mouth organs mingle with a company of soldiers marching through a town; when they began to play the "International" the whole company frequently sang it with them.

Cell forming was an important aspect of the Communist fight against the military, although information is very scarce on the subject. Quite a few soldier cells appear to have been in existence. A few times it was possible to have national conferences whereby representatives from most cells could be present. Only a limited number of conscripts could be reached in this manner, and less secret tactics were developed.

A National Recruit Association was started. Ostensibly neutral and only concerned with the welfare of the conscripts, the Central Intelligence quickly named it a communist cover
organization and warned the military authorities. The demands of the Association were cleverly chosen since most soldiers were concerned with them: guaranteed work or financial support when the tour of duty was completed; free train travel home on weekends; more pay and better food, etc. A paper *De Big* (The Guinea Pig), emphasized these demands but appears not to have published more than a dozen issues. A new paper entitled *De Schildwacht* (The Sentry) was started in 1936 and the Recruit Association was renamed Union of Soldiers and Civilians for Peace. The accent was on democratizing the army and making it free from fascist elements. Spain was held up as the dire example when generals obtained too much power. This paper appears not to have had a long life either while the organization proved largely ineffective.

The youthful communists were the only ones to increase their membership during the thirties; in July 1933 the Communist Youth Alliance counted 1,300 members and was still growing. Other groups suffered a steady loss of members through the lack-of-work weariness which made society life a burden. The Alliance renamed its locals "Clubs for Culture, Development and Recreation" and in a short time membership rose to 2,300. In 1937 Amsterdam alone had this many members. These clubs were little more than recreation and dance clubs and must have been very nearly the "impartial, independent" recreation clubs they claimed to be. But the Central Intelligence continued to label them "dangerous" similar to the adult Friends of Russia recreation societies which had a membership of 15,000. In 1938 the Clubs for Culture joined
the Netherlands Youth Federation which was clearly communist orientated but did not have formal ties with the Communist Party. Membership remained high—more than 3,000 between the ages 16 and 24. The Social Democratic youth organization had about the same number in this age bracket but during the twenties had been ten times as numerous as the communists.\[16\\]

That the Alliance under a new name had equalled the Social Democrats showed that it had found the right drawing card, but a maximum of entertainment and a minimum of political theory and ideology indicated that these were not the doctrinaire, hurt-the-military youths who remembered the World War. The new generation was for peace, against fascism, and was willing to cooperate with the bourgeoisie in this endeavour. But when the Nazi-Soviet Pact made fascism an ally there was no reason anymore to work with the Dutch government.

5. The Social Democrats

The youth organization of the Social Democrats had been unsatisfactory during the war and plans were made for a new organization. An independent youth society was too dangerous; the party was willing to allow considerable freedom but trade union leaders continually urged caution. They were afraid that much of what had been won would be lost through impetuous youthful action. After many consultations the unions agreed to an annual subsidy of 10,000 guilders, and the party of 3,000 guilders for youth work, but part of that money had to be used for a paid, adult executive. Social Democratic youths were divided into A and B groups of whom the latter, the older ones,
were allowed to elect their own executive. A new name, Workers Youth Federation, and a large initial membership—6,500 members in 1922—launched the new experiment. Ten years later membership had increased to 10,700, remained at that level for three years, then declined fairly quickly to less than 7,000 by 1938.

Much of the Federation's attention was directed towards the "new culture"—largely taken over from German Social Democratic youths—in discovering nature, and in study. The Federation thought itself elitist and bearer of a new culture. Plays, native dances, poetry and other art forms were studied and practised. The long weekend meetings at Easter and Pentecost and throughout the summer at the self-built camp "Easterhill" (Paasheuvel) were the high points of the year. In contrast to other youth organizations the Federation did not concern itself with politics. This was a matter for the party. It has already been noted how opposed Social Democratic leaders were to war resisting. Few youths therefore became war resisters or conscientious objectors; the antimilitarism of the Federation was limited to propagating national disarmament and partaking in the many demonstrations and petitions the party organized.

Little political anti-military literature was produced by or for the Federation. Of the roughly 160 pamphlets, brochures, etc., that the International Institute for Social History has about the Workers Youth Federation, only about ten brochures are of this nature. The anti-war attitude of the Federation came in a very different form: poetry, recitations, speaking choruses and declamations—the latter two were
quite popular and considered part of the new culture—showed the opposition to the military as the destroyer of human life and goods.\textsuperscript{20} But all this was more in the abstract sense—opposition to war and military in general—and not a particular standpoint against the government and military of the Netherlands. For a number of years the creativity of the new culture was sufficient but eventually some youths began to question the dichotomy between party ideology and party politics. Reciting one's hatred for war and marching in favour of abolishing the Dutch armed forces was rather difficult to reconcile with service in that army.

As the twenties came to an end, the mood of the Federation began to change. Whereas once the antimilitarism of, for instance, the Youth Peace Action was rejected as sentimentalism and pious dreams, the brochures put out by it were now called "gripping" and the organization did "good work".\textsuperscript{21} Certain Federation members became attracted to communist or anarchist organizations and were immediately deprived of their membership. The conflict within the party and the formation of the Independent Socialist Party resulted in a substantial blood-letting of the Youth Federation. Members were also lost as a result of the high unemployment which hit the younger generation very hard and caused severe demoralization. Many young men and women gave up their membership because there seemed no point in it; defeated and hopeless they withdrew into a shell of indifference and often despair.

The elitist posture of the Federation, the haughtiness with which it proclaimed to be the bearer of the new culture
had from the beginning repulsed a certain category of Social Democratic youths. The latter were frequently the less educated who had to go to work as soon as possible and they had different interests. The result was that two other organizations were formed: trade union clubs where young people in the same occupation met for recreational and educational activities, and sport clubs. The Dutch Workers Sport League became quite large with a membership equal to that of the Youth Federation. The latter considered sport "bourgeois" and therefore below the dignity of young Social Democrats. When around 1932 the Belgian International Socialistic Anti-War League expanded into the Netherlands, Sport League members became its first fervent participants. By this time the mentality of the Youth Federation had changed and its members were not adverse to some practical antimilitarism.

The Anti-War League provided a welcome change for many youths; suddenly it was possible to partake in a meaningful activity. Sport League clubs transferred themselves into semi-military formations and took part in the First of May parade in 1932 in Amsterdam. Social Democrat executives promptly prohibited them but the Amsterdam section of the Sport League refused to comply and was expelled. It was to no avail, the idea of a defence organization could not be suppressed and to expel all Social Democrat youths belonging to such an organization was too severe a measure. A Dutch Workers Peace Watch was created; after several changes in its constitution and numerous discussions with party and trade union officials it was decreed that Social Democratic youths could join. The
Peace Watch remained an independent organization without party supervision.

The Peace Watch was divided into those who did organizational or propaganda work and the militants who, without weapons, held training sessions under army reserve officers and NCOs. The aim of the Peace Watch was to combat war and militarism, to oppose and neutralize fascist and communist propaganda. Specific functions were to keep order at workers' meetings, to protect workers engaged in colporting, poster pasting, or street chalking (with slogans), and to protect buildings belonging to worker organizations. The Dutch Peace Watch and the Belgian Anti-War League joined, retained the latter name, and expanded the circulation of the Belgian paper. The name of the publication was very simple: NEEN (NO), and was explained on the masthead of the paper. "To fight for better living conditions is useless if we cannot break the tremendous power of militarism." According to its own figures the League obtained 12,000 regular members and a few thousand militants within a few years. Many of the ceremonies practised in the League were designed to give the participants the feeling that they were concretely aiding the peace effort. For instance, when foreign league units visited the Netherlands each group paraded in a single file, halted, turned to face each other, stepped forward and said, "We promise never to take up arms against each other. This we swear." Each youth shook the hand of the person facing him, exchanged "comrade books" which were signed with full name and address and returned, as a confirmation of the oath just given.
The Anti-War League wanted to have close collaboration with the Social Democrats but they remained sceptical of the independent, semi-military organization. This did not prevent the Anti-War League from making extensive propaganda with their "special relationship" with Dutch Social Democracy. To the world at large it was made to appear as if the League, the Social Democratic Workers Party, and the trade union federation were three bodies with a single (minded) purpose. Of course not all Anti-War League members were Social Democrats but apparently the majority was. To counter-balance the attraction the League had for youths, the Social Democrats formed "Red Watches" from the older Youth Federation members. They were designated as the "official" party guardians and marched in the big Social Democrat demonstrations. After the *Zeven Provincien* mutiny the government prohibited the wearing of uniforms for private organizations and this detracted from the appearance of the Red Watches. The party did get permission for the "Red Hawks" (age 12-16) to wear red neckerchiefs because they were not yet "politically conscious".

By 1934 party and trade union leaders decided that they could no longer avoid the issue and began to look for an excuse to cut the connection with the Anti-War League. They discovered that certain League units had sought out fascist groups to beat them up and this was enough to turn away. The League was now attacked with all the formidable means at the disposal of the party and trade unions. Social Democrat youths were given the choice of leaving the League or being expelled from the party. Most of them left the League although some stayed—a number of them secretly.
By preventing youths from articulating their convictions and actualizing them into deeds, the party and trade union bosses slowly strangled the youth organization. While party and trade union membership increased—respectively from 70,000 and 251,000 in 1931 to 87,000 and 285,000 in 1937—Youth Federation membership decreased by 4,000 in those same years. The percentage of Red Hawks declined slightly, but the Red Watches (age 16-21) dropped much more. Forcing young Social Democrats to follow the footsteps of their parents was less than successful and this was largely because the young were not ready to give up their antimilitarism.

The Anti-War League did not disappear but the loss of Social Democrat members could not be recouped through recruitment in other areas, especially because League leaders were careful not to fall under communist domination. After a difficult readjustment period the League had a viable existence with more than ten branches. Individual war resisting continued to be recognized as a courageous and laudable deed but was not the prime function of League members. Undermining the military from within was much more important. Each League member had to report his mobilization destination to League headquarters so that the location of each member was known. The reason for this was clear from the Constitution:

> It is our duty to take the necessary steps to bring about a mass refusal of services at the critical moment in case of war, or in case of military violence against the working class...

The aggressive tone and activities soon brought the League into difficulties with the authorities and after a few of the most capable leaders received jail sentences much of the drive
and fervour evaporated. By 1940 very little remained of the organization which eight years earlier had more than 10,000 members.

The decline of the left-wing youth organizations was general and the reasons were many: the depression, the alternative and apparently successful answer provided by the fascists, the eternal divisions within the left with constant in-fighting seeping away strength and vitality. This decline and fragmentation did not destroy the antimilitarism which was so characteristic of the left, but it did change it. The hard-hitting fight against the military ceased; in its place came a passive resistance, an indifference to the whole matter and a superficial obedience which hid the latent dislike. In Chapter IX it will be shown how these attitudes proved disastrous for the mobilized Dutch army in 1940.

6. The Independent Groups

The "Independent" youth groups who placed the greatest emphasis on pacifism and antimilitarism were the three "modern religious" Christian Youth League, Christian Youth Federation, Christian Student League, the more agnostic and humanitarian Free Youth Alliance, and the two abstinence groups mentioned earlier. The Roman Catholic Youth Peace Action has already been discussed in Chapter V. Only the federation which tried to coordinate all anti-military activity, the Youth Peace Action, will be discussed in detail. When the Peace Action converted from a federation to a regular organization with individuals as members it continued to be the real center of antimilitarism of the "independent" youths.
For certain young people peace was popular and "trendy" but the majority harboured a sincere desire that the terrible experience of the war not be repeated. Early efforts to form a united youth front to prevent a recurrence of war were disappointing. In 1923 the Christian Youth League and Christian Student League tried to call a national youth peace conference but failed. The following year a Central Committee of Youth Peace Action was formed to coordinate and organize the youth peace work. A very loose federation was envisaged whereby each local organization was left as much freedom as it wanted, as long as it clearly stipulated that its activities were undertaken on its own behalf and not under the auspices of the Youth Peace Action. Once a year a general meeting would be held to discuss principles and to elect new executive members.

The Youth Peace Action stood apart from the Christian Youth and Student organizations but many of these youths did work in the Youth Peace Action. There was close cooperation with the No More War Federation and Church and Peace which gives a good indication of the ideological climate. An age limit from 18 to 35 was set which definitely took the Peace Action out of the sphere of adolescents and placed it very close to adult organizations. Since the maximum age was set so high many men and women were attracted who had held executive positions in other youth groups but had become too old for them. Consequently, a number of capable people were in charge which accounts for the fact that the Peace Action remained in existence for so long in spite of its strange organization whereby both individuals as well as groups could be members.
Since the Youth Peace Action incorporated such heterogenous groups and individuals its Constitution was not very specific:

The participants in the Youth Peace Action unite themselves in spite of their distinctions in political and religious convictions, environment, and national character [in order to]: 1) give expression to their sincere desire for peace; 2) collectively take account of all that serves or hinders the creation of an international order based on justice wherein war will be an impossibility; 3) convince young people of and prepare them for the responsibility they already carry and whereto they will be called in the service of the nation. The work of the Youth Peace Action consists of consciously working for peace in the most general sense and in all aspects of life.

The wide spectrum of possibilities this allowed had, during the twenties, definite limits on the left. Conscientious objection was favoured, but war resisting was frowned upon even though no war resister was deprived of his membership. Conscientious objection was seen as a tacit recognition that the state had the right to exist; to become a war resister was to deny the state all authority. But outsiders of ill-will who called the Peace Action "Red" were answered that youths of all colours were part of the organization and that each was entitled to his own belief and opinion.

For the first few years of its existence the Peace Action's time was taken up with the preparations for a World Youth Peace Congress. It was held in Ommon, in August 1928, and was attended by 340 delegates from 32 nations and representatives from various colonies in Asia and Africa. The Dutch youths who were present represented some 12,000 young men and women in numerous organizations. In addition to the independent groups the communists and the Antimilitaristic Society were represented, but the Workers Youth Federation refused to come.
Many representatives were shocked by what they heard at the Congress. They had come to talk about peace and were forced to listen to speeches denouncing colonial oppression, racism, imperialism and capitalism. The communists attacked the pacifists as only useful in glossing over the danger of war from imperialism; the agnostics attacked the church for its role in war and war preparation; the coloured representatives denounced the suppression of the non-white races and the League of Nations Mandate System. Given such diversity it was not surprising that the hoped for World Federation of Youth for Peace did not materialize. But a resolution denouncing imperialism was accepted and so was one which admitted that all races were equal. Congress members also agreed that a world peace could not be achieved under the existing circumstances because the tensions that created war came forth out of the social conditions under which people lived. These resolutions stimulated and radicalized the Youth Peace Action and in the following years a more aggressive stance was taken.

The new direction was first noticeable in the organizational changes. In 1929 the Peace Action ceased to be a federation; the Youth Peace Federation was created for this purpose and more than ten organizations joined it. The Youth Peace Action withdrew from De Nieuwe Koers and started its own newspaper, Vredesstrijd (Struggle for Peace), in order to be more youth orientated and to have more room to discuss its particular problems and activities.  

Vredesstrijd appeared twice a month from 1929 to 1937 and was a free-swinging and thought provoking paper allowing
freedom of expression for the various streams within the Youth Peace Action. The paper quickly made clear that it was not interested in demands for an armed revolution or to get the weapons out of the hands of the capitalists and into the hands of the workers. On the other hand, the War Resisters Congresses were given detailed and sympathetic coverage without taking a stand on the subject. A lengthy exchange of ideas resulted wherein pro war resisting, war resisting in time of mobilization, and national disarmament were expounded. The annual meeting in 1930 decided that the Youth Peace Action should not adopt any position except "to be against all preparations for war" in order not to force any kind of principles upon any members.

From the little notices each local group published in Vredesstrijd it is clear that there was a great deal of activity: meetings, study groups about peace, war, economics, capitalism and disarmament, propaganda gatherings, drives for money and colportation with brochures and Vredesstrijd took much of the members' time. The paper had 2,000 subscribers and the organization 1,200 members in 1930 and increased these figures the following year to 2,500 subscribers and 2,000 members. The street sale of Vredesstrijd equalled the number of regular subscribers so that the total number of readers was quite respectable. From time to time special colportation numbers were printed which sold in sizeable quantities. The quality of the papers was such that the Central Intelligence repeatedly warned of their dangerous influence.
Gradually the tone of Vredesstrijd became more radical. The names of jailed war resisters were published and so were appeals for donations for the Canteen Fund. After a series of discussions about socialism it was decided that the Youth Peace Action was anti-capitalistic but did not necessarily accept the economic and class war theories of the left. What kind of society was aimed for was left unanswered and was for each member to decide for himself. Sabotage as a form of preventing war was rejected because violence, once started, could not be kept under control—the Bolshevik Revolution was the perfect example. A discussion about boycotting German goods also ended in a negative decision because it would hurt both the guilty and innocent, and would strengthen the feeling in Germany that everyone was "out to get them". By 1935 the Peace Action was in favour of unilateral disarmament, was against measures to protect civilians against air attacks, and was for the independence of Indonesia.

It was thought imperative that the radical-pacifist principles be brought to as wide an audience as possible. In conjunction with other pacifist groups a series of mass meetings were held. In Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Leeuwarden it proved possible to bring more than 1,000 people together for an evening. During 1934 twelve such meetings were held with the total attendance exceeding 7,000 people. Another series of meetings proved equally popular: well known Dutch literary figures spoke about war and testified to their pacifist beliefs. The short speeches, declarations and poems were printed and published in book form. In October 1936,
260 artists were brought together in Amsterdam where they protested against the growing tendency towards violence and increasing military preparations for war. Such meetings had great propaganda value because the press could not resist reporting such gatherings. Even if a paper commented unfavourably, it was difficult to hide the fact that many disagreed with the military measures of the government.

In its efforts to bring more unity to the youth movement the Youth Peace Action obtained mixed results. Vredesstrijd became the official organ of the Student Peace Action. Cooperation with the Roman Catholic and Flemish Youth Peace Action, and the Flemish War Veterans was quite satisfactory. But the Youth Peace Federation, which had 20,000 members in 1932, suffered from tensions between the religious and non-religious groups. The latter described their antimilitarism in ever sharper terms, no reconciliation proved possible, and in 1936 the Federation ceased to exist. Other active antimilitaristic groups such as those around the paper De Jonge Gids (The Young Guide), and the Abstinence Leagues were also declining through internal divisions. Efforts by the Youth Peace Action to gain new members through an intensive propaganda campaign in highschools were strongly countered by the National Youth Association—an adult led patriotic youth organization.

The brochures sold by the Youth Peace Action had a greater fighting spirit than Vredesstrijd. Only in the last few years of its existence did the paper display a strong opposition to air defence drills and other governmental measures, while it
also carried many articles about national passive resistance. The brochures, on the other hand, had this vigorous tone much earlier.49

Because many Youth Peace Action members came out of Liberal Democratic circles the kind of propaganda was somewhat similar to the brochures written by van Embden. The emphasis was on the high cost of war material, the impossibility of defending the Netherlands, the terrible destruction the new weapons would create, and the horrors of gas warfare especially when employed against a defenceless civilian population. The Youth Action also reprinted articles by Henrietta Roland Holst and Bart de Ligt and sold them. There was no additional comment given so that there must have been general agreement with the contents. A view from within the Youth Peace Action ranks was presented by Dirk Boer, a member of the executive, in his brochure, _Oorlog? Neen!_ 50. Boer pointed out that the whole effort to convince people to be for peace was like kicking in an open door. One in five persons carried the insignia of the peace movement—the broken rifle—on the coat lapel; anti-war books and films were very popular; all Dutch political parties were in favour of peace according to their election programs. And yet, the League of Nations could not arrive at a disarmament formula and the "civilized" world spent thirty million guilders on armament each day.

Boer came to the conclusion that the military "count upon us youths" to fight the next war for them and that it was time to stop this madness. If a "Christian" ex-Minister of Defence (van Dijk of the Anti Revolutionary Party) could say that it
was better to murder \textit{en masse} than to be mass murdered, youth could reject wholly the Christian and ethical principles of the older generation. That so many youths were taken in by such "trash" and joined the National Youth Association or another such organization could only be viewed with sadness and every effort should be made to undo the blinkers these people were wearing. Quite a few other pamphlets preached a similar message and proved quite popular;\textsuperscript{51} the one by Dirk Boer sold more than 20,000 copies.

As the arms race intensified the brochures began to point out the futility of the Dutch defence efforts. "Inside information" was provided on the uselessness of Dutch gasmasks,\textsuperscript{52} this pamphlet was sent to all municipal governments because they had the responsibility for the protection of the civilian population. Secret connections between arms manufacturers and nationalistic organizations were uncovered and published.\textsuperscript{53} The Red Cross was chastised as a pro-military organization which "fixed up" wounded soldiers so that they could be sent into the trenches again.\textsuperscript{54} In another brochure\textsuperscript{55} part of an article by an infantry captain was reproduced that explained what parents could do in case of a gas attack. One needed a good basement, should spend some money on it, and then it would provide reasonable safety. Since there were few houses with basements in the country--the soil in most places is too low and wet--the Youth Peace Action had no trouble pointing out that the rich had a chance to survive while the poor could either die in their basement-less homes or in the trenches. An authoritative pamphlet was a reprint from the \textit{Chemical}
Weekly wherein a committee of experts tried to answer questions asked by the Youth Peace Action and other groups. The answers were less than pleasant. In case of a joint attack from the air with high explosives, fire bombs and gas, a substantial portion of the civilian population would perish. If it was "only" a gas attack the result would be less disastrous providing every citizen was given a gasmask. Since only a very limited number was at hand, and production was slow and expensive, the "danger gap" would remain for a long time.

This concern for gas might sound a little strange in an age where we speak of millions of casualties in case of a nuclear attack. For the people of the thirties the little they knew about gas—plus what they did not know but suspected or imagined—made it as much a horror and mass destruction weapon as the nuclear bombs of today. The concept of chivalry in war was already lost thanks to four years of trench warfare, but the idea that war was a matter for armed combatants was still strong. In one sense gas was more abhorrent to the man in the 1930s than atom bombs for the man in the 1970s because gas warfare for the first time enlarged the boundaries of war to its final dimension: it included everyone.

In the final years before the outbreak of war the Youth Peace Action concerned itself largely with the question how people ought to conduct themselves in the event of war and occupation by foreign troops. It is important to note that foreign occupation was accepted as a natural consequence of Dutch involvement in war by many pacifist and antimilitarist organizations. When these people preached that national
defence was useless because the country could not be defended they did not use idle phrases: they believed them.

The articles in *Vredesstrijd* and other pacifist papers about passive resistance were augmented by a number of brochures on the subject. The "Plan de Ligt" had already been discussed and favourably received, and so had the somewhat similar ideas of Henrietta Roland Holst, but the relevance of such tactics had not been apparent in the early thirties. This was also true of the pamphlet *Dooft de Vuren* (Bank the Fires) which had been reproduced from de Ligt's paper and had caused considerable upheaval in certain sections of Dutch society. The pamphlet was a detailed study of the essential raw materials needed to make war, had followed the production process of these materials, and had pointed out in which factories and mines workers needed to strike in order to bring the whole military apparatus to a standstill. At the time, the Youth Peace Action sold the brochure without comment, but half a decade later the need for such action appeared much more real and imminent.

One brochure about national passive resistance took the concept to its ultimate limits: block all harbours and airfields, flood part of the land, destroy what the enemy can use, refuse cooperation, withhold food from the invader, sabotage his communications, etc. That such extreme measures would mean the death of many thousands of Dutch people through drowning, starvation and reprisals was not mentioned—and perhaps not realized. A more realistic approach was suggested in another brochure: refuse all cooperation with the enemy;
spread propaganda and put moral pressure on him; organize the life of the indigenous population with complete disregard for the invader; make the masses conscious of the possibilities and strength of passive resistance.  

Most pamphlets suggesting this kind of defence were clever enough to show why they preferred this kind of defence above the violent one. In the list of previous successes there were always a number of examples from India, the 1912 Gandhi led passive resistance of Indians in South Africa, the Ruhr in 1923, the withdrawal of the military training law in New Zealand in 1930, etc. The other necessity was to prove that the Netherlands could not be defended; one six page fold-out folder listed the reasons simply and effectively:

**UNSOUND DEFENCES**

**OUR WEAPONS UNDERMINE THE STRENGTH OF OUR PEOPLE**

From 1933 to 1938: our educational expenditures were reduced with 7 million; our arms expenditures were increased with 40 million

**ARMAMENT AND PROSPERITY ARE IRRECONCILABLE**

**ARMS DO NOT GIVE SECURITY**

The outlying provinces will not be defended and will be destroyed by our own troops

The area that remains is only 20 minutes flying time

The glistening surface of our many water ways guide enemy air fleets in spite of black-out precautions

Our climate allows a gas attack every four days

The Dutch winds aid the working of fire bombs

Therefore said A. Viruly, the well known KLM pilot and expert in air defence exercises: "I do not believe in the fairy tale of protection against air attacks."

Therefore said our Premier Colijn: "The best defence is the attack."

Which means: the war is a series of mutual reprisal raids on the civilian population.

Such arguments were damaging because the information was largely correct. It was common knowledge that the three north-east provinces would not be defended; the invader would be slowed down by blowing as many bridges as possible and making
roads impassable. For the people in those provinces it made therefore little sense to pay for, and serve in, the Dutch military if they would be handed over to the enemy without a fight. It was precisely because of the apparent truths in these pamphlets that the Central Intelligence thought the Youth Peace Action such a dangerous organization.

That the Youth Peace Action could not "sell" passive resistance to the Dutch people was not for lack of trying. Cooperation in various committees, with the Antimilitaristic Society and similar organizations, with the Women Leagues, etc., was as prevalent in the final years before the war as with the Abstinence Leagues, Christian Youths, Christian Students, and other such groups. In the end the Youth Peace Action, like the youth movement as a whole, suffered from the international tensions, the rise of fascism, the depression, and the growth of nationalism. Lack of finances forced the amalgamation of Vredesstrijd with other papers so that the distinctive form, tone and optimism was lost. Divisions and conflicts within other youth organizations made it more and more difficult to carry out concerted actions. In countless meetings and discussions it had been worked out and agreed upon that violence and war could not settle anything but this concordance could not prevent that each group wanted to work in its own way and emphasize its own particular points.

An evaluation of the antimilitarist and radical-pacifist youth movement is difficult to give in terms of concrete achievements. They always were a minority. It has been estimated that in the thirties the Protestants had more than
200,000 and the Roman Catholics had more than 300,000 youths (of all ages) organized in one form or another. The several thousand "modern religious" youths can be placed in the pacifist camp and the same can be done with the Roman Catholic Youth Peace Action. But there was a large core who wanted nothing to do with pacifism in the sense the Youth Peace Action used the word. Shielded as much as possible from outside influence in their own schools, their own churches, their own youth organizations, with their own radio programs, etc., this center core understood little and rejected everything that the pacifist and antimilitarist groups tried to bring. But apart from the central core there were many thousands of youths who did come into occasional contact with the work and the message of the pacifists. They might not have been convinced, they might not have attended many meetings and only occasionally read a brochure, but they were probably not left wholly indifferent. The amount of propaganda was so great and the lackadaisical attitude of the majority of the population so obvious, that these many thousands became indifferent to the defence of their nation.

The reasons that those favouring a defence force were a silent majority will be discussed in the next chapter. Only a few voices urged greater preparedness and these were submerged under the sound of the antimilitarist voices. The latter won a few distinctive victories in parliament; they forced a careful, reticent mentality upon the government; and they reduced the mental, physical, and material preparation of the nation in general and that of the soldiers in particular so that the war was lost before it began.
Chapter VIII: Proponents of a National Defence Force

1. Introduction

In the five previous chapters the aims and activities of the antimilitarists have been investigated but the question that still remains to be answered is: "To what extent was the government forced to deviate from its stated intention to maintain an adequate defence force through pressure and attacks by antimilitarists and pacifists?" A few facts and figures will illustrate the problem. In the two decades between the wars the three clerical parties polled between 50.1% and 54.5% of the vote and captured between 52 and 59 seats in the elections. Each party furnished one premier and each party always had at least one man in the cabinet. In matters of defence the government in most instances received the support of the Freedom League—10 seats in 1922, 8 in 1925 and 1929, 7 in 1933, 4 in 1937. During the Great War the Netherlands spent approximately fl. 2 billion for its defences, an average of 10% to 15% of its national income. But from 1920 to 1938 only fl. 1.66 billion was spent, about 1.7% of the national income. The year Hitler came to power per capita defence spending for the Netherlands amounted to fl. 6.22, whereas Denmark spent fl. 9.70, Belgium fl. 11.47, and Switzerland fl. 13.40. In percentages of the national budget this meant that the Netherlands spent 8.7%, Denmark 16.3% and Belgium 16.9% for its defences. The curious situation existed that on the one hand a government determined to maintain a defence
force was spending less on it per capita of the population than most other countries, while on the other hand a great number of antimilitarists and pacifists constantly attacked this woefully inadequate force. The cardinal question is, therefore, whether the antimilitarists forced the government to spend so little or whether there were other reasons.

Because of the history of the Netherlands, and the national character of the people, it was difficult to maintain a military force. The Netherlands was a satiated nation; it had a small population and a very large colonial empire. A war could not bring any gains but it could bring the loss of the colonies. This fact had been realized long ago and was one of the reasons that such a strict neutrality was practised. The reaction towards lessening of that neutrality was the same in the interwar period as during the 19th Century. Since the country had been at peace for 100 years (except for the colonial skirmish in Atjeh) there was a general feeling that it did not have any enemies and could continue to stay out of European conflicts. Moreover, the Dutch were parsimonious and business-like and did not spend money when the need was not self-evident. Finally, the Dutch had a great propensity for finding peaceful compromises. They were forced to compromise in their national politics and domestic policies without resorting to violence or draconian measures. They could not quite understand why other nations could not do the same.

All these factors meant that an "adequate defence force" was not interpreted to mean a force capable of withstanding every attack. "Adequate" was not judged in military terms, nor
in comparison to armed forces in countries of similar size and population. There was general agreement that some sort of armed force ought to exist because there always had been one and because the nation would be totally defenceless without it. But this ought to be a potential force, one that could be called upon in time of need but was cheap and unobtrusively small in the years it was not needed. "Unobtrusive" was important because so many people were bothered by the sight of men in uniform, and "cheap" struck a responsive chord in the frugal, burgher mentality of the Dutch people.

There were two groups who disagreed with this commonly held view of the military. The antimilitarists wanted no armed force at all and the pro defence groups wanted a larger, more modernly equipped, and better trained armed force. The pro defence groups were the active spokesmen for the majority of Dutch people—this is the conclusion that must be drawn when the party programs of the three major clerical parties and the Freedom League are read. These groups should have acted as pressure groups who urged the government to spend more money on defence. But in practise this did not happen. The proponents of a defence force spent all their time combating antimilitaristic propaganda. They had to exert all their energy defending the little the government was doing for the military. This fact alone testifies to the strength of the antimilitarists and the effectiveness of their propaganda. In terms of votes the pro defence groups had two-thirds of the people behind them, but this majority was much less active than the one-third who voted for parties demanding unilateral disarmament.
Dutch military unpreparedness in 1940 cannot be blamed solely on the antimilitarists. For political reasons the government sometimes had to bow to the demands of the unilateral disarmament parties but at the same time some good opportunities were wasted to support pro defence groups. Dutch politicians not only misjudged the international situation and underestimated Hitler's greed, they also neglected or ignored many chances to prepare the nation mentally, materially, and militarily for a possible war.

2. Pro Defence Groups

In 1918 several thousand demobilized soldiers rushed to the Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam to prevent the "Red revolution". These men were quickly organized into a Special Voluntary Militia that remained in existence until 1940. Initially only ex-servicemen could join. In 1928 a first and second ban were instituted; those eligible for call-up in a mobilization (soldiers under 40, NCOs and officers under 45) joined the first ban; older persons and those ineligible for a call-up joined the second ban. The Special Militia was divided into 19 districts covering the whole country. It could be called up only in the event of domestic unrest, and received payment only when activated. In 1920 the Special Militia had 40,000 members, in 1930, 65,000 and in 1939, 95,000.2

Great care was taken that the Special Militia would not be infiltrated by subversive elements. The volunteers had to swear an oath of loyalty; all persons belonging to "left-wing revolutionary groups" were refused membership and so were
The Militia trained in the evenings and on Saturdays. No firing practices or parades were held on Sunday in deference to those who believed it to be a God-instituted day of rest. There were regular firing practices, district and national "Militia Days", rifle competitions, guards of honour, banners and medals, and yearly inspections where the Queen or a senior officer took the inspection and march past.

The Special Militia was a patriotic organization wherein the men from the right showed their love for Queen and country and simultaneously thwarted the idea that everyone in the Netherlands was opposed to the military uniform. The Militia was closely associated with professional soldiers in the Dutch army. Not only was the mentality quite similar but nearly 2,500 army reserve officers belonged to the Special Militia.

With a little more encouragement and a slight influx of money the Special Militia could have been made an integral part of the national defence forces and could have provided invaluable service in May 1940. When the mobilization went into effect in 1939, 42,000 Special Militia men rejoined their old units and consequently were dispersed throughout the army. These men had all had basic training such as all other conscripts received, but their mental disposition and morale was much better than the average conscript. Their field training, however, was as deficient as that of all other men in the army. An excellent chance to train and prepare able and willing men had thus been neglected. Furthermore, up to the moment
of the mobilization the Special Militia existed specifically to prevent domestic left-wing unrest or revolutionary uprisings. When the mobilization was called, the 42,000 Militia men went back to their old units to stand side by side with those very "left-wing elements" to defend the country. That there was less than wholehearted cooperation between the two groups speaks for itself.

That the Special Voluntary Militia did not play a role in the defence of the nation in 1940 must be blamed on the authorities. They had attended the Militia Days, had spoken kindly of the institution, had taken the reviews, but had not injected the required money or tried to change the focus of the organization.

In 1918 another militia organization, the air observer corps, was started and it received even less official support than the Special Militia. Regular and reserve officers were in charge of the corps but local units stood under the command of a civilian and volunteers only wore an army uniform when they were on duty. It cost the country very little to maintain the observer corps: the few officers in charge and the few NCOs travelling from place to place to recruit more volunteers were about the only expense. Observation posts were housed in existing high towers or high buildings; regular telephone provided the link with the air defence center. Each local detachment (22 men) received fl. 2.50 for each training exercise; when detachment commanders met once a year for a few days to discuss new developments only their train travel was reimbursed. In April 1939 the observer corps was mobilized.
and the shortcomings in men and material became quickly apparent. An intense recruiting campaign was launched and a year later the corps had 4,000 volunteer members. This development once again proved that people could be persuaded to do something for the safety of their country. That it turned out to be a last minute effort before the German invasion was largely because the government had not thought it important to pay any attention to the observer corps. Early private initiative to provide a national measure of protection had not been encouraged or supported.

A partial mobilization during the 1938 Munich Conference brought to light what insiders had long known: the Netherlands had three modern batteries (9 guns) anti-aircraft artillery. Efforts were now made to ameliorate the deplorable situation by ordering more guns and by forming a separate Air Defence Command wherein the air observer corps, the anti-aircraft artillery, and the air force were united. Until this time the air force had been part of the army. But by this time a number of people had lost faith in the ability of the military to protect them from air attacks. Several municipalities and industries decided to form their own anti-aircraft defence. There was substantial opposition from the antimilitarists because the nation was now becoming truly militaristic, from the military because the weapons should be placed in the hands of the regular forces, and from many individuals because it was a typical small minded attitude of "each for himself and God for us all".
Many municipalities continued in spite of the criticism and in May 1940, Delft, the Hague, Leeuwarden, and the area around Zaandam had batteries of 2 cm. Oerlikons in position with trained civilians manning the guns. Another dozen or so cities were still in the process of acquiring guns; Utrecht and Rotterdam already had them but had no time to train crews before the invasion started. The civilian crews were largely municipal and industrial employees. When the Netherlands mobilized, a system of rotating shifts was worked out so that the guns were manned at all times. The government mobilized the civilian gun crews and paid them the same as regular conscripts; the respective employers made up the difference in pay during the time that the men manned the guns instead of working at their regular employment. At the outbreak of war there were about 750 civilian volunteers manning the batteries.

Of the three semi-official military organizations only the anti-aircraft crews were in a position to take an active part in the war. The Special Militia was denuded of its members through the mobilization. The observer corps did take part in the war but the enemy aircraft were numerous, the Dutch air force was quickly wiped from the sky and the anti-aircraft artillery wholly insufficient so that warnings of incoming aircraft were mostly useless. The civilian anti-aircraft crews actively took part in the war, especially the groups at Delft and the Hague. German transport planes looking for places to drop their parachute troops or land the light infantry on the air fields around the Hague formed easy targets for the Oerlikons. The manner in which the civilian crews conducted
themselves proved that a much greater national effort could have taken place had more encouragement been given to these matters in the years that Hitler's intentions became quite clear.

Several groups in the Netherlands tried to change the national mentality in favour of the military. Two of these had existed for a long time; one glamourized life in the army, the other in the navy. Both produced glossy, picture filled monthly magazines that tried to bring some romance and status to professions many Dutch people thought degenerate. Especially Ons Leger (Our Army) tried to convince antimilitarists that the defence of the Netherlands was viable, both on military and financial grounds. The magazine at first met the antimilitarists in a straightforward confrontation. Public debates with antimilitarists of various standpoints were organized.\(^{12}\) The Sin of Christianity was given a thorough and good review.\(^{13}\) The magazine also urged that military music and parades be brought back into the streets; soldiers in uniform should be seen in cities and towns. To hide the military so as not to hurt the feelings of "other thinking" people was only interpreted as a sign of weakness by those "other-thinkers" who did not at any time neglect to wear their broken rifle insignias on their lapels.\(^{14}\) Because the magazines had a readers' circle largely limited to families with long military traditions, it preached to the converted. This was also true for the third magazine, Onze Strijdkrachten (Our Armed Forces), which covered both services and the colonial forces. A major propaganda campaign by the three publications was thought undesirable; an independent propaganda committee was therefore created.
The Committee Against Unilateral Disarmament was started in 1925, consisted of active and retired officers and a few civilians, and was primarily concerned with printing and distributing propaganda to nullify antimilitaristic propaganda. Membership of the Committee, and the connections it had with military and patriotic organizations were kept as secret as possible. The military men were never addressed by their rank, not even in the minutes of the meetings. In 1937 there were approximately 200 donors and 43 "friendly organizations" periodically providing money. Some "under the table" money was obtained from public funds. The minister of defence promised fl. 200 "for the good work of distributing brochures and flysheets in favour of the army." The minister of colonies promised fl. 100 for unspecified reasons. Confidential information about antimilitaristic persons and groups could sometimes be obtained from the Central Intelligence.

Apart from this intermittent assistance dependent upon the mood of certain individuals, no help was received from the government. It would not have been difficult to do so because the Central Intelligence was also financed secretly (hidden in the budget of the Department of Internal Affairs). The Committee, therefore, seldom had enough money to publish as much as it wanted. The minutes of the meetings testify that this was a recurring problem.

In February 1939 the Committee listed a dozen or so organizations desiring a stronger defence of the Netherlands but had to add, "the mass has not yet been reached and it is important that this be done." That the Committee had not reached the
people had not been for lack of trying. Pamphlets, brochures, flysheets, postcards, etc., had been distributed or sold in the thousands. Comments, letters, and warnings had been sent to newspapers. Speakers had travelled throughout the country to spread the message. All possible help had been given to nationalistic youth groups. The Youth Peace Action and Church and Peace had been opposed whenever possible. Three brochures were directed specifically against this religious group. But in its eagerness to combat antimilitarism the Committee went to extremes. Almost every antimilitarist organization was painted "red" and/or cowardly. Not only did this debase the argument in favour of defence but it was a little too simplistic and negative.

In this respect the Committee should have taken as example the brochures written by regular army officers. Some of them, such as the one by Captain Maas in answer to van Embden, showed a lack of research but the majority tried to counter antimilitaristic propaganda with sensible arguments. Most noticeable in the army brochures of the twenties is the conciliatory tone. No bombastic language, no superior-caste attitude can be found. Many military writers felt it necessary to explain that they were not "militarists" and that they had nothing in common with the pre 1914 German officer. Dutch soldiers and officers did not want war; they wanted to live in peace like everyone else. They only differed from the antimilitarists in believing that one ought to be prepared. 

Around 1935 the tone and the arguments began to change. It was not so important anymore to convince the antimilitarists;
it became essential to persuade the Dutch nation as a whole that some action must be taken. Comparative figures with Belgium, what she was doing as opposed to the Netherlands, suggestions about the essential improvements that must take place and the role the military could fulfill both for the Netherlands and the League of Nations became the main themes.\textsuperscript{22}

Much of the stimulus for better defences came from a group of civilians not previously concerned with the topic. M. Verkaak, a journalist, wrote a pamphlet wherein he asked why the southern provinces had no defences at all and why the enemy was only to be stopped north of the big rivers.\textsuperscript{23} This touched a sensitive nerve for two reasons. It was already common knowledge that the three north-east provinces would not be defended in an attack from the east. Antimilitarists had already made use of this fact in their propaganda. Secondly, the tensions between France and Germany made a war between them quite possible: a recurrence of 1914 therefore. But the French were building a Maginot Line and Belgium was also building a defensive line on its eastern border. It was logical to expect a German attack through the southern part of the Netherlands in order to reach the undefended northern borders of France and Belgium. Why should the Netherlands allow an unhindered passage of German troops through the southern provinces and only defend the area inside Fortress Holland?

Not long after Verkaak posed his question an Association for National Security was formed which held meetings throughout the country "to explain how, within the framework of our
national peace policy, a reasonable and stronger defence is possible." The Association consisted solely of civilians to show that it was in the civil interest to be properly defended and that no military self-aggrandizing interests were involved. Citations from military journals (mostly German ones) were used to demonstrate the low opinion foreign nations had of the Dutch defence capabilities.

From the foregoing description of the pro defence groups it is clear that they did not receive very much official support and that most of their time was used combating antimilitaristic propaganda. That the government remained so carefully on the side-lines in this propaganda battle can only be described as a serious mistake. It was not just a propaganda war between groups of opposing viewpoints; it was a fight for the mental disposition of the nation and the government ought to have been vitally concerned. That it was not can partially be attributed to political causes; the clerical coalition had to be maintained and the Roman Catholics would not tolerate an aggressive campaign in favour of the military. The clerical governments did not dare risk an open confrontation for fear that the antimilitarists would be able to sway public opinion in their favour with a consequent "Red-Catholic" coalition supported by the Liberal Democrats and the Christian Democratic Union.

3. The Defence Budget in the Twenties

The unrest in the army in 1917 and 1918 culminating in the extensive riots in October in the latter year (see p. 51) indicated that it was not a very reliable instrument for the
defence of the nation. The navy had not proved any more dependable; the commander in Willemsoord had taken the breachblocks out of the guns and had removed some vital parts out of the ships' engines to prevent unreliable sailors from taking over the ships and sailing them to one of the big cities. A new approach was essential to overcome what the committee investigating the 1918 riots had found to be the basic cause of it all, "our people are not a military people." The often repeated claim that the Dutch mobilization had kept the Germans at bay was undermined in an article by the war-time Commander in Chief when he revealed that the Dutch forces could not have stopped an invading force. Information from German sources soon made clear that they had left the Netherlands alone out of economic considerations. Had the military ones weighed heavier, Dutch neutrality would have meant as little as the Belgian "scrap of paper". If the Dutch government wanted to make the armed forces the guardian of the nation's independence a new mentality and much money was needed.

Apparently the government was willing to spend money on the military; the 1919 Defence Budget listed an increase of fl. 4 million for the navy and fl. 14 million for the army above the previous year. There was immediate protest in the Second Chamber that there was no need for such extravagance. The Social Democrats and Liberal Democrats lead the protest and enough Roman Catholics supported them that only a compromise could bring a solution. In the next two years the Defence Question caused the fall of one minister of war, one minister of marine (in 1928 the two departments were united in the Ministry of
Defence), and the resignation of one cabinet. When a compromise was finally reached, the clericals had retained their army and navy but knew that they could expect no more than the bare minimum. The antimilitarists could not terminate the existence of these forces but had ensured that the Netherlands drafted fewer men and spent less money on them than any other European nation (except Luxemburg). The Defence Budget went from fl. 207 million in 1919 to fl. 107 million in 1922; thereafter it dropped below fl. 100 million until 1936. The low point was reached from 1933 to 1935, respectively fl. 77, fl. 75, and fl. 76 million.

The conscription law passed with a two vote majority by the Second Chamber in December 1921 was the best that could be obtained. The antimilitaristic mood of the country did not allow a better law. At the time it was an acceptable compromise in spite of the fact that it was a definite decline for the army. But that the law was not changed for sixteen years was pernicious and cannot be blamed solely on the antimilitarists and pacifists even though they must carry the major share of the blame.

Under the new law the size of the draft was fixed at 19,500 of whom no more than 1,000 were to go to the navy. Two-thirds were called up during the summer, the remainder in the winter. Service time in the infantry—the greatest majority because it was least expensive—was set at 5-1/2 months; other arms served a little longer. It was possible to reduce this period to six weeks by training 300 hours during evening hours and/or Saturday afternoons in one's own municipality. Two re-training
periods totalling 40 days were required; these normally fell in the first 6 years following basic training. A conscript remained in the army for 20 years; 15 drafts would be called up in time of mobilization; the oldest 5 drafts were in the "second reserve" and would only be called upon if time permitted and the seriousness of the situation demanded it. To sweeten the bitter pill a modernization and reorganization was promised; fl. 106 million would be made available to buy new arms and equipment and to build new camps where training in large formations could take place. The law passed the Second Chamber only because the majority of Roman Catholics found the continuation of a clerical government more important than a greater reduction in the army. The 300 hour pre-training provision was a concession to the Catholics; the evil influence of the barracks could now be lessened.

The law was criticized by both the military and the antimilitarists. Both were angry about the unfairness of the draft. Of the roughly 60,000 eligible twenty year olds in the country 45,000 were medically fit but less than half had to serve. The exemptions provided for in the law—only one member in a family had to serve, a bread winner was exempted, if one was indispensable for another reason one also went free—were thought quite fair. But that one also was exempted when studying for or already in a religious profession was thought unfair. Why should these students be exempted and others not? A similar argument was forwarded by antimilitarists the following year when the government only recognized religiously based conscientious objection to military service.
Criticism from the military was much more extensive. They opposed the shortened service time because the growing complexity of weapons and tactics demanded more time, not less. Making 300 hours pre-training in small groups equivalent to four months in the regular service was ludicrous. These men would only be available for six weeks training in larger formations. Two re-training periods totalling 40 days was much too short. If the army was mobilized the oldest draft would be 35 years of age and would have had its last training period nine years earlier.

An additional problem for the military was that the government did not see the importance of the re-training exercises and repeatedly shortened them when it wanted to save money. The 1926 draft only received 34 days re-training, the 1928 and 1930 drafts only 30 days. The Dutch army was thus no more than a training center for conscripts who would be called up when danger threatened. But the whole system was curtailed and pruned to such an extent that no useful army could ever be created. Under these circumstances few professional officers enjoyed their work and their numbers decreased from 1,050 in 1918 to 625 in 1936. Professional NCOs showed a similar decline. Since the promised fl. 106 million for weapons and new training centers never materialized the equipment of the army remained wholly obsolete. 34

Provisions for the navy were also inadequate. When the Great War broke out the Dutch navy consisted largely of old ships and four years patrolling along the Dutch coast wore out the vessels. In 1913 a committee had urged that a start be made
to renew the Indonesian fleet: 9 battleships, 3 cruisers, 8 destroyers, and 22 submarines were suggested. Before parliament had a chance to consider the suggestion war broke out and nothing came of it. In 1916 two new cruisers were started followed in 1917 by a third but they were not yet completed by the end of 1918. In the discussion about the cruisers in 1919 the Liberal Democratic spokesman suggested that all work be stopped until the international situation become settled. A Roman Catholic spokesman called the fleet "a sad mess" and wanted to drop the idea of independently defending Indonesia. The minister of marine resigned and Premier Ruys de Beerenbrouck took over the department. In order to get the 1916 cruisers completed, however, he had to drop the 1917 cruiser.

A committee was instituted to advise the government on naval requirements. In contrast to earlier strategy it was now decided that the Indonesian fleet should only slow down the enemy as he tried to penetrate the island waters. The Dutch home fleet was seen as an extension of the coastal defence system. The reduced aim was a silent recognition that a small country could not maintain a fleet capable of withstanding a major power. The figures that were proposed bear this out: Indonesia needed 18 submarines, 98 airplanes, 12 destroyers of about 1,000 ton displacement, and the two 1916 cruisers; the Netherlands needed 12 smaller submarines, 13 mine layers, 60 airplanes, and a number of smaller ships. No capital ships were requested. The government accepted the plan, suggested a building period of six years and financing over twelve years.
There was immediate criticism in the Chamber and beyond and the bill was withdrawn. Another committee looked at the problem again and this time it was suggested that only half the fleet be built in six years but to leave the payment over twelve years. This plan found the opposition to it increased. To build half a fleet was ridiculous; it was like having half a roof over a house. Others brought up the fact that the 1922 Washington Naval Agreement aimed for a reduction in fleet size while the Netherlands was working to increase hers. Moreover, the United States, Great Britain, France and Japan had promised "to respect the rights of the Netherlands in her Archipelago possessions in the Pacific Ocean." What was the point of building a fleet? Opponents also pointed out that Colijn, now an ardent defender of the Fleet Law, had urged in 1922 that the two defence departments had to share in the general reduction in expenditures. Disagreement within the cabinet came to light with the resignation of the Minister of Finance (de Geer, leader of the Christian Historicals) who thought the expenditures too much for the country. It proved relatively easy for the Social Democrats to collect 1.3 million signatures against the Fleet Law and with the help of ten Roman Catholics the bill was defeated with a one vote margin. It was the second tangible victory for the antimilitarists.

The decline continued. In 1924 the minister of marine tried to obtain money to build a few ships but his bill was defeated. Only the two 1916 cruisers were completed and taken into service; the remainder of the navy became more and more obsolete. In the army matters were no different. The equipment was wholly
out-of-date and inadequate. The infantry had rifles of a type dated 1895; the field artillery had 200 pieces of 7 cm that dated from before the war while the 12 cm and 15 cm howitzers were older. Machine guns had been purchased from the British and Germans in 1918 and were badly worn. There were no anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns at all. The coastal artillery consisted of pieces from between 1870 and 1904. The promised fl 106 million was not made available but in 1924 a new scheme was announced whereby a yearly sum was allocated for weapon renewal: the total amount came to fl 61 million in 1931. But in seven years only one-sixth, 1-1/2 million guilders each year, was spent on the renewal of weapons. In 1932, when more savings had to be realized, this amount was reduced with one-third. 41 In 1930 parliament accepted a new Fleet Law in spite of the 1-1/2 million signatures collected against it. But, according to one admiral, "the economic depression was gratefully seized upon to weaken the whole defence establishment." 42 It would have been more accurate to say "further weaken...".

One gets the impression that the government was incapable of grasping the long range consequences of its behaviour. An effective fighting force cannot be created in a short time; it takes years. But little thought was given to the future. The existence of an army in the time honoured tradition was sufficient. Nothing was learned from the recent war and things were returned to their pre war status as quickly as possible. The Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces was not replaced when he retired. The position would be filled when danger
threatened. The reason given was that the government then in office could appoint a man in whom it had complete confidence.\footnote{43} It meant that the Chief of the General Staff, the Commander of the Field Army, the Chief of the Naval Staff, and the Commander of the Home Fleet—all approximately with the same rank and seniority—were directly responsible to the Minister of Defence. Since that person was frequently an ex-officer, cooperation and planning were less than adequate if the personalities and ambitions clashed. The common soldier was given little consideration. The Defence Department took over the care of discharged soldiers in 1918 (see p. 53); the Cabinet decided in 1920 that discharged soldiers would not be given any support.\footnote{44} The voluntary committee was thus handed back the care of these men. How this affected morale will be discussed in the next chapter.

Matters might not have been so serious if the government had been conscious of the weakness of the armed forces and had simply bided its time to ameliorate the situation at the first opportune moment. But in public statements the indication was given that all was well. The Minister of War blandly declared:\footnote{45} The army is a strong organ capable, not to defeat a superior force, but to resist it, to slow it down, to inflict upon it serious casualties, to force the enemy into a major effort, and to win time. The army thus has a strong preventive weight. A possible invader will not be indifferent to have the Netherlands on the other side of the front.

This was myopia of the highest order. It was virtually equalled by another minister in 1930 when he responded to criticism of his proposed cruiser. It was to be a vessel of 5,000 tons—2,000 tons smaller than the ones started in 1916—and would
thus be half the size of the maximum agreed upon in Washington in 1922. When it was pointed out that the Dutch vessel would hardly be a match for a Washington type cruiser the minister did not think that this was a problem because the ship's task would be to slow down an enemy force, retreat from superior vessels and draw them to the submarines who would attack the bigger cruisers.\footnote{These viewpoints largely summed up the mentality of the government in connection with the defence of the country.} These viewpoints largely summed up the mentality of the government in connection with the defence of the country.

4. Defence Preparations in the Thirties

The depression placed the government before an economic and social enigma which, it believed, could only be solved through a reduction in expenditures. The military had to share in this austerity program. Warnings, largely in the form of articles in military journals that reductions could not go on indefinitely, went unheeded. Officers found it very difficult to maintain morale because their own was slipping perceptibly. The conscripts were lax and indifferent, were influenced by antimilitaristic propaganda, and only went through the motions of playing soldier. The general attitude of the population aided this mentality; officers tried not to appear in the streets in uniform because the comments from civilians were less than complimentary: "there goes my dressed up tax money" and "squanderer" were the milder epithets.\footnote{Various demonstrations and meetings in camps and on ships, especially in Indonesia, testified to the unrest among soldiers and sailors.} In February 1933 sailors in Indonesia decided that their
situation had become intolerable; they took over a ship, sailed it to sea, but repeatedly signaled that they only did so out of protest and did not want to start a revolution or become involved in violence.

When the message arrived that the Zeven Provincien had been taken over by its mutinying crew the reaction was one of hurt vanity, panic as a result of loss of control, and harsh reaction to recover the lost reputation. After a week of frantic communications between authorities in the Netherlands and Indonesia a bomb, killing 23 and wounding 13, ended the mutiny. It did not end the myopic policy which had caused it. The government acted very energetically but mostly in the wrong areas. 48

Forbidding civil servants to belong to any of the enumerated left-wing organizations (and the much shorter list of fascist organizations) needlessly widened the chasm in Dutch society without helping the military. Professional officers and NCOs were civil servants (but conscripts were not) and also fell under the department of defence and were thus prohibited from belonging to any of the social democratic organizations. 49 Left-wing conscripts thus knew that none of their professional superiors belonged to "their side" of society while the latter carefully watched conscripts because many belonged to "untrustworthy organizations". The dichotomy between the rank and file and the leaders in the army became greater and only detracted from the effectiveness of the forces.

Curtailment of the power and influence of the military unions was needlessly abrupt. The Netherlands was probably the only country in the world to have trade unions in its armed
forces. Their inception and growth had been made possible through a combination of sadly neglected conditions and outdated methods in the forces around the turn of the century, and the Dutch habit of tackling such problems through compromise. Instead of ameliorating life in the services, the government had tolerated the unions as pressure groups for their particular rank and service. Although their rights and duties had been carefully outlined, supervision of the unions had been less than strict and certain ones had come under the domination of left-wing elements and had contributed to the unrest in Indonesia. But other unions, especially in the army in the Netherlands, seriously worked for the betterment of their members in particular and of the armed forces in general. When the government moved against the unions the good ones were hurt with the bad ones. Morale sank because it appeared that not only the left and the antimilitarists were against them but also the authorities. 50

Instead of doing something constructive the government instituted the Committee Idenburg to pare fl. 25 million from the defence budget. The Committee came on the heels of Committee Welter, set up in 1931 to advise the government on the savings to be realized in the military. In April 1932 it declared that since 1922 the defence budget had been reduced 22.3% and that no further reductions could be justified. 51 The priorities of the Dutch authorities were clearly demonstrated by the appointment of the Idenburg Committee within a few months of the mutiny, after Hitler came to power, and with Japan already putting pressure on the Netherlands. 52
Ironically, the Committee Idenburg procured something beneficial for the army: it abolished the pre-training provisions as a means of saving money. The decision was lauded by the military who had long complained about the insufficiently trained youths coming into the army for six weeks to complete their tour of duty. Another decision of the Committee was met with less enthusiasm. Most of the professional NCOs were to be replaced with volunteers who signed up for four or six years. At the end of this period they were guaranteed employment by the government. This so-called capitulantensteinstelsel was strongly opposed by the Social Democrats because too many military men would find places in the civil service, making it easier to establish a military mentality and possibly a dictatorship. The military unions opposed it because it would bring men into the service who aimed for a safe civil service job and only became soldiers to obtain this security. 53

Committee Idenburg could only pare f5 million from the defence budget and the Social Democrats and Liberal Democrats thought it insufficient. Both parties voted against the 1934 Defence Budget.54 It was the lowest defence budget, f74 million, the Netherlands had had in more than two decades. The following year it was raised by one million. It was 1936 before a very modest increase took place.

By this time various civilian groups were agitating for a more complete system of national defence and they received support in the form of a strong argument from the military. In 1935 the Commander of the Military College held a strategic war game on maps and sand tables and came to the conclusion
that a small tank force from the east could push through to the Hague and capture the government and Royal Family before the Dutch could mobilize. If such a raid took place early in the year, only one-third of the draft would be under arms (6,000 men) and they would be insufficiently trained and armed to prevent such an attack. The simplest preventive measures would be to have permanent guards in casemates by all bridges and important roads and to have the bridges mined. When the Chief of the General Staff passed on this information he added a long list of materials and weapons that were urgently required. The request, pressure from certain groups to defend the south, and the deteriorating international situation finally forced the government to pay attention to the defences.

Most essential at this point was money, both to buy weapons and to train more men, but the government was loath to provide large amounts. The regular defence budget for 1936 was increased to fl. 85 million and a Defence Fund of fl. 53 million was provided to buy new material. But fl. 22 million of this Fund went to the navy while the army also had to finance the casemates (fl. 5 million) guarding the bridges out of this. The fl. 26 million that remained was increased by fl. 47 million in 1938, but the total fl. 73 million was far short of the fl. 137 million the Chief of the General Staff requested in 1937. General Reynders described his request as only providing the most necessary items and he had not even considered the air force. When it is remembered that fl. 106 million was already thought necessary in 1922 it is obvious that the General did not exaggerate.
The extra 10 million added to the defence budget in 1936 was needed to finance the special border battalions which were created to man the casemates and offer resistance at the border. These men all belonged to older drafts and resided in the border areas so that they would be immediately available when the situation demanded it. It meant that married men, often with jobs and businesses, were called up for practices or pre-mobilizations while thousands of unemployed youth were left idle. The money placed in the Defence Fund in 1936 was spent before 1937 came to an end (mostly for munitions), but the additional sums of 1938 and 1939 could not be put to good use. The Netherlands did not have an arms industry worth mentioning and everything had to be bought abroad. The Dutch not only wanted the best available, but also worried about the price so that each foreign purchase meant long and careful consideration. In the years 1936 to 1938 only fl. 13 million was given out for new equipment for the army; other orders could not be filled because all arms industries were working for their own governments. In 1938 parliament readily passed a new conscription law, drafting 32,000 men for eleven months, but like the Defence Fund, it came too late to repair twenty years of neglect.

Responsibility for the poverty of the Dutch defence establishment can be placed on various people. The antimilitarists were able to prevent much needed modernization during the twenties and also brought about a reduction in the size of the army and in the length of service. They also spread enough
propaganda so that for many people the national indifference towards the military was changed to active dislike. But the government must also share the blame because it did very little to combat the antimilitaristic propaganda, gave no support to the small groups who worked for adequate defences, was too intent on its savings mania, misjudged the German appetite, and put too much stock in the history of Dutch neutrality. Repeatedly the Dutch were lulled into a false sense of security by their leaders. After the Rhineland occupation the Dutch winter draft was kept beyond its regular time. Premier Colijn quickly announced on the radio that there was nothing to fear and everyone should go to bed and sleep as restfully as any other night. Yet in that same month (March, 1936) Colijn told the First Chamber: "If we are honest we have to admit that we do not have an army; it has to be formed through and after a mobilization." Less than a year later he declared before that same body that war was madness because the limits of self-destruction would quickly be reached. In complete contradiction he added, "I am willing to go as far as anyone [to maintain a defence force] but I want to stop before we reach the borders of our financial ruin." Apparently the nation was not yet completely ruined because shortly thereafter he outlined what he wanted to improve in the armed forces. Rather than introduce his ideas in parliament, however, he preferred to wait until after the elections so that the voters could give their judgement via the ballot. Such an argument might be accepted from a weak and timid politician, but Colijn was a (head) strong and determined man. His "Let's ask the voters" was no more than
a ploy to gain time, postpone expenditures, and thus save money. It was the same tactic he had used in connection with the border battalions. It proved the cheapest remedy but not necessarily the best. 62

Colijn placed an indelible, and in certain aspects a fatal stamp on the Netherlands in the inter war years. He was a dominant and dominating person. Although he headed a party that only represented 14 per cent of the voters, he formed and headed five of the ten inter war cabinets; he was premier for almost seven years and minister for nine. For the right he was the strong man who represented order and authority in a world gone mad with permissiveness and licentiousness; he wanted to maintain the "honest" (undevalued) guilder; he kept the country out of foreign involvement; he would defend it and with it Christianity. For the left he was "the man from Atjeh", 63 the ex oil baron who had wanted to torpedo the Zeven Provincien, who demanded "adaptation" to the depression which gave the unemployed just enough so that they did not die of hunger, or forced them into work camps where they only earned a few cents more. 64 Colijn's personality and principles were in no small measure responsible for the wide schism between right and left and the impossibility of rapprochement. He made it easy for the left rank and file to retain their antimilitarism because for them he was the perfect example of a "militarist".

Colijn dominated his cabinets and no minister of finance or defence was willing or able to oppose his frugal-conservative method of governing. The unemployed and the military received the bare minimum; he did not have the flexibility to combine
employment provisions with defence preparations. Thousands of unemployed workers had to report twice a day to their local unemployment office to have their card stamped to ensure that they did not earn any money on the sly. All these men were chained to their own locality while the defence fortifications of "Fortress Holland" were in 1939 in the same condition (but more deteriorated) than in 1890. When in 1937 plans were developed to build a defensive line from the big rivers to the Belgian border to protect the southern provinces, an anti-tank canal was deemed essential. Long studies had to be made whether this canal could also serve an economic purpose. If the answer was affirmative, the unemployed could dig the canal under the work provision scheme. If the canal was economically unfeasible regular contractors had to dig it and the money had to come out of the defence budget.65

In the spring of 1939 Colijn's Fourth Cabinet fell. The increased defence expenditures meant a deficit budget and Colijn demanded that fl. 15 million be pared from the unemployment benefits. The minister in charge refused to jettison his new program of constructive work provisions for the approximately 70,000 unemployed youths and resigned. Colijn needed one month to put his Fifth Cabinet together; within two days of its formation the Second Chamber passed a no-confidence motion. It took a week before de Geer, leader of the Christian Historical Union, received instructions to form a new cabinet and slightly less time before he had formed it. After six weeks the Netherlands had a government again and for the first time the Social Democrats were included.
De Geer, age 69, was not the right man to lead the country during this tense time. "I do not understand strategy," he once admitted, "and I cannot see what reasons the Germans can have to attack us." The second part of the sentence confirmed the correctness of the first part. He had never concerned himself with foreign policy; he disliked war and violence because they were an abrogation of Christian principles. He felt sympathy for the pacifist ideals of Church and Peace but could not envisage them as national policy in a sinful world. He was a great conciliator and had long urged that the Social Democrats be brought into the government. But he disapproved of their criticism of Chamberlain's "capitulation" at Munich. De Geer labelled such a view "thanklessness over against God and the noble statesmen He uses as His instruments." Once de Geer had put his Cabinet together he left for a vacation in the Black Forest. On August 23 the international situation was so tense that the Cabinet, in his absence, decided to order the pre-mobilization. Five days later the general mobilization order went out and Lt-General I.H. Reynders, Chief of the General Staff, was made Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Netherlands. A number of people had reservations about General Reynders but since he had prepared the mobilization plans it was decided to make him Supreme Commander. Within a few months there were major differences of opinion between the General and the government. On February 6, 1940 he was asked to resign; on that day it had yet to be decided exactly how and where the Netherlands would defend itself against a German attack.
5. Foreign Policy and Neutrality

The government and people of the Netherlands did not worry about their defences during the twenties because the new peaceful Europe was so obviously manifested in the demise of militaristic Germany, a Naval Agreement (1922), the Locarno Treaties (1925), the Briand-Kellogg Pact (1928), and the existence of the League of Nations. Furthermore, the nation had been neutral for one hundred years and in 1870 and 1914 wars had passed it by. A policy of strict neutrality was sufficient to stay out of armed conflict and if such a policy was not enough by itself, then the geographic location of the Netherlands would come to the rescue. France and Great Britain on the one hand, and Germany on the other would never grant each other control of the mouths of three major rivers. One well known academic wrote in 1923:

If our people consider themselves safe it is not based on an exaggerated optimism about the good intentions of the major powers, but from the conviction that History as political maxim of the first order has introduced and affirmed the conviction that the integrity and independence of our country is essential for the political balance of Europe.

In October 1939 Professor B.M. Telders repeated these words and added that the Netherlands was a trustee of a very important geographic area which was recognized by all of Europe. Similar thoughts were expressed by H.A. van Karnebeek, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1918 to 1929 and special governmental adviser thereafter. He emphasized in 1938 that this position of trust should be guarded with integrity, honesty and impartiality. All semblance of favouring one nation over another must be avoided:
Our mission is not only to be neutral in times of conflict, but to be independent and impartial as a permanent political manifestation.

The practical application of these principles resulted in a careful, hesitant, never-be-first foreign policy. The Netherlands became a member of the League of Nations in 1920 but in the parliamentary debates preceding this decision all speakers were fearful of the loss of traditional neutrality and urged the government to be extremely cautious. Dutch contributions to the League were hardly of a trail blazing kind. When in 1925 discussions were started which eventually led to the protocol to outlaw bacteriological and chemical warfare, the Netherlands held back until many other nations had signed it. It was thought inexpedient to be one of the first. The minister of foreign affairs was criticized because he had taken the initiative in the League in discussing the German refugee problem. Such matters ought to be left to the major powers. Nor should the minister have criticized the proposed Hoare-Laval Treaty; getting involved in such questions could only bring trouble and this could easily be avoided by remaining silent. When the League decided to impose economic sanctions against Italy the Netherlands announced (in conjunction with the "Oslo nations"—Belgium, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden) that she would not participate in such a venture. Henceforth she would unilaterally determine whether or not to participate in League sanctions.

In the Spanish Civil War the Dutch government was also scrupulously impartial. The Netherlands was a member of the Non-Intervention Committee which met for the first time in
London in September 1936. Unlike some other members such as Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union, the Netherlands adhered to the letter of the agreement. Not only were no war materials sent, but the roughly 700 left-wing volunteers who went to fight in the International Brigade were promptly deprived of their citizenship.

Such an act had little to do with neutrality but everything with the government's attitude towards the left, both in Europe and at home. The Soviet Union was not awarded formal recognition, but in the spring of 1938 the Netherlands sent her ambassador "to Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy and Kaiser of Ethiopia" in accordance with Mussolini's demand.

After 1937 it was generally acknowledged that the League of Nations had failed and that other means ought to be tried to ensure the nation's security. For a brief moment the government considered requesting Germany, France, and Great Britain to declare that they would look upon the violation of the Dutch, Belgian, and Luxemburg borders as a violation of their own borders. The plan was never implemented. In 1939 a non-aggression treaty with the same powers was briefly discussed but never went beyond this stage. The old idea that strict neutrality, impartiality, and independence was best was believed to the very end. Consequently there was no cooperation in defence matters with other nations.

Ex-premier Colijn reacted very angrily to German accusations (after their victory) that the Netherlands had made such plans. On July 3, 1940 Colijn wrote that during his time in office (May 1933-August 1939) there had certainly not been any
discussions with Belgium, England, or France about military matters. Premier de Geer had been even more averse to discussing military questions; he referred to them as "bad dreams." When the neutrality and military questions were thoroughly investigated after the war it became conclusively clear that no official discussions had taken place with England or France. Only a few minor matters had been settled by the military attachés, and they had acted on their own accord. With Belgium some desultory talks were held in November 1939, but no concrete plans materialized. The only precaution the Dutch had taken were sealed envelopes in the hands of the Dutch ambassadors in Brussels, London and Paris which were to be opened and passed on to the respective governments when the special coded message arrived from the Hague. The envelopes contained the Dutch defence plans, the positions of the armed forces, and stipulated the specific help the Dutch Commander in Chief would like to receive. The special coded message left the Hague on May 10, 1940 when German paratroops were descending around the Hague and Rotterdam. It was then a little late for the allies to work out a coordinated plan in conjunction with the Netherlands.

6. Political Leadership and Public Opinion

Unwillingness to see national socialism as a threat was one of the reasons for the neglect of Dutch defences. The left in general, and communism in particular, had been viewed for so long as the atheistic threat that it was difficult to see a communist-opposed system as an enemy. Few people bothered
to inform themselves about the true nature of fascism, its conduct in Germany before 1933, its stated aims as laid down in *Mein Kampf*. Many believed that Germany had been wronged at Versailles and Hitler only wanted to get back for Germany what belonged to it. His methods might be a bit rough, but at least he was bringing law and order whereas in Weimar there had only been chaos. Initially there were many clerical voices in favour of Hitler. The Anti Revolutionary papers rejected his anti-semitism as unacceptable for Calvinists, but the Jews were a difficult race, and they were not easy to get along with, and therefore one could understand the German attitude. Especially the "moral purity" Hitler strived for was lauded after the excessive freedom, nude gymnastics, and godlessness of Weimar. The Roman Catholic paper, *De Tijd*, was in full concordance with Hitler when he declared that the fight against Marxism was a matter of life and death. It was understandable that the German government had to use force since millions were already in the claws of that depraved doctrine.

Dutch Social Democrats opposed German (and Dutch) national socialism very strongly and this reinforced the clerical point of view. The Anti Revolutionaries in general and Colijn in particular intensely disliked the Social Democrats and over-reacted as a result of it. When Dutch Social Democratic leaders said that Chamberlain had "sold out" at Munich, *De Standaard* answered that it was not a capitulation at all. This was the worst possible time to start a war because it would be in partnership with communist Russia and no good could come out of it. The reason for the last minute settlement was quite
clear: "It is not the desire of the people, it is God Who guided the hearts of the statesmen." And that settled the Munich matter.

Jewish refugees presented a dilemma for the Dutch. In theory the Dutch border was closed in May 1934 but enough legal and illegal loopholes existed that some 33,000 refugees entered the Netherlands before in February 1939 the government made serious efforts to plug all the loopholes. Protests (largely left-wing) against this decision were to no avail. Ostensibly the reason was the lack of work and housing in the Netherlands but fear of appearing partial against German policies must have played a part. In early 1939 Premier Colijn asked D. Cohen (a member of the Jewish Refugee Committee) whether he knew how a book by Konrad Heiden about the November Pogroms came to be translated into Dutch and was being printed in the Netherlands. Colijn thought that certain passages ought not to be printed. It would make the German government angry and conflicted with Dutch neutrality. Colijn knew that he had the support of his party and of many other clericals. The German treatment of the Jews was condemned but the decision to prevent more Jewish refugees from entering the Netherlands was wholeheartedly supported. Too many Jews caused a problem.

Being friendly toward Germany stemmed also from other considerations; it was the biggest trading partner for the Netherlands. In a period when hundreds of thousand were unemployed it was essential to remain on friendly footing with the one country that had a growing economy and room for foreign labour. Dutchmen in places of authority closed their eyes to the fact
that the German economy was becoming more and more a war economy. If the Germans could help ease the Dutch unemployment problem full advantage should be taken of this. Pressure was exerted from the Hague that municipalities cut off unemployment benefits of those refusing to accept the work offered in Germany. In spite of protests from municipalities and labour unions approximately 30,000 unemployed Dutchmen were forced to go to work in Germany between 1937 and 1939. 

As long as such a mentality existed, and as long as the national leaders remained blind to what was happening outside the Dutch borders, it was impossible to create a national sense of urgency about the poor defences. Public opinion (except in the left) was seldom aroused by anything that took place outside the Dutch borders. Newspapers reported the persecution of the Jews, the camps, the purges, the growing armies, etc., in a detached manner as befitted a nation holding itself aloof from European politics. Official neutrality came very close to isolationism and was experienced that way in the daily lives of the people. The three clerical parties did not have yearly party congresses or leadership conventions where the rank and file had a chance to discuss party policies and programs. Local election committees allowed a little public participation but most matters were dealt with by party officials. The stimulus had to come from above. This was certainly the case when it concerned such matters as defence which was closely connected with foreign policy—an area of very limited interest for most Dutch people.
Being caught in a particular thought pattern was not the sole prerogative of the Dutch; many politicians and intellectuals in Europe and America had the same malady. Many Dutch intellectuals were concerned with the proliferation of parties and the consequent possibility that the democratic system would collapse; they were not worried about the lack of defence measures. The apparent success of fascist parties and other authority-preaching groups in the Netherlands was seen as a greater threat than the ambitions of Germany. In 1936 Professor A.C.J. Jitta analyzed the Dutch national character and came to the conclusion that the Dutch were phlegmatic, religious, freedom loving, peace loving, and international minded, but he said nothing about the need of safeguarding the nation to ensure that freedom would not be taken away. Jitta's judgement did not differ greatly from that reached one year earlier by the well known historian J. Huizinga who had accentuated the burgher mentality and unheroic life style which resulted in a dislike for the military and interest in trade and commerce. Huizinga did not conclude that efforts should be made to ensure national safety. On December 14 and 15, 1939 speeches were given at Leiden University by three well known academics from three Dutch universities. They dealt with the values held by the Dutch people, the role the nation should play in the commonwealth of peoples, and the part each Dutchman could have in this. From 1914 to 1918 the Netherlands had only one thought, "How do we stay out of it?" During that time, "neutrality was a completely passive, negative concept." But now the neutral nations, foremost among them the Netherlands, were actively searching to establish a permanent peace.
The academics all spoke as if neutrality was a one-sided position which could only be changed by the Netherlands. Students were not warned to prepare to fight for their country because the danger was imminent. There is not one word about a possible invasion in any of the three speeches. The most ironic part about the lectures is that the speakers clearly recognized what had been wanting in the Dutch attitude towards neutrality from 1914 to 1918 without realizing that exactly the same attitude still persisted in 1939, and in fact, that they themselves shared this attitude. It is not surprising that none of the speakers took issue with Premier de Geer's speech of November 19, 1939:

It has come to the attention of the government that in the past few days rumours have circulated that a great danger threatens our country, and that these rumours have caused unrest in many people. I just want to tell you that there is no reason for this at all...

Continuing the Premier used the example of the First World War; many had then also been afraid that the war would involve them, but that fear had proved groundless. "One should view the situation as not being any different now." 97

De Geer's view of the international situation did not differ from his predecessor. Colijn had reassured the nation in 1938 that there was nothing to worry about and that people should not let their vacations be spoiled by international events. 98 In April 1939 Colijn declared in a radio speech: 99

...there is no reason at all to be concerned. Of course we carefully watch the world situation, but that is very different from fearing for our immediate safety. For such fear--I repeat it--I do not see any reason.

That such political and intellectual leadership did not prepare the nation for a fight for life and death speaks for itself.
7. Conclusion

The question posed at the start of this chapter has been answered as completely as space permits. During the twenties the antimilitarists were strong enough to force drastic reductions in defence spending but were not strong enough to abolish the armed forces. After 1933 their strength declined. The Roman Catholics supported the Fleet Law in 1930, the Liberal Democrats began to hedge their antimilitaristic standpoint in 1934 and discarded it in 1936. The Social Democrats followed one year later. However, it has been shown that not everyone in these parties changed their view and that there were many religious and middle class antimilitarist or radical-pacifist groups active until 1940. The continuing activities of these groups kept the antimilitaristic sentiment alive and, as will be seen, helped to undermine the morale in the army.

After 1934 these groups were not strong enough to defeat legislation in parliament; consequently the government could have increased the defence forces had it wanted to do so. But in a less tangible way the antimilitarists were partially responsible that so few improvements took place during the thirties. After more than a decade of propaganda, pressure and opposition, the Dutch military was a shadow of what it ought to have been in view of the independent position and geographic location of the country. But the exterior still resembled a military force. The men in authority had become used to the façade; they did not ask what was required to fill out the façade to an adequate whole. Public opinion did not prod them on. The pro defence groups were not seen as a core around
which the largest part of the nation could be mobilized to make the necessary sacrifices. Only the antimilitaristic voices were heard criticizing the little that was being done. Until the middle of the thirties these voices were much louder than the pro defence voices and they struck a responsive snare within many Dutch people.

Most Dutch people were opposed to the demand that the military be abolished, but they were equally loath to bring the financial and personal sacrifices to create a truly adequate force. Most of the reasons for this have been cited: an unwillingness to see danger; the demand that the budget remain balanced which precluded large military expenditures; a belief that others would respect traditional Dutch neutrality; and an insistence that military projects not be used as work programs for the unemployed. When the deterioration of the international situation could no longer be ignored a few perfunctory measures were taken. But they were just that: perfunctory measures. The civilian leaders did not think that it would come to a war in the Netherlands. The frequently repeated soothing public statements is proof of this. No all-out effort was required, only enough to be able to mobilize a reasonable force as had been done in 1914. It was a myopic vision and less than honest.

The government did not think of its responsibility towards the men it called into the service each year and would mobilize in time of danger. Their purpose was to defend the nation but they were not given the weapons, the training, the fortifications, or the support they deserved. If the government thought it never needed these forces, these men need not have
been trained; if the possibility existed (however remote it might be) that these men had to fight, they should have been given the tools to carry out the task. It was never considered to offer only token resistance (as Denmark did), or to offer none at all (Luxemburg). If the Dutch forces were meant to have a deterrent function, to make it very expensive for an enemy to invade the country, they should have been much better equipped and trained, and the fortifications and inundations should have been made as impregnable as possible.

That other countries in Europe were equally ill prepared for the German onslaught cannot be used as an excuse. Dutch leaders had decided on an independent course and they should have acted accordingly. Nor can the argument be used that the defence of the Netherlands was a Sisyphean task. The low lying, soft, with rivers and canals infested land was more suitable for defence against tanks and motorized infantry than any other country. The Germans proved this in 1944-1945 when for many months they kept the allies south of the major rivers.

It is not unfair to conclude that the Dutch leaders provided weak and inadequate leadership. Dutch antimilitarism lost ground as a result of the international situation, but it could have been reduced much more had the Dutch leaders asserted themselves. Since they neglected this, the morale and mentality of the armed forces were so poor that no fighting spirit existed. The subsequent defeat was the direct result of this. The training and conduct of the men prior to May 1940 had been an ominous admonition. But it had been ignored.
Chapter IX: The Armed Forces

1. Antimilitarism and Discipline, 1919-1933

A conscription army reflects all the vices and virtues of the society from which it is drawn. At best the particular function and organization of a military force will temper the national vices and enhance the national virtues. From the information thus far provided the conclusion can be drawn that the Dutch must have had an "un-military" armed force. This chapter will show that this conclusion is largely correct.

One-third of the conscripts were drawn from groups which opposed, to a greater or lesser degree, the existence of the Dutch armed forces. Another segment of the population viewed the military with a certain amount of fear and distaste. This barrack fear was more prevalent among older Roman Catholics, but the young had been warned their whole life about the dangers of atheism and Protestantism in the military. Of the remainder of Dutch society only a small percentage saw military service as an honourable duty. Most youths viewed it as an unpleasant, unavoidable necessity when they pulled a "bad" number. So many youths took advantage of the pre-training provision in the 1922 law that some changes had to be made.

Initially, one had to start pre-training before one knew whether one would be drafted. In 1922 this resulted in 12,683 youths taking pre-training, only half of whom were subsequently drafted. Military authorities found this a waste of instructors and the law was changed. One had to know that
one was drafted before starting pre-training. In 1930, 4,000 youths and in 1931 almost 5,000 took the pre-training option. Since the left viewed pre-training as more pernicious than serving 5-1/2 months, most of those taking pre-training and serving the subsequent six weeks in the regular forces belonged to the right. It meant that for four months each draft was all the more susceptible to antimilitaristic influences.

One reason antimilitarists fulminated so strongly against the Dutch military was that they saw soldiers everywhere—in part because they wanted to see them but also because of the historical development and geographic limitations of the Netherlands. Barracks were usually located in the center of towns and cities; training areas were few and the lack of space necessitated that most training took place in or near habitated areas. Soldiers were thus very visible: being marched to and from training areas; training near homes in meadows and orchards; walking through city streets in the evening; going home on weekends with public transportation. Men of older drafts talked about their next summer manoeuvres; their uniforms were always at home as a visible reminder that they were still soldiers. The examples can be multiplied.

The activities of the government and military authorities were at times so clumsy and inconsistent that they could easily be misconstrued. The "near revolution" of November 1918 had in many ways disastrous consequences. Civil and military authorities became overly sensitive towards all left-wing activity partly because of events in the Soviet Union, Germany and Hungary, and partly because the unrest and riots in more
than a dozen military camps in the Netherlands in 1918 had partially been instigated by antimilitaristic propaganda. Central Intelligence reports continued to grow; the list of "dangerous revolutionary elements", their addresses and occupations, was already 120 pages long in 1924 and the updated versions of 1925 and 1926 added 30 pages for each year. The immediate concern of the military leaders was to safeguard the "good" regiments from revolutionary influences. In the first few years after 1918 many long reports were compiled about the morale and mentality of the various units, the extent of the antimilitaristic influence in each, and their probable dependability. Each commander tried to have the "untrustworthy elements" transferred out of his unit. Since no one wanted these "elements" the situation usually remained as it was.

A careful study of the reports leaves the strong impression that the soldiers were not so much interested in revolutionary antimilitarism as in minimizing the discomforts during service time. Their complaints were mostly about the low pay, the poor quality of the food and barracks, and the decision to end free travel home on weekends. The latter was experienced by many as a severe injustice. As a result of these grievances military unions became more active. Certain officers saw this as an incipient move towards Soviet Soldier Councils and the fear of the left received another stimulus.

By about 1923 military commanders were reasonably certain that they need not fear a revolution from the army, but they were not at all certain that all units would follow orders to curb civilian unrest. The atmosphere in the camps was not
always what it ought to be and commanders were very afraid that reports of minor irregularities among the troops would leak out to left-wing or antimilitarist newspapers. That articles in these papers often brought an official investigation indicates not only that such papers were read, but also that they were taken seriously enough to warrant investigations. In 1924 military commanders could no longer keep the disciplinary troubles to themselves. A night long demonstration of more than 1,000 soldiers throwing stones at officers and refusing to return to their barracks reached all the newspapers. The immediate causes appear to have been the strict enforcement of dress regulations by the military police, leaky tents and heavy rainfall, and the slow payment of special family allowances. The riot was largely the work of four drafts on re-training exercises. Some of these units already received a bad name during the war; others came from Twente which had a strong antimilitarist tradition. Authorities also noted that the day before the riot there had been large antimilitaristic demonstrations in the major cities and this had affected the troops. Moreover, reports had been received that unknown men had made antimilitaristic speeches the evening before in Ede, the nearest town to the training area. A month later less serious incidents took place in Harderwijk. Other garrisons also reported minor disturbances of which one, in Amersfoort, is worth recounting because it shows the mentality of both civilians and soldiers. An unarmed patrol of one sergeant and two privates patrolled the city streets and were followed by a group of adolescent boys. When the patrol stopped a soldier
because his tunic was unbuttoned the boys began to beat up the sergeant. He called out to other soldiers walking in the street to assist his patrol but they quickly moved out of sight without helping.\textsuperscript{11}

That teenage boys dared to beat up a sergeant says a great deal about the contempt for the military; the unwillingness of passing soldiers to aid a man wearing the same uniform was indicative of the lack of \textit{esprit de corps}.

Minor disturbances in 1925 and major ones in 1926\textsuperscript{12} were still partially caused by complaints about food and housing but were also linked to antimilitaristic propaganda. A big Social Democratic demonstration in the Hague and antimilitaristic speeches in taverns in the evening brought disturbances to Ede the following day.\textsuperscript{13} In Assen troops sang the "Internationale" and passed reprints around from \textit{De Tribune}, while the cry "workers and soldiers unite" was heard frequently.\textsuperscript{14} The Central Intelligence was only able to discover a few of the ringleaders behind the disturbances. Perhaps as compensation it sent countless reports to the officers about antimilitaristic congresses and meetings,\textsuperscript{15} but this hardly helped local commanders.

Little support was received from the government. The minister of war sent a letter to all corps commanders warning them that certain publishers of antimilitaristic material were mailing their brochures directly to soldiers. Such material should be intercepted, the addressee should be made to send it back and if he refused it must be confiscated.\textsuperscript{16} The following year (1926) the minister ordered that all confiscated material be sent to him. If it proved seditious he could
prosecute, but only if the item had been printed less than one year ago. After that time limit had passed nothing could be done.\(^\text{17}\) Nothing was said in either letter about taking action against persons receiving such literature.

In a letter to the Council of Military Chaplains the minister admitted that he was virtually helpless to stop the eroding power of antimilitaristic literature. The laws were insufficient, man power was in short supply, and an individual could bring into the barracks what he wished.\(^\text{18}\)

In earlier correspondence with the chaplains the minister had agreed to put a Remonstrant church in Rotterdam out of bounds for sailors because the pastor of the church preached anti-military sermons. Care should be taken, however, that no sailor belonging to that church was barred from entering because the law stated that each individual was allowed to attend his own church.\(^\text{19}\)

That any matter touching upon religion had to be handled very carefully was recognized by all officers. The commander of Den Helder asked the minister what he should do with two pastors belonging to Church and Peace who openly preached anti-military sermons and also gave religious instructions to some of the officer cadets. The officer thought that the parents of the cadets ought to be informed so that they could convince the boys to seek other religious council.\(^\text{20}\)

It is important to note the hesitant and conciliatory attitude of civilian and military authorities towards antimilitarism and the resulting lack of discipline. They feared that strong methods would cause a public outcry and only
exacerbate the situation. The Commander Field Army instructed
the military police to be less strict about the way soldiers
were dressed because it caused less trouble. Overly strict
discipline must be avoided since Dutch conscripts did not
accept Prussian drill tactics. The minister of war could
think of no other antidote to the anti-military propaganda
than special instruction emphasizing the preventive role of
the Dutch mobilization from 1914 to 1918.

In marked contrast to this timid attitude was the effect of
a little article in De Nieuwe Koers which charged that disci-
pline and deportment had been very bad during the 1929 summer
manoeuvres and that three men had died because of army negli-
gence. The number of reports, statements, and investigations
resulting from this one article fill a thick dossier.

The dwindling number of officers were kept busy writing
reports and conducting investigations sparked by such news-
paper reports. In addition they were ordered to take special
safety precautions, mount extra guards, etc., to ensure that
revolutionary elements could not steal small arms and ammu-
nition. The Commander Field Army and the division commanders
personally checked and commented upon the reports about the
measures that were being taken. One brigade commander was
moved to write that his troops were already insufficiently
trained and that all these guards made it impossible to com-
plete their training. The summer and winter drafts only served
5-1/2 months each, who was he to use for guard duty in the
remaining month? Many officers felt the same way. An added
burden were the many Central Intelligence reports tabulating
the latest antimilitaristic publications, relating what the last congress had decided, and listing the places where meetings were scheduled. If the meetings were close to a garrison town (and they frequently were) military police were frequently dispatched to the building to prevent soldiers from attending.  

Another problem for the officers was the radio. Around 1930 most military canteens must have had a radio installed because the first reports all date from this year. The minister tried to get an Order in Council prohibiting the VARA from sending out antimilitaristic messages. Apparently this failed because he later gave camp and depot commanders authority to shut off the radio if an antimilitaristic program was sent out. The VARA was the big culprit because it interjected anecdotes about the military into its regular, popular music programs. The anecdotes either made the military look ridiculous, or dealt with some alleged injustice towards a certain soldier or sailor. Quite a few officers thankfully reported that they had used the minister's fiat to ban all VARA programs.  

The new decade brought other measures against antimilitaristic propaganda. In 1931 Minister of Defence Deckers decreed that Het Volk no longer be sold on newspaper stands in the canteens because the paper urged unilateral disarmament. Soldiers could still buy the paper on the street and bring it into the barracks with them. The following year officers could forbid this if a particular issue of the paper (or any other paper) carried an antimilitaristic article or was judged to be undermining discipline. In 1932 all civilians working on military bases (and who therefore were civil servants) were
to be fired immediately if they openly or secretly spoke of disobeying the lawful authorities. No solution was found to stop material coming through the mail in plain, sealed envelopes. Mail would have to be opened and there was no law to cover such censorship. Since railroad stations and trains were favourite places for selling antimilitaristic material, the Commander Field Army ordered police in civilian clothes on the most frequently used trains so that all persons selling such material or using seditious language could be charged. Camp commanders had to send in the time, place, and date of the trains most commonly used by conscripts going home on weekends. Police was also placed on the special trains transferring men to and from their summer manoeuvres.

All these measures were too little and too late, did not touch upon the fundamental problem, and could in many instances be easily misconstrued. Het Volk had been advocating unilateral disarmament for one decade; to prohibit it in 1931 was seen by Social Democratic conscripts as another discriminatory act against their party. Similar feelings were created by forbidding VARA programs. All soldiers were aware that their uniforms were uncomfortable and looked very old fashioned, something which was often commented upon, also in military publications. The men knew that their weapons were out-of-date, their barracks worn out, and their other equipment near obsolescence. They also realized that their training was inadequate and that it would remain so as long as 19,500 men were trained in two drafts with each draft only complete for its final six weeks.
The men were also very much aware that the country discarded them after they had completed their tour of duty.

The privately funded National Association to Aid Conscripts (see p. 53) had to help an increasing number of soldiers with decreasing funds. The biggest complaint was that employers used the draft as an excuse to get rid of their less desirable workers, or hired another because the position needed to be filled and they did not want to discard their new man in favour of the old one on his return. Most youths had strong ties with their own area and they did not cherish the thought of going to another place to look for work. With the beginning of the depression the loss of one's job became much more serious because new ones were not obtainable. The Association wrote many letters to the government pointing out that this made the draft increasingly unpopular. In 1930 more than 600 departing conscripts requested aid from the Association, but only a few could be helped. In some instances governmental departments refused to re-hire their old workers. An inquiry in 1932 among 700 employers showed that only 9% would definitely re-hire their employees after their tour of duty, 26% would "perhaps" re-hire them, and the remainder would not do so or refused to answer the question. Antimilitarists had no trouble pointing out that military service meant being used by the state and thereafter being carelessly discarded.

Military unions had a different problem. They represented the interests of the (largely) professional soldiers and fought a retreating battle against the deterioration of their positions. In the early thirties the army had twenty-one unions varying
from NCO unions to Armourers and Swordmakers, Shoemakers, and Military Tailors. 32 Apart from the occupational division there were the customary Dutch blocs. "Our Interest" (Ons Belang) was the largest and oldest NCO union; it was "neutral". Shortly after its formation the Roman Catholics and Protestants started their own organizations. The left was not represented because its organizations had been forbidden during the war and "Our Interest" had been able to absorb the relatively few professional NCOs who were socialists. The navy did not have any socialist unions either but several socialists held executive positions in some naval unions.

"Our Interest", with a membership of 5,110 in 1921 and 2,937 in 1933, 33 fought against the diminishing number of professionals in the army, opposed the reductions in pay and pensions, and wanted to end the practice of promotion without pay. It was unfair to the individual, and it prevented real promotion and the necessary "flow through" of personnel. In 1929 there were 1,000 warrant-officers getting the pay of their previous rank; three years later 53% of all senior army NCOs were still in this situation. 34

From 1922 on the unions and the government met in "organized consultation" (georganiseerd overleg). At these meetings representatives from the unions and the defence department met to discuss duties and functions of the many specialists the unions represented. Beneficial agreements for both sides were often reached. From 1922 to 1940 the authorities and the unions met 116 times in "organized consultations". 35 In 1931 the Second Chamber accepted the "military civil servants law", 
something the unions had long fought for. It made military personnel civil servants, with special provisions for discipline and other military matters, and as such equal to "civilian" civil servants. It had been hoped that this law would give parity with others working for the government but the reaction to the 1933 mutiny prevented this expected development.

Until the mutiny the unions were tolerated as long as they stayed within their approved statutes and did not offer criticism of the over-all running of the army. "Our Interest" had more than once received a reprimand because its criticism was too severe or widespread, but its weekly newspaper, Algemeen Militair Weekblad (General Military Weekly), was never forbidden. The same was true for the naval unions even though some of them were more critical and aggressive than Our Interest.

Contemporaries had no difficulty finding fault with the Dutch armed forces. Officers in active service, using pseudonyms, wrote sarcastic brochures about the uselessness of maintaining such a force. After a public debate between an officer and a Social Democrat about unilateral disarmament a group of officers at the school for reserve officers in Kampen sent a congratulatory telegram to the Social Democratic Workers Party stating they agreed with the party's standpoint. In 1927 a retired captain wrote a series of scathing articles about the army in the widely read newspaper De Telegraaf. In the Militaire Spectator (Military Spectator), the authoritative military monthly, each issue had articles about the deteriorating conditions, the lack of discipline, the lack-luster performance of officers and NCOs, the poor relationship
between officers and men, and officers and NCOs. During ma-
noeuvres there were never enough men for all reserve officers
to have their own command. This meant that many did not gain
the experience they so desperately needed and so many officers
were standing around with nothing to do but criticize that no
one wanted to take any initiative or responsibility. 40

Officers pointed out that the new military law book,
proposed in 1903 and finally introduced in 1923, was out-of-
date and inadequate. A man could remain absent without leave
for up to twenty days and receive a ten guilder fine or ten
days detention. Ten guilders represented several weeks pay for
the poor conscript so that he had to serve his detention. For
those who received money from home, it was easy to pay the fine
and they enjoyed twenty days leave without fear of the con-
sequences. 41 The hopelessness of training soldiers in two
drafts with one-third reporting for the final six weeks was
repeatedly mentioned. The quantitative shortage of 19,500 men
to fill all functions in a modern army was also clearly
demonstrated. 42

Qualitatively the army fell short in all respects. One
officer reported that discipline was lax, there was no neatness
in the barracks, men were late reporting for duty, there was
no firing discipline on the rifle range, march training was
deficient as was the knowledge of gasmasks while there was no
awareness of the dangers from air attacks. Dress and deportment
were casual or sloppy and the men were always "bitching and
complaining." 43
This judgement was substantiated in a four page letter by the Commander Field Army to his division commanders. During manoeuvres he had observed that soldiers who were supposedly carrying out an attack did not take cover but stood around talking. Another group calmly walked in front of one of their own machine guns giving "covering fire". When the umpire explained that this could not be done the men continued doing so as if they had not heard him. Troops were hours late at a certain point because the men did not feel like marching quickly. Officers did nothing to correct these matters; they spoke a few words, moved away and ignored the men, or they pretended that they saw nothing.44

For the majority of conscripts all the weighty articles and reports were of no importance. They did not like military life and while they were in it wanted to do as little and leave it as quickly as possible. Their view of the whole system was nicely encapsuled in one of the most popular soldier's songs of the time:45

He who has killed his father
And has poisoned his mother
Is still much too good
For the life of a soldier.

A thief and a murderer
Are flung into a cell
But at least at the proper time
They get bread and a hot meal!

But once will come the time
That we will leave this mess
Damned be the regiment
But never the soldiers.

Nineteen thirty-three was a momentous year in Europe but for the Dutch the events in Germany were overshadowed by the Zeven Provincien affair. The measures that were taken were not designed to meet the new situation in Europe but to prevent a repetition of the breakdown of law and order as a result of revolutionary activity and antimilitaristic propaganda. The struggle between antimilitarists and the military intensified but the latter were still not certain how their encounter should be organized.

Reports that literature had been distributed in military barracks and pasted on walls urging soldiers to follow the example of the mutineers prompted the Commander Field Army to order that dependable troops be kept available at all times on one hour notice. He was also very upset because from two reliable sources he had heard that certain officers had discussed the mutiny and had decided that if it happened in a military compound they had no choice but to give themselves up, and if forced, to aid the mutineers. Local commanders were instructed to instil other thoughts into their officers. \(^{46}\) Reports about the safety precautions are noteworthy because all watches were placed under professional officers and NCOs. Nevertheless, the Second Field Artillery Regiment reported that the over-all attitude of the NCOs was not good. They grudgingly accepted the reduction in wages—which had been the cause of the mutiny—but thought them grossly unfair. \(^{47}\)
Since seditious pamphlets kept appearing a special committee was set up to design proper precautionary measures but the complex security arrangements caused endless complaints. Many officers pointed out that regular training was now impossible because all professional personnel was used for security. One man made the excellent observation that handing all responsibility to the professionals was not likely to win the trust of the conscripts; they felt themselves used as pawns who were good enough to fight and die but not to be trusted.

Another security measure was a Declaration of Loyalty to the Queen and the lawful authorities which all professional NCOs had to sign. They declared that they did not belong to, or would aid any group or organization whose activities were contrary to the duties of a soldier. The law forbidding membership in left-wing and certain fascist organizations had already been passed so that there could be no misunderstanding. Extreme attentiveness was ordered for supervisory officers; if a man hesitated before signing the declaration he ought to be questioned; if he refused to sign, his motives must be brought to light. Apparently most NCOs signed the document; some refused to give up their membership in a forbidden organization while others chose the army. The latter had to undergo an investigation to ensure they really had terminated their membership.

All this meant considerable work for the (too) few officers. Reports about searches for seditious documents and the use of "undercover" soldiers to find the revolutionary culprits took much time. The results were meager while the effort was great.
That all this precautionary work was basically negative was recognized to a certain degree. It was self-evident that a loyal dedicated army could not seriously be damaged by antimilitaristic or revolutionary propaganda. Since this was not the case it was finally decided that some counter propaganda should be made. Conscripts would henceforth be told why they were being trained and what was expected of them. The Commander Field Army instructed his division and brigade commanders that soldiers be taught *esprit de corps*, regimental histories, and the achievements of the Dutch armies in the past. All negative feelings were to be rooted out; pride, honour, the Royal House, and comradeship were to be emphasized and their necessity clearly shown. The importance of the individual soldier was to be accentuated as well as the natural defences—rivers, canals, low lying *polders*, etc.—which helped to make a successful defence possible.

Officers threw themselves onto the new task with enthusiasm. Regimental histories were written with rapid speed but not always with great accuracy. Senior officers made critical comments about the sloppy writing, poor punctuation, the lack of attention to the Dutch efforts at Waterloo, etc. It was also suggested that a short excerpt be made of the important dates in the history of each regiment so that conscripts could memorize them and be tested.

Whether conscripts enjoyed memorizing dates is questionable. For the military exploits of the regiments the writers had to go back to the ten day campaign against Belgium in 1830 and the battle of Waterloo. Both were somewhat irrelevant because
more than one hundred years later men faced a very different world. That it was thought necessary in 1933 to start teaching the importance of the geography of the Netherlands for defence purposes says a great deal about the neglect of earlier years. From some of the reports submitted to headquarters it is clear that the "national education" (opvoeding in nationale zin) did not quite obtain the results the Commander Field Army had hoped.

The success of national education may be judged from a letter dated April 23, 1934 from the Commander Field Army to his division and brigade commanders. It had been brought to his attention that many conscripts requested their padres and priests to explain to them the following points:

a. The necessity of defending the fatherland.
b. The possibility thereof.
c. The moral and ethical foundation on which national defence is based.
d. Antimilitarism.
e. Militarism (in the sense of material preparedness beyond what was required and thus only for the glorification of the defence establishment).

Religious officers were not always able to answer satisfactorily and national education should therefore be continued with more determination. This was especially urgent since many conscripts never consulted the religious officers and these were the men who needed proper education more than the religious ones.

There was a great deal of correspondence about national education. Reports from the autumn of 1935 show that certain regiments had held no discussions on one pretext or another; others reported that the response from the men had only been "fair". Many of the officers who led the discussions proved quite well informed about sport and film stars but could say nothing about the economic situation in the world—a topic
very relevant to soldiers faced with massive unemployment when discharged. It was deemed unwise to send special officers around to hold lectures because the men refused to take part in discussions or to ask questions if they did not know the officer. Study groups should be set up so that officers could master the topics before approaching the men. In lectures it had frequently happened that officers had been confronted with antimilitaristic arguments and dogmas and that they had not been able to find proper rebuttals. This left a less than positive impression with the class. 55

National education died an inglorious death. In 1938, when service time had been increased to eleven months, there was some talk about starting it again but nothing was done. The project had been a failure.

Instilling esprit de corps into soldiers is impossible if they cannot be proud of something. Since uniforms, pay, equipment, weapons, and training all left much to be desired there was nothing to base it on except the desire to defend the Netherlands. And this desire was not present in all conscripts and the need of it was made to look remote by the frequent reassuring speeches of civilian leaders. How persuasive antimilitaristic propaganda had been, and how deeply it had penetrated into all segments of society was demonstrated by the questions religious soldiers asked their padres and priests. It can be safely surmised that non-religious conscripts were on the whole more imbued with these ideas.

The pay a conscript received hardly made him proud to serve his country. During the twenties he received 20 cents a day,
by 1934 this had been reduced to 18 cents and from 1936 to 1940 it was 17 cents. When one was given a specialist's training (chauffeur, sapper, etc.) a few cents extra were paid, and the same was true for conscripts trained for corporal or sergeant. Since this meant one had to serve longer, few conscripts found this an interesting alternative. From the money a soldier received, a few cents were detracted for barracks damages. If the guilty party could not be found the damages were paid out of this pot. For a while so-called "act of God" damages (a storm breaking a window, etc.) were also paid for by the soldiers. In addition, conscripts usually paid a few cents a week into a "potato peeling fund" so that a local woman could be hired to peel the potatoes—a much disliked job which was part of the daily duty of a conscript. The financial side of military life enticed very few young men.

The attempt to instil a certain measure of national pride in conscripts through national education was in sharp contrast to the treatment of the military unions. It can be made a point of discussion that there should be no unions in military forces, but in the Netherlands they had existed for more than thirty years and they had become an accepted part of the military system. Much of the trust built up through the "organized consultations" was destroyed through panicky government action. Much later a contemporary was to write bitterly, "'Our Interest' received bigger wounds in 1933 than in five years of war and occupation." This was an exaggeration perhaps, but still indicative of the way the professional NCOs viewed the matter.
After the mutiny voices were raised to do away with all military unions. In the end this was not done, but they were drastically curtailed. The naval unions had to fire their civilian executives and stop publishing their newspapers. This reduced the unions' effectiveness a great deal. It was difficult for a part-time executive of naval personnel, who could themselves be sent out to sea at any time, to maintain contact with sailors who had lengthy tours of duty in Indonesia and the Dutch West Indies. The statutes of both the naval and army unions were redrawn and the spheres of influence and authority reduced. In the army unions the old executives were also forced to step down, retired soldiers could no longer belong to the unions, and members had to attend all union meetings in uniform. This reduced attendance considerably because the meetings were held in the evening and, the anti-military mentality of a large segment of our population encouraged no one to walk around in uniform if it was not absolutely necessary.

The introduction of the capitulantensteinelsel further hurt the NCO unions because the status of about 1,600 NCOs was changed to short-term professionals after which time they were expected to take a position in the civil service.

When the draft was increased and lengthened in 1938 there suddenly was a shortage of 1,586 NCOs while in the previous twelve years 2,000 had been pushed out of the army (partly under pressure from the antimilitarists, partly as an austerity measure) before their retirement age. The NCOs, who form the backbone of every army, showed their unhappiness in their work.
Officers were equally pessimistic about their profession and the general situation. The Association of Reserve Officers compiled a report wherein they suggested that, if reductions were indeed imperative for financial reasons, a major reorganization should take place. Instead of cutting wages and pensions and reducing the number of professionals, all the small garrisons should be done away with and a small, well equipped and properly trained force be retained. The Association of Professional Officers was very worried about the frequent reductions in pay and pensions and spoke a great deal about the defeatist anti-military mentality in the country. The Social Democrats, the Youth Peace Action, and Church and Peace were seen as insidious forces undermining the national will to resist outside aggression. They were indirectly responsible for the conditions in the officer corps which made so many leave because they saw no future in it.

All the military publications in the middle of the decade were critical of the way things were going. They pointed out that the number of professionals had reached a ridiculously low point, that pay and pensions were totally inadequate, that economic and military preparations were negligible when compared to neighbouring countries, that the national mentality (although somewhat better than during the twenties) was far from what it ought to be, and that many antimilitaristic groups were still sowing their defeatist propaganda.

Antimilitarism remained a major concern. The complex arrangements of who was forbidden to belong to which organization caused endless correspondence, especially after the
capitulantenstelsel was started in 1936 because a number of conscript NCOs became short-term professionals but did not always divest themselves of their membership in forbidden organizations. Precautionary measures were taken so that a mobilization could not be disrupted by Social Democrat led strikes, by communist propaganda, or by efforts of the Youth Peace Action or similar organizations implementing national passive resistance. Lengthy Central Intelligence reports kept the fear alive that all this might occur. The discovery of an antimilitaristic brochure still resulted in searches, investigations and reports.

Little or no distinction was made whether the material came from the communists, Church and Peace, or the Union of Soldiers and Civilians for Peace. The Central Intelligence informed the army that Church and Peace wrote parents of draft age boys, and that Youth Peace Action urged people in areas which would not be defended not to pay their taxes, all of which could hardly be prevented by the military authorities. Long reports about antimilitaristic meetings and congresses only directed attention away from the dangers outside the borders. For officers not up to date on Dutch political developments the reports could easily leave the impression that the great antimilitarist bloc was still intact. Such a belief was strengthened by a letter from the minister of defence in December 1938 explaining that the Social Democrats' change of policy and the consequent lifting of the restrictions for civil servants in the defence department did not change the rule about publications and radio programs. Local commanders must continue to
bar newspapers and VARA programs wherein "the government or military was ridiculed or subjected to unreasonable criticism."

Seven months later, answering an inquiry from a regimental commander, the minister decreed that the *Utrechtse Volksblad* (Utrecht People's Daily)—a regional edition of *Het Volk*—was not to be sold in military canteens. The minister referred to his order of May 8, 1939 which stated that no paper from the Social Democratic press was to be sold in military canteens.  

Such an attitude maintained the schism between officers on the one hand and a large segment of conscripts on the other. The decree, and the prompt way it was carried out, indicated that the rift between right and left was not narrowing very much while at this time it was certainly in the best interest of all groups to form a united front against outside aggression.

Fear of "revolutionary elements" and to a much smaller degree of "fascist elements" was kept alive by unit commanders. The *Jager* and *Grenadier* Regiments kept requesting that such men be transferred out of their units.  

According to one list the 1934 draft and 1935 winter draft had 654 men of "revolutionary tendencies" serving in the twenty-two infantry regiments.  

When these drafts were mobilized it was assumed that these men, and those of other drafts, had not changed. To this number must be added the ones partial to fascist ideas, and the many who had lived, or had family living, in Germany. In November 1939 a list of several hundred names was circulated and means were sought to transfer them to non-vital positions.  

It was also a problem to find "safe" civilian homes to billet soldiers. Known left-wing civilians
were not exempted from quartering soldiers but if it was to be for a lengthy duration other quarters should be found. Similar caution was urged when soldiers entered civilian homes (at the occupant's request) for a friendly chat, an evening with a family, etc. 75

The careful "protection" of soldiers did not extend to all areas. As the depression deepened employers not only used the draft but also the three week summer manoeuvres as a convenient excuse not to take back their employees. The Association to Aid Conscripts was powerless to stop this and was too weak financially to assist all those who requested aid. Company and battalion commanders wrote letters to former employers of soon to be discharged soldiers requesting that they please take them back. 76 It might well be asked whether it was impossible to pass a law that men had to be given their old position back after their tour of duty, or that the government provide some financial support. Such a law would have had more positive result than all the precautionary measures against "bad influences".

By 1938 the demoralization and indifference were visible in all ranks of the army. From 1931 to 1936 no large scale manoeuvres were held because of the cost involved and because no proper preparations were possible since officers were burdened with other tasks. 77 A newspaper picture showing a group of graduate reserve officers receiving their regimental commission revealed them fiddling with their belts, taking off their gloves, slouching, etc., just before and just after they took their oath. In the resulting correspondence about this
photograph various senior officers admitted that the mentality of young officers was not good; they were indifferent and weak. A picture of a similar ceremony two years later (in 1937) showed the same slack postures so that in this respect nothing had changed. 78

One observer noted in September 1938 79 that the troubles and riots of the twenties were a thing of the past, but that the laxness in discipline was very noticeable. Many commanders sent out "a corporal and two men" to ensure their orders were carried out. There was a great propensity to "interpret" orders, to carry them out as one saw fit at one's own speed. In part this happened because few officers dared to give orders; they suggested, they "eased the men into it" as if afraid that the unrest and antimilitaristic mentality would return. But as a result many things were not done, or were half done, or were done more slowly than they ought to have been.

That the men did not allow themselves to be "pushed" was demonstrated by one regiment where 164 men reported sick one morning, one company was purposely dressed in the wrong clothing, and another company was not ready— all because they considered the training too heavy. 80

Reporting sick is a well known way of avoiding work in any army but was used especially frequently in the Netherlands. Nearly half the men reported sick at least once while in the army. The average days sick in bed in the military was eight, and the total number of sick days per year usually exceeded the 100,000. In certain garrisons, a draft serving 5-1/2 months sometimes accounted for more sick reports than the
number of men in the draft, and this did not include the persons caught faking and returned to duty. Of those reporting sick between 12 and 37 per cent were sent on to a hospital for further examination but were sent back because nothing could be found. This meant that at least most of the morning had been lost and that one did not have to take part in regular training. 81

High ranking officers did not impress Dutch soldiers and did not make them change their lackadaisical working methods. During an inspection tour the Commander Field Army noted that the crew of a heavy machine gun put the weapon in position in a slow, sloppy manner with much casual talk. A group of infantrymen could not put a light machine gun together. Both groups had had eleven months training. Artillerists had not bothered to keep harnesses and rigging in good condition. The cleanliness of great-coats, bandoliers, and other items left much to be desired. Saluting was in all cases slow and sloppy. When senior officers consulted each other, groups of soldiers formed within listening distance and watched curiously. When soldiers, and sometimes NCOs were called, they approached quite leisurely while many did not answer with "sir". None of the regular officers corrected these shortcomings; they appeared to find it quite normal. Nor were they surprised when several soldiers with eleven months training could not recognize a general. 82 More examples could be given. The mobilization in August 1939 offered only a brief time to ameliorate the defensive capabilities of the Netherlands.
3. Mobilization: Men and Material

The mobilization created a military force of approximately 300,000 men led by 1,485 professional and 10,429 reserve officers, 5,000 professional NCOs and a larger number of conscripted ones. There were not more than 15 professional officers in a regiment of 4,000 and they were often promoted several grades to a rank for which they were not trained. Reserve officers lacked practical experience while the conscripted NCOs had only received nine months training and slightly longer re-training periods than the men. Only the 1938 and 1939 drafts had received eleven months basic training. So many administrative changes had taken place since 1925 that the mobilized battalions had men from all age groups and from all parts of the country. This prevented the formation of first and second line battalions with the younger formations handling the more arduous and physically more demanding tasks. It also prevented regional solidarity within units based on familiarity of dialect, habits, and in certain instances religion. An *esprit de corps* was thus difficult to create.

This mobilized army had only trained in battalion size formations for fourteen days or so in the previous years. Between 1931 and 1940 two manoeuvres were held "when with great difficulty one division had been put together," and then only for two or three days.

Professional officers and NCOs were generally well trained and up to date but they were too old. Reserve officers had received their commission because they had a five-year high school diploma or equivalent, which meant they came largely
from middle class families. Such men often knew little, and cared less, about the mentality of their largely working class conscript soldiers. 86

It is difficult to generalize about the common soldier; many documents have been destroyed and little was written by them during and after the war. A certain percentage realized the seriousness of the situation and tried to prepare themselves as well as they could for the war they expected. But the majority would not or could not see the importance of the mobilization and tried to get through it with as little exertion as possible. The oldest draft was from 1925; 87 the men might have lost some of the antimilitarism they displayed in those years but a strong residue remained. The feeling was increased because they served far from wives and children while thousands of single, often unemployed, youths were idling away their time. The majority did not show a principled opposition—all the precautionary measures had been in vain—but the mood of indifference was widespread. The often repeated antimilitaristic statement that the country could not be defended took on more substance when the paucity of weapons and equipment was compared to what the Germans displayed in Poland. For some men this created an inferiority complex; others only tried to make life easy for themselves by simulating illness, faking incomprehension or ignorance in order to avoid arduous or unpleasant tasks. Persons in authority were either ignored or spoken to in near-insubordination. 88 Such deportment was made easier because discipline was not enforced uniformly and punishment came long after the misdemeanor because of the shortage of courts martial. 89
Everyone knew that they had been mobilized to defend the country, but why it was worth defending was not explained. National education was not restarted; serious discussions or instructions about the underlying causes of the war were not attempted. Instead, a great deal of entertainment was provided by the specially created "O and O" organization. 90

The foregoing paragraph should not leave the impression that the whole Dutch army was spending its days in idleness. This was not the case. But there were too many individuals who conducted themselves as outlined and this made it very difficult for those who wanted to work because there was so much to do, so little to do it with, and such a short time to do it in.

The deficiencies in field training alone were most glaring. Each year a sizeable report was compiled about the proficiency of the units who had completed their re-training that summer. Special skills and general ability were listed separately and very few units obtained an "excellent" in either category. Most of the battalions and companies were given a "sufficient" or "barely sufficient" while "insufficient" also appears often in the reports. When the mobilization was called a very large percentage of the troops was thus mediocre and needed a period of intensive training. But this could not be made too arduous or the troops objected. Progress was thus discouragingly slow, also because the army had to spend most of its time building fortifications and defensive lines. 91

In October 1939, six weeks after the mobilization, senior officers noted that discipline, dress, saluting and training left much to be desired. When constructing defensive positions
much procrastination took place while major blunders were made. Earthen defence works were finished perpendicular on the enemy side so that they were very visible and would collapse from the tremors of nearby explosions. In many cases shelters were built with the entrances wholly or partially to the enemy side.

By February 1940 there was still no improvement. During the manoeuvres of II Division the orders were such that the attack would have failed. The orders were corrected but the lack of strict adherence to them, and the lack of initiative meant that the attack still failed. Also, certain fundamental mistakes were made: guns were placed in positions from which it was impossible to fire; others were not made ready to fire; some were placed in the middle of infantry forming-up areas. In IV Division matters were the same. The men walked through their attack; they immediately placed their rifles on the ground or against trees when halted; they attacked forward without bothering about the flanking fire they received. Taking out strong positions and wiping out machine gun nests were not done at all. Machine gunners did not know how to "clear" an area before an infantry attack. It was not unusual for men to stop in the middle of an attack to buy fruit from a sutler. General Reynders discovered on an inspection tour that soldiers did not know him, nor recognize his rank. One soldier addressed him as "Lieutenant-Colonel"; when the mistake was pointed out the insouciant retort was, "Oh, is that what a general looks like?"

General Winkelman, who became Chief of the Armed Forces in February 1940 found a similar casual and careless attitude
during his surprise inspections. A few examples will suffice. On April 14 the men in a machine gun casemate all sat warmly inside; the gun embrasures were pushed full with hay and straw to keep the draught out; no guards had been posted. At another post near the German border, the general ordered the guard near a moveable road barricade to sound the alarm. The detachment calmly came out of its trenches, slowly erected the barricade (which did not work properly), but did not take cover or give fire protection. When the general pointed out that German troops could have passed the roadblock before it was closed the two officers in charge politely remarked that it was not likely that this would ever happen. Both inspections took place a few days after the invasion of Denmark and Norway (and less than three weeks before the invasion of the Netherlands). 97

Such negligence might not have been present everywhere but the carelessness and indifference were widespread enough that the Germans had no difficulty inspecting nearly all the Dutch defensive lines. 98 Barring a few exceptions the Germans were not impressed; only the many water hindrances could pose a problem if all the bridges were blown on time. The fighting quality of the Dutch forces hardly inspired them with awe.

The Netherlands did not possess one tank and only 26 armoured cars in May 1940; the General Staff had repeatedly requested them both but nothing had been done. 99 The age and quality of rifles and artillery have been mentioned in Chapter VIII. A separate Air Defence Command was only created in November 1938 even though air defence in a small, flat, nearly tree-less country
was of paramount importance.

Air Defence Command possessed 125 planes of which 51 were modern fighters and 9 were modern bombers; the remainder was too old to be of much use. In early 1940 General Best of Air Defence Command was offered 36 modern fighter planes complete with cannons and ammunition from the American Curtiss factory. It was to be a "package deal" and the decision should be made quickly. General Best went to Minister of Defence Dijxhoorn who promised to think about it. Curtiss urged speed. Best went again to Dijxhoorn and urged acceptance. Dijxhoorn said he would talk to Premier de Geer. The two men eventually decided that 36 planes were too expensive but thought that 20 would be financially acceptable. This offer was sent to the Curtiss factory; lengthy correspondence followed; the Netherlands was invaded before an agreement was reached. Generals became somewhat despondent when faced with such myopia.

Anti-aircraft guns were also in short supply: 150 2cm, 42 4cm, and 81 7.5cm guns (which included the municipal/industrial pieces) were the only modern guns available. They were augmented by 425 M25 Spandau machine guns bought from the Germans in 1918, converted to anti-aircraft use and completely worn out. There were a few other heavy guns in use but they were outdated. One hundred new 7.5cm guns, made in the Netherlands under license from Vickers, were sitting in storage when the war broke out because some vital parts had been made incorrectly and the head engineer, the only man capable of constructing it properly, had been ill. In late 1939 the army staff worked out that it needed 1,250 anti-aircraft guns: it had 285.
In May 1940 the Dutch navy had available in home waters: 1 cruiser, 1 destroyer, 9 torpedo boats, 5 gun boats, 6 submarines, a few mine sweepers and mine layers, and some river craft. Hardly any ships had anti-aircraft guns so that they were easy prey for German fighters.

The mobilized army had 30,000 horses, 12,000 trucks, and 1,600 cars, most of them requisitioned from the civilian population. The trucks were of many different makes and quality; maintenance was therefore slow and expensive. The horses were primarily for the artillery—except for a few modern pieces it was all horse-drawn. Instead of motorized infantry there were bicycle battalions. It was a cheap solution and not impractical in a hill-less country. The speed was about thrice as fast as marching, there were few mechanical breakdowns and no worries about fuel replenishing. But only light weapons could be carried and only a limited amount of ammunition for the light machine guns.

The "uniform problem" was never solved. During World War I the then Commander in Chief called them "ill fitting, rough and uncomfortable, and detracting from a soldierly bearing." Since 1918 they had been changed but still left much to be desired. Especially irritating were the high collar of the great-coats and the puttees. The latter had been adopted from the British, but instead of having them around the ankles and of soft, pliable material, the Dutch had them come up to the knee, and made them of cheap, stiff cotton. To keep them on they had to be tied so tightly it hindered the circulation. Many people complained about the uniforms, but nothing was done.
Packs were poorly designed, personal equipment was too heavy and cumbersome so that soldiers quickly felt uncomfortable. Canteen and mess kit were made of cheap tin with soldered seams; they could thus not be heated over a fire because the solder would melt.

During the first few months of the mobilization training was hampered because the quartermaster had assumed that each conscript would have a good pair of boots and proper underwear. This proved a fallacious assumption. The uniforms the soldiers had taken home after basic training had in many cases been used as work clothing and were badly worn. For many weeks men thus had to train in civilian clothes. Because of the shortage, others only received one uniform and thus had to put on their "civvies" or remain in the barracks when it had to be washed or repaired.

Defensive lines were non-existent or had been neglected and the troops had to spend their time digging. Until March 1940 four days each week were spent on this and two days on training; thereafter the priorities were reversed. There had never been time to practise line construction and even the professionals were without experience. Mistakes were made and much had to be built anew. The men disliked training but disliked digging more and progress was very slow. Steel and concrete were insufficiently available so that many points were not as strong as they ought to have been. An additional burden was the weather. From the middle of December until the middle of February freezing temperatures were registered nearly every day—an unusual occurrence in the Netherlands. It made
digging that much slower and much time was used cutting and chopping the ice on tank traps and the inundated areas. No authority dared to cancel the regular leaves, or the business, study, harvest, etc., leaves which were granted liberally and meant that units seldom were at full strength. Through the scarcity of ammunition, firing practices had to be curtailed and many soldiers and gunners did not get enough training.

Worst of all, however, was the morale and mentality of the army. Few believed that the Netherlands would get involved in a war or, if it did become involved, that there was much hope of success. Few soldiers dug, built, marched, trained, or practised field craft seriously; they did not believe that their lives would depend upon mastering these skills. They simply put in time, as so many had done when undergoing their basic training, in the hope that they would soon be able to leave this useless, dull, and dreary army life.

4. Defence Strategy and Personality Conflicts

What part of the Netherlands should be defended, and for how long, were fundamental questions; the inter-war governments did not have a long range vision in these important matters. In 1924 the minister of war decreed that a Dutch army of 300,000 men should be able to defend Fortress Holland for three months and that enough ammunition and provisions must be available for this period as well as food for the approximately three million civilians within the area. In later years this plan was either forgotten or it was subordinated to the austerity demands. During the thirties preparations were made to stockpile
food and fuel, an evacuation plan for civilians (and cattle) near defensive lines and inundated areas was worked out, alternative meeting sites for the government were sought, and provisions were made to remove and safely store national art treasures. But all these preparations took place in a vacuum because it had not been decided where the Dutch would halt the enemy's advance. It was assumed that the troops on the border would fight for a few days, a few more days resistance would take place behind the Yssel River and the Grebbe Line; thereafter all forces would withdraw behind the inundations of Fortress Holland. And then? The general supposition was that France and Great Britain would come to the rescue; but whether they would be able to do so, or whether this did not demand that the Dutch hold military talks with them, was not considered. The real assumption was that Germany would not invade. The Dutch army would mobilize, but only as a precaution—the way it had in 1914—and no one dared visualize a situation where the front line would run through the center of the country.

For Dutch staff officers the absence of clear guidelines meant an enormous amount of work. Until 1934 a so-called "neutrality position" was maintained which meant an all-round defence: the enemy would be he who first crossed the Dutch border. When General Reynders became Chief of Staff in 1934 he gradually changed the plan until it dealt only with an invasion from the east. He wanted an initial resistance along the Grebbe and Peel-Raam lines with a withdrawal to the Fortress Holland line for the final defence. He showed the plan to Premier Colijn who at the time was also Minister of Defence
and received full support. Colijn did not think the matter important enough to discuss it with the cabinet. The next Minister of Defence, J.J.C. van Dijk, later testified that he saw the plan only after repeatedly asking for it. Van Dijk knew that the Commander Field Army, General van Voorst tot Voorst, did not agree with the plan. But no changes were made and no discussions were held.

When de Geer became Premier he appointed A.Q.H. Dijxhoorn as his Minister of Defence. He was a Lt-Colonel attached to the Defence Department and served as liaison officer between it and the General Staff. Before making the appointment de Geer consulted General van Voorst tot Voorst who was not in favour of the appointment. General Reynders was not consulted even though he had worked more with Dijxhoorn and would have to work much more with him in the future. Reynders would have been less favourably inclined because he could not get along with Dijxhoorn at all. The three top men concerned with the defence of the nation thus had strategic differences and/or personality conflicts. Such was the situation when the mobilization was called and a Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces needed to be appointed.

There were only two realistic choices for the post: General Reynders or General van Voorst tot Voorst. But the latter was ineligible because there was no other officer capable of directing the field army. There were reservations about Reynders and Dijxhoorn explained them to the cabinet but he also admitted that there was no alternative. The cabinet decided "without any enthusiasm" to make the appointment.
Such a situation begged for difficulties and they were not long in materializing. The complex story falls outside the framework of this thesis and has in any event been thoroughly covered: first by the pamphlet polemic between Reynders and Dijxhoorn immediately after the war and thereafter by the official governmental investigation. There were three main points of disagreement between the General and the government: the declaration of martial law, the location of the defensive lines, and the creation of Mobilization Clubs.

General Reynders wanted martial law declared so that the military could censure all mail, detain persons found in or near defensive lines, and requisition land for building obstacles, prepare it for inundations, or clear it for fields of fire. The government was not willing to give such extensive powers to the military; a "gentlemen's agreement" between military and civilian authorities about partial martial law in certain areas frustrated both sides without accomplishing anything.

On September 9 the Queen, the Premier, the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and the Commander in Chief met to discuss defence strategy. It was agreed that in the event of an attack by a superior force the field army would not accept a major battle in the Grebbe line (wherein and behind which it was largely stationed) but would leave a rear guard and fall back on the Fortress Holland line. No instructions were given about the area south of the main rivers; one of the ministers had talked about a "symbolic defence" there.
Defence from the Fortress line—as had taken place in the Eighty Years War and in 1672 against the French—was rather incongruous in 1940. Eight of the eleven provinces would be given up to the enemy; Amsterdam and Utrecht would be well within range of enemy artillery. The line was strong because of its inundations but it had been neglected since 1918. Nearly all its strong points had to be rebuilt and/or modernized to meet the new standards of warfare. The water was held back on the defenders' side by dikes while the attacker would sit on high ground. The area was very low, the water table was one or two feet below ground level so that all strong points had to be built on the ground. The tree-less area was devoid of cover making it very difficult to protect against air attacks. The Grebbe line, on the other hand, was wooded and thus provided cover; it was higher and sandy so that the troops could dig many of the smaller trenches; it was further east so that a larger area was protected. Inundating the area in front of the Grebbe line was possible but it required more time to bring the water up to the desired level and near the Rhine at least one large pumping station needed to be built.

General Reynders ordered General van Voorst tot Voorst to prepare plans for a withdrawal of his four divisions behind the Fortress line in case of a major attack but to resist a small attack in the Grebbe line. But the latter general concentrated on making the Grebbe line as strong as possible because he did not think it possible to withdraw through the inundated area in front of the Fortress line. Withdrawal plans were not made. Until December the two generals worked on
two opposing plans. A further incongruence was that Reynders ordered III Army Corps to prepare the Peel-Raam line for defence. Many parts of this line were naturally strong because of low, peat bog areas but it was too long to be defended by one corps, and it ended abruptly at the Belgian border. The Belgian defences were along the Albert Canal (from Antwerp to Liege) so that a 30 kilometer long "hole" existed between the Belgian and the Dutch lines. The hapless situation was exacerbated by the Minister of Defence who held inspection trips on his own, found fault with many things, held separate discussions with the two generals, and balked at some of the requests for money for building concrete strong points in the three lines.

By the end of December the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that another high level conference took place which resulted in new instructions. The country would be defended in all three lines but the plans should not be based on a successful withdrawal from the Grebbe to the Fortress line. It was a compromise solution which did not solve very much strategically, and the third conflict was by this time reaching explosive proportions.

In October 1939 certain Social Democratic leaders found it necessary to provide Social Democratic conscripts with an alternative to the Protestant and Roman Catholic Military "Homes". A committee drafted a constitution for the "new" Mobilization Clubs. The clubs had as aim "to be helpful and useful in the interest of the mobilized soldiers". But membership was limited "to conscripts accepting the standpoint of the modern labour movement." The Social Democrats requested the government
for permission to form such clubs and the Cabinet officially informed the Second Chamber on November 24 that permission had been granted.

Socialist leaders realized that they had to explain the party change of 1937 more fully to the conscripts. Many of them had expected never to be mobilized because through "valiant disobedience" the labour movement would prevent a mobilization. Many Social Democratic conscripts were very bitter that the party had changed its policy. But that the Social Democrats chose the same name for the clubs as the one they had used twenty years earlier was a mistake, and so was the accent they put on "the modern labour movement." Both terms angered many officers who had remained suspicious of the left in spite of the changed policy of the Social Democrats.

"Politics in the army" had been a long standing taboo and Minister Dijxhoorn made a major mistake when he accepted the clubs without first consulting the Commander in Chief. On November 8 the latter had issued an order that no clubs could be formed that had a political character and that all clubs must be accessible for all military personnel. He had issued the order because local commanders had notified him that "left-wing elements" were forming "closed" clubs. Three weeks later he received a brief note from Dijxhoorn that in view of the government's acceptance of the Mobilization Clubs the General's order of November 8 needed to be changed.

The brusque note, and the abrupt change in policy from the previous minister of defence—who in July stated that Social Democratic papers were not to be sold in military canteens—
brought the relationship between the Commander in Chief and the government to the breaking point. General Reynders' suspicion of the Social Democrats increased; he saw them as a discipline undermining, propaganda spreading, in league with communists threat. His feelings were shared by many officers and were strengthened when it became known that the Workers Youth Federation on January 9 sent out a confidential list of questions to its members in the military forces. Some of the questions read: "About which things do you have serious complaints and why? What can you tell us about the morale of your unit?" The questions were meant to help the soldiers but they testified to little insight. Bringing complaints to another authority (the party) by-passed the military chain of command and was interpreted as undermining discipline.

The whole question was unresolved until General Reynders was forced to hand in his resignation in the end of January. Many officers were angry because they were on his side; the Social Democratic conscripts did not get their clubs and felt slighted; the government had to find another Commander in Chief and start the strategy question all over again.

A new Commander in Chief, General H.G. Winkelman, was appointed on February 6 but this time various talks were held to ensure that similar personality conflicts would not take place. Winkelman had been retired from 1935 to 1939; his return in 1939 had been as Commander of the Utrecht Air Defence. He was not acquainted with the over-all strategic problem. Since the Army Chief of Staff had been removed at the same time as Reynders the two new top men needed time to orient themselves.
It was the middle of March before a final decision was made about the defensive lines. The major battle would now be fought in the Grebbe line; the Peel-Raam line would be evacuated on the first day of an invasion (except for a rear guard) and the troops used to defend the southern flank of Fortress Holland. But the troops in the Peel-Raam line were not to be told of this lest they lose all zest for strengthening the line. In theory the defensive plans of the Netherlands were now complete, but it was not clarified why troops should work hard at strengthening a line if they were to leave it when the enemy approached.

5. Warnings

The phlegmatic Dutch people lacked a sense of urgency in all their defence preparations; externally they made ready for war but internally they would not accept that it could come to their nation. Early warnings about Germany's intentions were ignored: Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were not the same as the Netherlands. Indications that Hitler had designs on the Lowlands were not heeded. In October 1939 a number of people were arrested for trying to smuggle uniforms of Dutch police, custom officers, and the army into Germany—a clear warning that the Germans planned to capture Dutch border posts and bridges intact when they invaded. On November 9 a Dutch officer of the General Staff, accompanying two British intelligence officers, was shot near the German border by an SS squad and the four men (including the Dutch driver) were dragged into Germany. This became known as the "Venlo incident".
Pointed warnings about German intentions came from the Dutch military attaché in Berlin, G.J. Sas. He received his information from Hans Oster, head of the Zentralabteilung, Amt Ausland-Abwehr (Central Intelligence Agency) of the German Army. Sas warned that Germany would invade on November 12 and military leaves were cancelled. The Venlo incident heightened the tension. But nothing happened and on November 13 Premier de Geer announced on the radio that there was nothing to worry about. More sand was thrown in the eyes of the Dutch people by ex-Premier Colijn who declared in a newspaper interview that same day: 137

The worry some of our people have is in certain instances reaching ludicrous heights...a clear indication that there is something wrong with our nerves.

With such statements from their political leaders it was difficult for officers to instil a sense of urgency in their soldiers. Why train hard and dig deep when there was nothing to worry about? Sas' warnings were not believed in military circles either; General Reynders and many officers in army headquarters placed no value on his information. 138 Other officers thought the Germans were feeding Sas incorrect information so that the repeated alerts would weary the troops. 139 If an attack came it would take place when least expected and without warning.

When in January 1940 a German airplane made a forced landing in Belgium and the confiscated papers proved to be plans for a German attack on the Lowlands, it should have been crystal clear that Sas had a reliable source. But the Dutch military was not impressed--partly because it only received a short
synopsis from the Belgians as to what was in the captured documents, and partly because it could not believe that the Germans would be so careless. This was also the problem with Sas; he would not disclose his source; the Dutch could not believe that a German officer would betray his fatherland; and they could not believe that Hitler would change the date of the attack so often (eighteen times in all).

During the first week of May so many warnings from so many different sources arrived that no doubt could remain. Many precautionary measures were taken, but when Sas called the evening of May 9 with the message: "Tomorrow morning at dawn", he was not believed. A few very important precautionary measures were therefore neglected and the invasion still came as a rude surprise. Partly because of this, but more so because the nation and the military were not properly prepared, the development and duration of the war also became a cruel surprise. Various officers had assured the nation that the enemy could be held "from four weeks to four months", or, "at least three months". It was to last less than five days and the defeat tasted that much more bitter because of the disappointment.
Chapter X: Conclusion

1. Dutch Society and Antimilitarism

The conduct of an army and nation at war is determined by many factors of which a few usually can be designated as primary ones. In the case of the Netherlands, one can point to the lack of modern weapons and equipment, the insufficiently trained soldiers, the slack discipline, or the poor state of the defensive lines. Strategical and tactical mistakes can also be cited as factors for the defeat as well as certain instances of weak and timid leadership by officers, or low morale and panic under fire in some units. On the one hand, these factors contributed to the defeat but on the other hand they can also be viewed as symptoms of the main underlying causes which lost the war, namely the main characteristics of the Dutch, the kind of political leadership the nation received, and the influence of the antimilitarists.

The national characteristics which proved most fatal were a lack of imagination, a parsimonious frame of mind, and a dislike for things military. The first meant that few people could imagine that loss of independence for the Netherlands was possible and what such a loss could mean. Financial frugality was held in high esteem by most people and defence expenditures were quickly labelled needlessly extravagant. The need to keep up to date in weapons and equipment was not recognized because few people believed that the army would ever need to
do more than mobilize as it had in 1914. That very few people were willing to make financial or personal sacrifices for the military had been diagnosed by many contemporaries. The Committee investigating the 1918 riots stated, "Our nation is not a military nation."¹ K.J.E. Oudendijk, vice-president of the monthly magazine, Ons Leger, put it more lyrically:²

It is an indisputable fact that in our dear fatherland the conviction that we ought to be at all times prepared, does not live in our people.

In a different context Albarda told the Social Democrats, "With such people...it is impossible to make war."³ In 1939 the Committee Against Unilateral Disarmament admitted that the mass of Dutch people had not yet been convinced of the need for proper defences.⁴

The kind of political leadership the Dutch received can be encapsulated as clerical and conservative. This meant that first and foremost the positions of the respective churches had to be safeguarded. Maintaining a clerical coalition was thus of paramount importance. The barrack fear of certain Roman Catholic MPs necessitated certain compromises. As long as this fear remained, there was no possibility of modernizing the armed forces. These Roman Catholics would vote against such proposals and since the antimilitaristic "bloc" could count upon more than thirty votes such bills would be defeated. Being clerical and conservative also meant that the left was viewed with suspicion. Safety precautions against a possible revolution were not only unrealistic but also focussed attention much more on internal security than on the danger from outside the borders. Finally, being conservative meant that money was
spent very carefully. When the depression demanded financial reductions the defence budget was not omitted even though it was recognized that the military was weak in comparison to other nations.

The insistence that traditional neutrality be maintained stemmed largely from the conservative nature of Dutch politicians. The policy had been successful in the past and it was assumed that it would remain successful. Other reasons were that Dutch politicians had learned to compromise in domestic policies and found it difficult to accept that others might be quite willing to use war and violence to settle their international differences. Dutch leaders underestimated Hitler’s greed. In their political shortsightedness they were in the company of Daladier, Chamberlain, Roosevelt, and others, but that does not exonerate Dutch leaders from their responsibility for their own country.

French and British leaders can be blamed for giving in too much to Hitler, but at least France built a Maginot line and Britain was, after all, an island. The United States of America could afford her isolationism; she was large, far removed from Europe and Asia, and potentially very strong. The Netherlands on the other hand, was small and weak, was close to Germany, made no proper defence preparations, and practised a neutrality bordering on isolationism.

It is with some hesitation that one speaks of a Dutch defence policy before 1940. A policy implies that a certain goal is envisaged and that measures are taken to achieve that goal. Ostensibly this was practised in the Netherlands but in
reality the defence policy was an enigma. Elaborate evacuation plans were prepared; extensive stockpiles of food and fuel were gathered and stored; all the major bridges were mined; large areas were to be placed under water if necessary. Countless millions would be destroyed to ensure that the Dutch remain free and independent. Token resistance and a quick capitulation were not thought about. But in complete contradiction the fighting forces who were to carry out the actual defence were ignored, ill provided with weapons, imperfectly trained, and not given the national support they needed. From a financial point of view it could be reasoned that preparing evacuation plans and stockpiling food and fuel was not "lost" money the way buying tanks and airplanes was. But this remained true only as long as no actual invasion took place. There was no point in blowing bridges to slow the enemy's advance because the final defensive lines were inadequate and did not guarantee that the enemy could be held there; nor had arrangements been made with friendly powers to come to the assistance of the Netherlands.

The only explanation for such obvious contradictions is that Dutch leaders simply could not believe that the country would be invaded. The long history of peace, the complete acceptance of the 1914 mobilization myth, and the absence of any real military experience had moulded this belief. The stockpiling, the evacuation plans, the mining of bridges and the preparations for inundations did not destroy anything, did not cost very much, and could easily be undone once the other countries in Europe had ceased to fight. In support of this
line of reasoning it might be recounted that the promised martial law was not put into effect when the country mobilized. No permission was given to clear orchards and houses in front of the Grebbe line until an actual invasion took place; the inundations in front of the Fortress line were not set until war started. These examples could be multiplied.

In view of the foregoing it was not very honest of many Dutch military and political leaders to put all the blame for the unpreparedness of the nation on the antimilitarists. The latter did not make, or carry out, the close-to-isolationist foreign policy of the Netherlands which excluded all military talks. Antimilitarists did not frustrate the strategic and tactical defence planning of the country. Had such plans been made and discussed early enough, the Dijxhoorn/Reynders controversy, and the changes made by the subsequently appointed General Winkelman would not have happened. A long list of similar detrimental last minute changes could be cited. It would have been more accurate for Dutch leaders to designate antimilitarism and pacifism as the basic cause from which many of the problems resulted, both directly and indirectly.

There is a clear distinction between the direct and indirect achievements of Dutch antimilitarists and the latter were nearly as important as the former when judged in relation to the war. The direct achievements came in the form of political power in parliament which directed the defence efforts in a downward line after 1918 and in the effect their propaganda had. The indirect results were the reactions they aroused in the remainder of the Dutch nation. Each group of antimilitarists
elicited a different response, but in one way or another they all drew attention away from the foreign threat.

The Extreme Left and the Social Democrats were watched with suspicion; the creation and maintenance of the Special Voluntary Militia was the direct result of this. Regular army officers had to spend a great deal of time dealing with reports and plans about internal security. Much of the patriotism of the Calvinist bloc became directed towards safeguarding the country from the internal threat. As a result, the foreign threat was minimized or largely ignored.

Religious antimilitarists sowed a certain amount of doubt and confusion within the respective religious blocs. The actual defences were forgotten in the acrimonious debates whether or nor antimilitarism was Biblically justified. The fact that several classes and finally the General Synod of the Reformed Church had to deal with the question is indicative of the way it held the attention of orthodox Calvinists. In the Roman Catholic bloc the difficulty was to reconcile the long-standing fear that military service would draw Roman Catholic conscripts away from the Church with the demand for a national army while at the same time maintaining a homogeneous Catholic bloc. The presence of the St. Michael clubs, the People's Party, and the youth organizations show that antimilitarism also turned the attention inwards.

The Peace Movement elicited the least reaction from the Dutch nation. Only Dutch army officers angrily rejected the theories of van Embden and others from the neutral bloc. Within the neutral bloc there were no large pro-defence groups as
was the case in the Protestant bloc. The many different groups within the Peace Movement, and the wide spectrum of their positions, made it difficult to focus on one group as presenting a danger to the nation. The fact that all the groups conducted their propaganda in a dignified manner, and that they all belonged, to a greater or lesser degree, to the middle class, gave them a certain status. The Peace Movement did not evoke strong reactions from the Dutch people; on the other hand the general indifference of the neutral bloc did not provide a stimulus for a strong military establishment.

Although the youths have been dealt with in a separate chapter, most Dutch people saw the youth organizations as part of one of the three categories covered thus far. Youths were most noticeable in their support for, and participation in war resisting. This cause never elicited another response as large as that in favour of Herman Groenendaal, but it remained an issue on a smaller level. Friends, family, and acquaintances of every war resister and conscientious objector were confronted with the fact that there was a choice and that every person had to decide for himself what he ought to do.

All the various reactions to the antimilitarists focussed attention upon them and their stated beliefs without causing a public reaction in the opposite direction, towards a strong state which would do away with all this "defeatist" talk. The small group of people who did react in this manner started a political party and elected one representative in 1933 but were unable to repeat this "success" in 1937.
Antimilitaristic propaganda contributed in another way to the general unpreparedness of the nation. Hundreds of stories about the effects of chemical and bacteriological warfare were produced. The nation could not be defended against air attacks and the defenceless cities would be devastated. The weak denial from the military, and the inefficient and infrequent air raid drills appeared to substantiate the antimilitarists' argument. The meetings, films, pamphlets, flysheets, photos, stickers, etc., carried their message to every corner of the land. Except for a few who joined the air observer corps or the municipal anti-aircraft detachments, the people pushed the thought of war out of their minds; it was too horrible to contemplate. Besides, there was really no need to think about it because the Netherlands would certainly remain neutral as it had for the past century. Consequently, most people were completely unprepared when the Germans attacked and they reacted in a nervous, panic-stricken manner which greatly hampered the Dutch war effort.

The detrimental effect of antimilitaristic propaganda on the military has been discussed in Chapter IX and need not be recapitulated in detail. It should be emphasized, however, that service time was already much too short and that time spent on extra guard duties, searches for propaganda material, special instructions to counter antimilitaristic theories, etc., made the army less proficient. It widened the distance between officers and conscripts and burdened the former with extra administrative duties. Even if the men in uniform were not antimilitaristic, the reiteration of the shortcomings of the
services still undermined morale and discipline. The specific instances of antimilitaristic propaganda resulting in riots or demonstrations were few, but the constant criticism of the military system had its effect. It was most noticeable in the way the men trained and conducted themselves after they had been mobilized and the danger from the east was far from illusory.

The political victories of the antimilitarists were the most formidable. In the time span of two decades more than a dozen political parties were persuaded to add the antimilitarism plank to their party platform and eight of these parties won representation to parliament at least once. That antimilitarism made greater inroads into the Protestant north than into the Catholic south, and that it was more prevalent among the working class than the middle and upper class did not detract from its strength. Universal manhood suffrage, the secret ballot, and proportional representation meant that in political terms each worker carried as much weight as a member of the other classes while geographic location lost its importance. Antimilitarism had sufficiently strong enclaves in all the blocs that it cannot be relegated as just another socialist demand.

The political victories in parliament in the early twenties created a situation wherein later propaganda encountered no visible opposition in the form of a modern, imposing army. The short training and limited funds prevented the formation of a smart, efficient, up-to-date army which could make a nation feel proud of "their" boys. The Dutch army looked anything but
smart in its old fashioned uniforms and great-coats with the puttees to the knees. Bicycle battalions and horse drawn artillery did not exude the élan and spirit as did dashing foreign armies, most notably the Italian and German ones. The absence of rolling stock, in particular armoured cars and tanks, meant that civilians had nothing to look up to, both figuratively and literally, when the Dutch army paraded past. All this meant that it was easy for antimilitarists to say that the country could not be defended because the armed forces never presented an imposing enough picture to stamp the propaganda as a self-evident lie. The Social Democrats could organize a demonstration of 20,000 persons virtually at will, but the army had great difficulty bringing one division together during the summer.

The antimilitarists' compelled pre-training option weakened the army in a way few people had anticipated. It was recognized in military circles that it was an inadequate way of training conscripts, but it was not recognized that the kind of youths who made use of the option enervated the army in a specific way. Calvinists did not shun the pre-training opportunity. Many saw it as a positive feature. It was expedient to keep one's job as long as possible. Moreover, preparing one's self to defend the fatherland, and remaining at home while doing so, made it possible to discuss what one did with friends and family. From the information available it appears that only left-wing youths avoided the pre-training because they found it more obnoxious than regular service. Of course Roman Catholic youths were urged to take the option because it meant less exposure to the dangerous mentality in the barracks. The result
was that many soldiers who viewed national defence in a more positive light received the least amount of training. Those who were indifferent or antagonistic spent more time in the regular service; the examples provided in Chapter IX indicate what the over-all effect was.

Many times antimilitaristic parties, most notably the Social Democrats, demanded that the government take better care of discharged conscripts, provide larger pensions for retired professionals, and make proper financial arrangements for disabled mobilization veterans. Social Democrats fought for years to get pensions for widows of soldiers who had died as a result of training accidents and in fights with smugglers during the 1914-1918 mobilization. The government was always refractory in these instances and showed a definite reluctance to grant such financial provisions. It was not difficult to deduce from this behaviour that the clericals were quite eager to get men into uniform but were quite indifferent to them once they were out of it.

Although the antimilitarists did not mention this, the government's attitude was also unfair to the soldiers in so far their ultimate task, the defence of the Netherlands, was concerned. If a government thinks it has the right to draft men into military service it takes upon itself the moral obligation to provide these men with the best possible training, weapons and equipment so that they can carry out their task with the smallest possible danger to their own lives. From the conduct of the Dutch right in general, and the government in particular, it is clear that they were satisfied with a façade,
a visible body of men in uniform, without asking the fundamental question whether such an army was capable, both mentally and materially, to carry out the task which might be demanded of it.

After twenty years of determined effort Dutch antimilitarists had achieved something quite different than intended. With the help of myopic governments and a largely lackadaisical population antimilitarists had obtained a numerically weak, insufficiently trained, improperly equipped, and morally indifferent armed force. But they had worked for the total abolition of all armed forces so that the nation would not become involved in an armed conflict. Antimilitarists had thus successfully thwarted what in Chapter I has been described as the "military way". There was no efficient, scientifically operating armed force, but there still was a military force and therefore there still was the potential of armed conflict.

2. Five Days in May

It is, of course, what happened during the German attack that confirms the argument of the previous chapters. A short description of a war involving half a million combatants leaves many things unsaid. Out of necessity the accent has been placed on the unprepared state, both mentally and materially, of the country and the army. The failures should not obscure the fact that many soldiers fought tenaciously and that in a few instances notable successes were booked. But such instances were insufficient to change the over-all outcome of the war. Similarly to the inter war period when a segment of the population was
enough to frustrate adequate defence preparations, so did a certain segment of the army prevent proper resistance. Individuals or small groups withdrew too early and without authorization, they quickly surrendered, they spread rumours, or they were derelict in their duty in some other way. Stubborn resistance by others cannot compensate for such conduct. If a defensive line is given up in one spot the defenders in another area will be attacked from the rear. The early departure of a gun crew means that others willing to fight are left without artillery support. Such examples can be multiplied endlessly. For the Dutch it was especially important that everyone carry out their designated task because the size of the country prevented the withdrawal to secondary defence lines from which resistance could be organized anew. Moreover, they were outclassed materially and the loss or inefficient use of equipment or weapons added to the material superiority of the enemy. In view of what has been described in previous chapters it is not surprising that the Dutch capitulated on the fifth day of the war. It was the logical outcome of twenty years indifference, neglect, and antimilitarism.

Very early on May 10 the Germans attacked with approximately nine divisions, two of which were air-borne and were dropped inside Fortress Holland. Faulty judgement at the top, inattentiveness and panic at the bottom meant that the first day brought major setbacks. On the evening of May 9 the Commander in Chief sent out the message, "From the border come very disquieting messages, thus be extra careful." Since most troops had been on alert since May 7, this message only
served as another warning, not an order. It lost some of its urgency because that afternoon a telex message had gone out from headquarters giving local commanders permission to grant emergency leaves again. Certain officers drew the conclusion that the situation had returned to normal and they relaxed the special precautions. Moreover, the message to be extra careful was not passed on to I Corps held in reserve in Fortress Holland. Consequently, when paratroops descended at dawn, and transport planes landed soldiers at several airfields (after they had first been bombed and strafed), I Corps had to be alerted before it could be brought into action. This cost valuable time.

The use of paratroops against Denmark and Norway and landing light infantry on the Oslo airport had warned the Dutch that they had to be prepared for a similar surprise. Guard units near airfields were increased but they still left much to be desired. For austerity reasons, or because the minister of defence did not really believe in a German attack, there were no covered shelters near the anti-aircraft batteries around the airfields. Guard units were often incorrectly placed, did not have adequate strong points, were usually connected with their commander via above ground telephone lines, were too lightly armed, were inexperienced and/or indifferent. When the Germans bombed and strafed the three airfields Ypenburg, Ockenburg, and Valkenburg around the Hague, and Waalhaven in Rotterdam as a preliminary to landing troops, many defenders fled in panic. The troops stationed around Ypenburg departed as soon as the bombardment started so that the landings were
virtually unopposed. Certain units at the other airfields reacted in a similar manner or surrendered to the Germans without firing a shot. Many commanders remained in their shelters without giving instructions to their troops; others were unable to do so because the telephone lines were severed.

General Winkelman had to commit his reserve corps to recapture the airfields and to isolate the paratroops dropped in other areas in order to prevent the capture of the Hague. In addition, several battalions had to be withdrawn from the Fortress line even though they could not really be missed.

On the border everything did not go according to plan either. Most border detachments blew the bridges over the waterways and erected the road blocks but a few were fooled by German ruses so that quick penetration of Dutch positions resulted. By 10 a.m. the Germans had crossed the Meuse River in at least eight places and were advancing on to the Peel-Raam line.

The Light Division and III Corps were, according to plan, ordered to withdraw to Fortress Holland. This order angered many men in those units; they had been working on the Peel-Raam line for months, they believed that it could be defended and, since many came from the province Noord Brabant, they wanted to fight in that line. Many civilians in the province felt cheated by the quick withdrawal because they were left virtually defenceless. Withdrawing these troops a few hours after the German invasion did not add to the determination of the troops (the Peel Division) remaining in the line. Men began to retreat on their own and officers sometimes had to
point revolvers at their men to ensure they remained in their positions. In the evening of the 10th the commander requested that he be allowed to pull back to the Willemsvaart—a canal five to ten kilometers west of the Peel-Raam line. Permission was granted and the retreat started. After one day of war the Peel-Raam line, on which soldiers had worked for more than eight months, was given up.

Border patrols along the eastern border in the center of the country had as duty to warn about the approach of invading forces, carry out certain demolition tasks, and withdraw behind the Yssel River line. In spite of the fact that all the bridges across the river were blown on time this line was penetrated in three places during the afternoon of the 10th and German troops began crossing the river. As was to happen frequently during the next days, Dutch troops quickly withdrew out of their whole defensive line once it was penetrated at one point. On May 11th the enemy was already carrying out probing attacks against the main Dutch defences, the Grebbe line.

The five battalions in the northern provinces were only to offer resistance in a few specified places and carry out the designated demolition tasks. Some of these tasks were carried out but the desire to fall back proved very strong. On the first day of the war people in the province of Friesland repeatedly saw small groups of Dutch soldiers, without their officers, pass through on their way west. When asked where the officers were the answers were discouragingly similar, "we don't know", "we haven't seen him since this morning," etc. Very few units retreated intact even though few had been in
contact with the enemy. The Germans arrived before the Wons
defences on the 11th, carried out dive bomber attacks on the
12th, started artillery fire in the afternoon and carried out
a weak attack. The defenders (who did not have artillery) with­
drew hastily and fled along the Afsluitdijk to Noord Holland.
Only the 250 men at Kornwerderzand, the strong point on the
dike, prevented the Germans from marching into Noord Holland.

The battle against the German airborn operation became on
the one hand a minor triumph for the Dutch and on the other
hand a major disaster. The triumph consisted of quickly re­
gaining control of the three airfields around the Hague, iso­
lating the paratroops dropped between Rotterdam and the Hague,
destroying a great number of German planes, and taking many
prisoners of war. The Germans used 165 bombers, 242 fighters,
and 430 transport planes against the Netherlands. The grass
landing strips in the low polder land proved too soft for the
heavily laden transport planes and many sank through the grass
mat and were unable to leave again. They thus became easy
targets for Dutch guns. The blocked runways necessitated later
transports to circle the area while looking for alternative
landing sites and this made them good targets for Dutch anti­
aircraft guns. Many of the transports were damaged when try­
ing to land along the blocked (with vehicles and obstacles)
highways, on the beaches, or in the meadows. In total the
Germans landed 3,324 men in 14 different places around the
Hague which was only 35.9% of the number that was planned for
the operation. To this number must be added 500 air crew
members who had to remain behind because their planes were
damaged or stuck. 28 Dutch forces took about 1,600 prisoners of whom 1,200 were shipped to England before the capitulation on May 14. Among them were many air crews whom Germany could ill afford to lose. Of the 430 transport planes 220 were damaged or destroyed while the total number of German planes damaged or destroyed reached 328. This number was 12% of the 2,694 German planes used in three months against Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Great Britain. 29 These figures proved what certain officers had always claimed: if the Dutch soldier was properly armed, trained and led, he could fight as well as anyone. These figures also show that, had this been the case with the whole of the Dutch army, the country need not have been as "undefendable" as antimilitarists had claimed for many years.

But these triumphs were bought at too high a price. The whole strategic reserve, I Corps, as well as the tactical reserve from the Grebbe line, was employed against the airborne troops. 30 Dutch attempts to regain Waalhaven airfield near Rotterdam failed, nor could the bridges across the Meuse in that city be recaptured. Further south the large Moerdijk bridges (the main road to Antwerp) remained in German hands. The Germans dropped and landed 7,240 men (of the planned 8,100) between Rotterdam and Moerdijk without sustaining great losses. 31 There was little anti-aircraft artillery in this area and the Dutch air force was virtually destroyed on the first day of the war. 32

The Moerdijk bridges had not been destroyed at the outbreak of war because they faced south, were more than 100 kilometers
from the eastern border, and the Light Division had to cross them on its planned withdrawal from the Peel-Raam line to Fortress Holland. There were charges under the bridges but no igniters for fear that nervous local commanders would blow them prematurely. The guard detachments had not received the warning on the evening of May 9th because they were so far behind the front and a good night’s rest was thought more important. The telex message about granting leaves had been received and had immediately been interpreted to mean that the situation was not all that serious anymore. Consequently, all munition was collected again that evening, to be distributed the next morning, as was the custom during normal times.

When the paratroops landed near the bridges they had little difficulty gaining control of them.

Recapturing Waalhaven airfield was given priority over recapturing the Moerdijk bridges. But there were few troops in Rotterdam and the piecemeal commitment of arriving units did not bring success. Some of the guards around the airport had fought well when the Germans landed but others, among them at least one senior officer, failed badly. They either gave themselves up or they withdrew. Extra troops directed to Rotterdam were greatly hampered by many reports from civilians about paratroops in various parts of the city. Patrols had to be sent out to investigate these reports. Panic and fear heightened the imagination and the reports were almost always incorrect. Badly needed soldiers were wasted on these patrols but the rumours would not die down. The central telephone exchange was partially destroyed and evacuated by its staff.
because rumours had it that the Germans were only one city block away. Except for the bridgehead on the north shore by the Meuse bridges there were no Germans in that part of the city. For a time communications were disrupted, however, and this further hindered the attack on Waalhaven.

Dutch troops everywhere were burdened by the rumours: German troops were seen in Dutch uniforms; Fifth Column Dutchmen were firing on their own troops; poisoned candies were being handed out; shells were filled with sand, etc. In Rotterdam and the Hague these rumours were worst but they hurt the morale of the already badly shaken troops everywhere.

General Winkelman ordered the Light Division to take a different route to Fortress Holland instead of trying to force its way via the Moerdijk bridges. He wanted to use this division to recapture Waalhaven and believed that the troops available in Noord Brabant, and the French troops coming up from Belgium, could easily recapture the bridges. Winkelman appears not to have grasped the vital importance of the bridges in the strategic plan of the Germans, nor was he aware of the chaotic situation in Noord Brabant after May 10.

The withdrawal of the Peel Division in the night of 10-11 May was the start of a retreat which quickly became a rout. Some of the units arriving at the Willemsvaart had lost, or had thrown away, their arms and ammunition. Other units did not halt at the canal but continued to the west. The canal had no previously prepared strong points; the western dike along the canal was lower than the eastern dike so that the enemy could approach the canal unhindered. This task was made easy
because of the woods and underbrush east of the canal. On the 11th German troops crossed the canal at several places so that a further retreat was ordered. These troops became mixed up with evacuating civilians and advancing French units. Roads became clogged, dive bomber attacks compounded the confusion; apart from a few units no real organized resistance took place. Some of the demoralized troops managed to reach the defensive lines in the province of Zeeland, others moved south with the retreating French; the majority surrendered to the Germans.  

By late afternoon of the 12th the advance guards of the German 9th Armoured Division reached the Moerdijk bridges and linked up with the paratroops there. The road to Waalhaven was now in German hands; the southern flank of Fortress Holland was penetrated because the Germans still held the northern bridgehead of the Meuse bridges. The tanks had a clear road to Rotterdam and, once through the city, could link up with the paratroops north of the city.

While the southern flank of Fortress Holland was being penetrated the Dutch main defensive line in the east was collapsing. Peace time austerity measures and unwillingness to prepare for a coming war now had to be paid for. The pumping station that was to have ensured inundations in front of the southern section of the Grebbe line was not yet completed so that several areas remained dry. The government had refused permission to cut down orchards and woods to obtain clear fields of fire and deny their cover to the enemy. The orchards were only to be cut down once war broke out. The quickness of the enemy's advance and the rapid collapse of the Yssel River line
meant that there was no time for this. The Germans made full use of the cover left them and the Dutch had no field of fire and no proper observation.\textsuperscript{41}

Even though these were major faults in the defensive position they cannot be viewed as the main reason for the quick collapse. The Germans reached the Grebbe line on the evening of May 10 and began their attack the next morning in the southern sector where there were no inundations. By late afternoon the outposts and screening line were in German hands. Certain posts fought to the end but too many withdrew very quickly sowing doubt and demoralization in the lines to the rear. One sergeant was ordered shot by a hastily created court martial but by evening more than 120 soldiers had been collected who had left their posts without reason.\textsuperscript{42} Shooting them all was too drastic and they were ordered to undertake a counter attack on the lost positions. So much procrastination took place that the Germans started their own attack on the main defensive line so that the Dutch attack could not take place. After one day of fighting in the Grebbe line the Commander Field Army noted in his diary: "If no better resistance will be offered than hitherto, the enemy will go through [this line]."\textsuperscript{43}

Around noon on May 12 German soldiers penetrated the main defensive line. Many Dutch soldiers left their trenches without orders. The strong points which continued to fight could therefore be taken from the rear. The Commander IV Division (which bore the brunt of the attack) ordered a military police detachment to a strategic position on the railway located close behind the main defensive line with orders that all
retreating soldiers be warned to return to their posts or they would be fired upon. But so many fled to the rear that the order to fire on them was not executed. Supreme effort by certain officers and the military police brought several hundred fleeing soldiers to a halt behind the rail embankment, but many more could not be stopped in their retreat. All attempts to organize a counter attack failed.

At noon on May 13 the Commander IV Division warned the Commander Field Army that the situation was critical. Since daylight more and more soldiers left their post and slipped to the rear. By the time (1645 hours) the Commander Field Army ordered a retreat to Fortress Holland a large part of IV Division was already in a chaotic rout to the rear. The main Dutch defensive line had been lost in less than three days.

The Dutch troops safely reached the Fortress Holland line because a heavy ground mist prevented air attacks. Much equipment had been left behind, more had been thrown away during the retreat. By this time (the morning of the 14th) the men were exhausted, units were badly mixed up, and the demoralization was general. A look at the new defensive lines lowered morale further.

When the decision had been taken in March that the Grebbe line was to be the main defensive line, all work on the Fortress line had been halted. Not only were most of the fortified points uncompleted but the inundations had only been started on May 12. The main strength of the line, water, was at an insufficient depth and did not yet cover the higher areas. Luckily for the Dutch soldiers they did not have to fight in the new line.
At 1030 hours on the 14th the Germans demanded capitulation under threat of destroying Rotterdam. General Winkelman was the final authority in the country because the Queen, members of the Royal House, and the Cabinet had left the Netherlands the evening before. While negotiations were still in progress the bombing of Rotterdam started (at 1330 hours). At about the same time an ultimatum was handed to the Commander of Utrecht while German planes dropped leaflets threatening the destruction of the city through air bombardments. General Winkelman wisely decided that further resistance was useless and capitulated. Only the province of Zeeland, where many French troops were located by this time, was to continue fighting.

The foregoing litany of failures should not obscure the fact that many soldiers, and especially airmen, fought with selfless courage. But such men were too few in number and were not representative of the mentality of the armed forces. It must also be emphasized that the Dutch soldiers who robbed the jewelry stores in Rhenen after the civilians were evacuated were not representative of the military. The mean lay in between these extremes: no heroes and no plunderers. But too many were much more inclined to retreat or give themselves up than to offer determined resistance.

Admittedly the Dutch soldier was confronted with an enemy who was better armed and trained, who had battle experience, and who had complete control of the air. At the border some Germans were dressed in a variety of Dutch uniforms; at different times during the war Dutch prisoners of war were used as a living, moveable shield during attacks on Dutch strong
points. In addition to these German tactics, the behaviour of the civilian population caused turmoil. Reports about German paratroops in civilian clothes, the Fifth Column firing on Dutch troops, Dutch speaking Germans in Dutch army uniforms, etc., increased the confusion within the military and in many instances brought nerves close to the breaking point.

On the other hand, the Dutch fought from defensive positions, many of which were located behind water obstacles. They were familiar with the area wherein they fought, were in their own country, and had the interior lines of communications and logistics. They also outnumbered the attacking German troops at many points. These factors should have compensated to a large degree for the disadvantages cited previously.

It is quite logical that an army will react nervously when coming under fire for the first time; such a reaction has nothing to do with antimilitarism. The point is not that antimilitarism was responsible for the initial reaction but that it was responsible for the poor equipment, morale, and mentality of Dutch troops before and during the war. After their baptism of fire their sense of discipline did not compel them to remain, or return to their duty. Few were motivated with a great anger and determination to throw back the invading enemy. Too many retained their pre-war mentality and asked: how do I, the individual, get out of the unpleasant duty the system demands of me? If an individual is opposed to the military it does not necessarily follow that he will run away from battle. He may fight as well as the most determined chauvinist. But the likelihood of this happening in many cases is slight. To
be a good combat soldier demands that one has had adequate training. This cannot be learned during the first few days of battle. Training, skill, and knowledge about fighting are of vital importance and, largely because of antimilitaristic efforts, this fell far short in the Dutch army of what it ought to have been. If an army is granted enough time such soldiers can be moulded to conform to the demands placed upon them, but the Dutch did not have time.

The collapse began on the first day and there was no time to rectify the shortages and faulty mentality which had existed for two decades. Once a certain percentage of soldiers left their positions the others were in an untenable position. Those who panicked, retreated earlier than they should have, or surrendered very quickly, did not do so because they were cowards but because they over-estimated the danger they were in. Once they had left their posts they tried to stay out of the combat area because during training they had shunned difficult tasks and had not been made to feel the consequences of such behaviour. The easy way out was therefore also taken during combat. Some retreated quickly, others stuck white flags on top of their positions or in front of their trenches when German infantry was not yet in sight. Excessive safety precautions, such as groups of men from the forward areas moving to the rear carrying white flags, caused confusion and demoralization in others. When officers managed to bring a group of fleeing soldiers to a halt, and tried to create some semblance of order, individual men immediately slipped away when they were not watched. In other instances retreating
soldiers purposely moved around collecting points so that their journey to the rear would not be interrupted. One group numbering between 400 and 500 who had been halted behind the front line thought they would be re-armed and ordered back into the battle, started to chant, "We want to surrender." Some of those who fled, or who became separated from their units, obtained civilian clothes and continued their journey. For a not inconsiderable number this journey led straight to their homes where they awaited developments, or they reported to their units after hostilities had ceased. Many who did not run away nevertheless shared a general mentality which was succinctly encapsuled in one account after the war: "Then it [the situation] became dangerous and we pulled back."

After the capitulation a committee tried to determine how many soldiers and officers had neglected their duty and whether or not they should be punished. The investigation was not completed because it proved an insurmountable task. Not only were too many people involved but the destruction of many military archives and papers on May 14 made it impossible to determine with certainty which orders had been given.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the foregoing is that when fully one-third of a nation opposes the existence of its armed forces there can be no national effort. That the majority of the one-third belonged to the left does not weaken this statement. That two major antimilitaristic parties changed their position before the war is a factor, but it has also been shown that not everyone in these parties changed while the rank and file conversion of the Social Democrats was certainly less than wholehearted. Moreover, nearly two-thirds
of the mobilized army in 1940 consisted of men who had been drafted and trained between 1926 and 1937 when antimilitarism was in full stride. In the late thirties open hostility against the military had waned, men in uniform were not showered with derisive comments anymore; but not hurling invectives was not the same as standing firmly behind the military. Professional officers knew that they were tolerated but were not liked or supported. The mistrust and suspicion between officers and men resulted in loss of control when units came under fire because many had no faith in their leaders. Reserve officers and conscript NCOs showed the lack of adequate training; the whole army showed the absence of training in large units which had been deemed too expensive. The weight of all the implicit evidence of the latent and open antimilitarism of the Dutch people—the indifference, the nonchalance during manoeuvres, the inadequate defences, the outdated equipment—was measured in an exact but cruel way during the war. And the scales tipped conclusively.

3. The Wider Context

The objection might be raised that the factors suggested here for the Dutch defeat might not be the right ones because other countries where antimilitarism was not very strong also fell before the German onslaught. Or one might grant that antimilitarism was in some measure responsible for the Dutch unpreparedness, but that this really made little difference because the Dutch could not have withstood the Germans indefinitely—Belgium fought for eighteen days and the Netherlands for five but the end result was still defeat.
The first objection implies that the reasons for the military defeat of one country are similar to the reasons for a defeat of another country. This argument is too simplistic. The defeat of any nation is the result of various factors; even if the same factors are present in two countries, the importance of each particular factor need not be the same. The thesis is not that antimilitarism in the Netherland was the only reason for the defeat, but that it was the main reason for the quick defeat. In this context it is important to note that in the two countries where antimilitarism was strong, Denmark and the Netherlands, defeat came very quickly. In Belgium and France antimilitarism reached sizeable proportions but never achieved the size and intensity it did in the Netherlands. French socialists dropped their disarmament demand long before their Dutch counterparts considered such a step. In Belgium war resisters were treated very harshly. Conflicts between the Flemish and French speaking parts of the nation and the large fascist movement might have hampered a strong defence policy; nevertheless Belgium, with roughly the same size and population as the Netherlands, spent twice as much on its defences, its army was more than twice as large, and it fought more than thrice as long. The defeat of Belgium and France have different reasons than the defeat of the Netherlands but the antimilitarism and foreign policy of the latter contributed to the defeat of the former.

It can be readily admitted that Belgium and France were not as up to date in their weapons as the Germans, but the discrepancies were not all that great and the main reasons for
the defeat stemmed from the military "lessons" these countries learned from the Great War. The strategy of a static, defensive war—manifested in such mammoth undertakings as the Maginot line and fortress Eben Emael—proved outdated when confronted with the German "Blitzkrieg" wherein air force, armour, and infantry cooperated much closer and moved much faster than non-German generals thought possible. Western European commanders were not flexible enough to take into account that the Germans might think of other tactics besides attempting to break through the defensive lines. They were therefore confused and surprised by the use of specially trained para and glider troops on top of Eben Emael and the passage of several armies through the "impassable" Ardennes. That the French had distributed their tanks throughout their infantry for its support instead of combining them into major armoured units was a major error. And placing many divisions behind the Maginot line instead of on the northern border where there were few fortifications was also a serious mistake.62

The German forces attacking west were outnumbered by the defenders of the Netherlands, Belgium, and France (including the British Expeditionary Force). German equipment and weapons were marginally better but it was mainly the use that was made of them, and the aggressive and daring tactics and strategy that defeated the western nations. The margin was small enough, however, that with a little less luck on the German side and with a few changes on the defenders' side, the war could have had a very different outcome. The unanticipated and undetected German advance through the Ardennes, the capture of Eben Emael,
the quick collapse of the Dutch, the clear, dry weather so essential for armour and air force helped the German forces enormously. They had the advantage that they could choose the time and place of the attack, and they were riding the crest of victories in Poland, Denmark, and Norway. But the very tactics the Germans employed in the west indicated that they had to gain a quick victory or become trapped in a static (1914-1918 type) war which they would loose.

It was very important for the Germans that the Netherlands be defeated quickly and major risks were taken to this end. The use of two airborne divisions (all they had) and the dash of the 9th armoured division to the Moerdijk bridges 100 kilometers in enemy territory are proof of the chances they took.

It was necessary to do this because the 18th German army had to turn south as quickly as possible to aid the 6th army in Belgium. A quick Dutch defeat forestalled the not unreal possibility of a British landing in Fortress Holland and a consequent attack from the fortress area on the long flanks of the German armies. Moreover, the 6th and 18th armies (Army group "B") had to put the greatest possible pressure in the north to draw the French reserves in that direction and prevent them from being used against the armour divisions coming through the Ardennes and forcing their way across the Meuse between Dinant and Sedan.\(^63\) The strategy worked beyond expectations because the French sent their 7th army (six first-rate motorized infantry divisions and one light armour division) into the Netherlands; the British Expeditionary Force moved east of Brussels and the 1st French army came in place south
of it. The bulk of the Belgian army faced east at the outset of war but because the Dutch had refused to hold military talks and because they could not be depended upon to defend their southern provinces the Albert canal, running roughly east-west from Antwerp to Maastricht, was also a defensive line. The quick Dutch withdrawal and flight in Noord Brabant enabled the Germans to put so much pressure on the Belgian forces that they had to withdraw quickly while the French 7th army became entangled in the Dutch retreat and was unable to establish a defensive line in the Netherlands.

The whole German strategy would have been much less successful if the Dutch had had 22 divisions (as Belgium did) instead of 10 poorly armed and badly trained ones. The combined Dutch-Belgian forces could have held the Germans long enough for the French 7th army to arrive and this combined force of 50 divisions would have been more than a match for the 29 divisions (of which 3 were armour) of Army Group "B". It is questionable whether the Germans would have dared to place all their bets on the single Ardennes card and commit nearly all their armour to the attack there if the Dutch had prepared themselves properly for the defence of their freedom. A stronger and longer Dutch resistance was therefore not just a matter of fighting a few days longer; Dutch antimilitarism, as the main reason for the quick defeat had far greater consequences than the simple argument that the length of resistance was inconsequential because an eventual defeat was certain.

An eventual Dutch defeat was not inevitable in 1940. Even if the Dutch had not been able to maintain themselves for long
in Noord Brabant but had withdrawn to Fortress Holland and defended it well, the outcome of the war could have been different. The German pressure on Belgium would not have been so great because some forces would have been diverted against the Netherlands. The German move through the Ardennes and the breakthrough to the English Channel would not have been prevented, but it would not have been impossible for the British Expeditionary Force, the two French armies, and the Belgian forces who were cut off from the south to fight their way north to Fortress Holland. They would not have lost all their heavy equipment and weapons as happened in the evacuation from Dunkirk. Behind the inundations of Fortress Holland these forces, and those of the Netherlands, could have resisted German attacks for a long time. The many good harbours and the supremacy of the British navy on the North Sea enabled the provisioning of Fortress Holland from Great Britain. The German invasion of the West would certainly have run less smooth than it did and might have had a very different outcome.

The basic reasons for the quick Dutch collapse have been covered in sufficient detail that little needs to be added. To attempt a comparison between the conduct of French, British and Belgian soldiers on the one hand and the Dutch soldiers on the other would be an injustice because circumstances varied for each unit and in each country. It is not a matter of counting heroes or cowards; these words are so subjective that they cannot be used. French and Belgian units ran in panic as well as Dutch units when dive bombers and tanks attacked their positions. But French and Belgian troops
were marched hither and yon to help other nations or their own troops in a war of movement for which they had not been trained. Officers and men of the 7th French army felt very angry and "being used" when they arrived in Noord Brabant and saw so many young civilian Dutch men standing idly about while France had to mobilize nearly every able bodied man. They did not feel obliged to fight hard for a nation that did not exert much effort on its own behalf and had withdrawn most of its troops north of the rivers while at the same time asking the French for help. The French and Belgian soldiers' actions stemmed from different reasons than what was happening in many places in the Netherlands. Many Dutch soldiers, individually or in small groups, drifted to the rear when they had hardly seen the enemy, or they put white flags on their strong points, or they obtained civilian clothes and went home to await the outcome of the war. Most of these acts did not come as a result of panic and fear from heavy fire or bombardments. They stemmed from a feeling that fighting was not worth it, from a lack of discipline, and from an inability to size up a situation and draw the right conclusions. In short, many Dutch soldiers conducted themselves during the war in a similar manner as they had trained before the war. It was this mentality that was the result of twenty years barely opposed antimilitarism.

Discussing the wider context of the war is not an illusionary side-trip into the "ifs" of history but shows that the Netherlands could have made a significant contribution if she had lived up to the ideals she professed to believe in. Democracy,
toleration, freedom, were ideals which almost all Dutch people believed in. The anomaly was that only lip service was paid to the corollary of defending these ideals against those who preached the supremacy of the Germanic race, the extinction of the Jews, and unquestioned submission to one man. Half-hearted defence measures never make any sense: if complete disarmament is unacceptable, then either all out participation in the arms race, or collaboration with like-thinking nations are the only two alternatives. The Dutch gave in partly to antimilitaristic demands and this served no purpose at all. It did not guarantee that others would respect Dutch neutrality, it brought no allies, and it did not ensure peaceful occupation by an aggressive power because the official policy continued to be that resistance be offered. Yielding partly to antimilitaristic demands had as consequence that the country was ill prepared, contributed nothing to Europe's freedom, caused needless destruction at home, and brought quick defeat. There is little value in the argument that a long resistance of Fortress Holland would have brought intolerable destruction and loss of life; the price the Dutch paid for five years German occupation was as least as high as the damage would have been from German bombardments.68

Five years of German occupation convinced the Dutch that antimilitarism and unilateral neutrality were unacceptable as a way of life. After 1945 the country joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and became a wholehearted supporter of the policy of mutilateral defence. After two decades of peace, however, the dislike for the military gradually returned.
Youths again experienced the draft as an unwelcome and unavoidable burden. The national mentality changed enough so that conscripts quickly gained major concessions by the end of the sixties. A military union for conscripts was created; hair length could no longer be dictated but worn as the individual pleased; compulsory saluting was abolished; "democratization of the military" became a recurring demand which, in 1975, has not yet reached a stabilization point. The number of conscientious objectors increased from 618 in 1968 to 1,538 in 1972. The law on conscientious objection was changed after 1945 to include moral and ethical objections to military service but the number of war resisters continued to increase. The latter demanded that they be allowed to perform alternative service because they had political objections. These reasons include the use of atomic weapons by NATO forces, the possibility that cities will be bombed as a measure of retaliation, or that certain NATO members suppress their colonial people while on the other hand defending democracy through NATO. In all likelihood the Dutch parliament will pass a law recognizing such objections and will allow individuals to perform alternative service. Once this law is passed it is expected that the number of conscientious objectors will reach 6,000 and possibly 8,000 each year.

From many newspaper reports and from discussions with people of many different backgrounds and occupations one is left with the impression that the mood of the country is approaching that which existed during the late twenties. There is the same feeling that war cannot solve anything, that it causes useless
destruction, and that only rational discussion can bring results. There is also the strong feeling that the Netherlands cannot be defended except as part of NATO but that this makes the country a pawn of the big nations. There is presently only one political party opposed to the existence of a military force but several parties want the country to withdraw from NATO. The 15th Congress of the Labour Party, held in April 1975, accepted a resolution that the Netherlands withdraw from NATO in 1978 if it has not brought about concrete lessening of tension between East and West by that time. Another resolution demanded that the defence expenditures be reduced from the present 3.5% to 3% of the national income by 1978. The Labour Party is the largest party in the Netherlands and obtained 27.3% of the vote in the 1972 elections; it has 43 seats in the 150 seat Second Chamber and heads the coalition government.

Dutch people are not openly antagonistic towards the military as they were in the twenties but the tendency to hold the military in slight regard is spreading. Many people demand that the Dutch forces only buy weapons which cannot carry atomic warheads because an atomic war is morally unacceptable. In 1975 the proponents of this standpoint were not yet strong enough to get their idea accepted as national policy, but their strength is growing.

Dutch people who argue against NATO participation, or for a reduction in defence spending, or against the use of atomic weapons for the Netherlands are ignorant of, or blithely ignore, the history of the Netherlands between 1918 and 1940.
That period showed that half-hearted defence measures as a result of antimilitaristic pressure or an independent foreign policy for historical reasons did not guarantee safety. Moreover, it created a hiatus in the multilateral defences of neighbouring countries which had fatal consequences. An aggressor is just as liable to make mistakes as the defender; the present military balance between East and West is probably not greatly different from that in 1940; the outcome of a future war will therefore hinge on as many factors as did the outcome of the 1940 war. The present antimilitarism in the Netherlands is not likely to bring about a unilateral disarmament of the Netherlands. At most a similar situation as before 1940 can be obtained: a weak military force which is incapable of defending the nation and which can offer no support to allies will result. Such a situation is not the intention of present day antimilitarists, nor was it the intention of pre-1940 antimilitarists, but if the present development continues history might repeat itself in the Netherlands.
The Netherlands
Deployment of the Dutch army

The numbers in the circles designate the number of infantry battalions according to the plan of General Winkelman. The changes that were envisaged following the outbreak of war, such as the withdrawal of the Light Division and III Corps from behind the Peel-Raam line to Fortress Holland, have been taken into consideration. Although the withdrawals took place, not all troops reached their designated new positions.
Main defensive lines in the Netherlands

A. The strongpoint Kornwerderzand was built into the Afsluitdijk. The Germans failed to capture this fortification.
B. The Wons defences were weak and did not have artillery.
C. Screening lines. Only a few points were to offer resistance.
D. Yssel River line.
E. Meuse River line. No serious resistance was to be offered. Delaying actions and demolition were the prime tasks. The troops in the south of Limburg were to retreat into Belgium and if possible re-enter the Netherlands behind the Peel-Raam line.
F. Peel-Raam line. Note the gap between it and the Belgian line.
G. Grebbe line.
H. Fortress Holland line.
I. Moerdijk bridges.
J. Belgian defensive line along the Albert Canal. The square blocks represent large casemates.
The German cavalry division was to occupy the three northern provinces and push through to Noord Holland via the Afsluitdijk. But the defenders at Kornwerderzand could not be dislodged. Two infantry divisions and the armoured division were to operate south of the Meuse River. It was of great strategic importance that the armour push through to the Moerdijk bridges, and that the paratroops capture them and the bridges by Dordrecht and Rotterdam intact. Had the Dutch destroyed these bridges in time, the Germans would have had major difficulties crossing three major rivers and the soft, partially inundated area between them, in order to reach Rotterdam and penetrate the southern flank of Fortress Holland. Two infantry divisions and two SS Regiments were to capture the Yssel River and Grebbe lines. They were outnumbered since the Dutch had four divisions in and immediately behind the Grebbe line.
Chapter I: References


5. The term "Holland" correctly designates only the low lying area in the west of the country. "The Netherlands" will be used when speaking of the whole country.

6. One-twentieth of the surface of the Netherlands consisted of inland waterways; if the territorial sea, inland sea, and sea arms are added there was more water than land area. The water/land ratio is quite different now because of land reclamation.

7. The unusual name of the Anti Revolutionary Party says much about it. The revolution they opposed was the French one of 1789, and what these Calvinists thought it had stood for—the breakdown of authority, godlessness, and human values over God-given ones. Anti Revolutionaries believed that everything ought to be done according to Scriptures, in public as well as private life.


11 In 1889, 1.48% of the population declared itself to be non-religious; by 1930 this had increased to 14.42%. In 1889, 60.47% was Protestant and 35.56% Roman Catholic; in 1930 the respective percentages were 45.47 and 36.55.

Chapter II: References


2. Ibid., p. 91.


5. Ibid., p. 108.


9. Brugmans, Paardenkracht en Mensenmacht, p. 411. In the Netherlands kitchens and bathrooms are not counted as rooms.

10. See ibid., Part II and III.

H. Roland Holst, Kapitaal en arbeid in Nederland, Vol. I (Amsterdam, 1902), Ch. 1,2.

11. G. Harmsen, Blauwe en rode jeugd (Assen, 1961), p. 34. The middleman had an established position and was called the remplaçantenbaas.

12. The resolution is in ibid., pp. 34-35.

13. In the 1860s the army in Belgium was used repeatedly to quell riots and break strikes. The socialists decided to make propaganda among the soldiers "to make the bayonets think," and to "defeat the army from the inside". The young socialists working for this purpose numbered 8,000 by 1909; although they suffered many prison terms, they were so successful that in the general strike of 1902 the government did not use the army to maintain law and order. For a short description see ibid., pp. 25-27; for more information see F. Lehouck, Het antimilitarisme in Belgie (Antwerpen, 1958).

These men were punished several times for the same offense. Initially a prison sentence of a few months was given. After serving the sentence the objector was again ordered to don a uniform and when he refused received another term in jail.

15 Harmsen, Blauwe en rode jeugd, pp. 51-52.

More detailed information on the League can be found in B. Meyer, Voorwaarts en niet vergeten (Amsterdam, 1958), part I.


17 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, De militaire dienstweigering verdedigd op het Internationale Socialistische Kongres te Zurich (n.p., n.d.).

-----Wat betekent de militaire dienstweigering? (n.p., n.d.).

-----Oorlog aan den oorlog (Amsterdam, 1901).


19 Ibid., pp. 4-5.

20 Domela Nieuwenhuis, Oorlog aan den oorlog, pp. 20-21.

21 "Herdenkingsnummer", pp. 4-5.

22 For more information see J.J. Bout, The Dutch Army During World War I (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia), pp. 17-23, and Militiawet, 1912. Wet van de 2den Februari, 1912 tot regeling van den verplichtingen ten aanzien van de Militia (Groningen, 1912).


26 For the different opinions within the Social Democratic Workers Party see J.H. Schaper, De SDAP en de anti-oorlogs raad (Amsterdam, 1915).

27 "Herdenkingsnummer", p. 6.

28 Van den Linden, De Anti Oorlogs Raad, p. 150. For the Minimum Program and the studies of each point see pp. 128-290.
See the pamphlets by J. Fedder, the articles in Het Volk, and R. Kuyper, Geen man en geen cent (Amsterdam, 1914).


Many of the speeches K. ter Laan held in parliament were printed as brochures and distributed or sold to party members.

P.J. Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, III (Amsterdam, 1932), p. 305 admits this readily and regretfully.

Van Welderen, Schets, IV, pp. 65-66, 73.


Ibid., pp. 45-58.


Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, IV, p. 206.

As reported in Het Volk, November 12, 1918.

This had been a clever, last minute move by Colijn, leader of the Anti Revolutionary Party, who was in London at this time. Normally shipments were simple addressed to "the Government of the Netherlands."

See Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, IV, pp. 210-211.

In addition to Scheffer, November 1918, much information can be found in J.C. van der Does, et al, Als't Moet, November 1918 en de Bijzondere Vrijwillige Landstorm ('s-Gravenhage, 1959).

Herdenkingsnummer", p. 6.


Herdenkingsnummer", p. 6.

Ibid., pp. 6-7.

B. de Ligt, Vrede als daad, I, p. 300.

The terms "war resister" and "conscientious objector" denote the difference between those who refused military service and went to jail and those who did alternative service because their objection was judged to be "valid". Until 1923 the ministers of war and navy decided what was a valid objection; in that year a law on conscientious objection was passed which
stipulated on what grounds alternative service could be
granted. Since the law recognized only religiously based
objections, all non-religious youths refusing to serve in the
military became war resisters (dienstweigeraars).

48 The Manifesto is printed in J. Giesen, Nieuwe Geschiedenis,
pp. 81-90, including the names of those who signed that
particular edition.

49 Certain areas, mostly along the borders and the important
harbours, came under military jurisdiction. The Dutch term
staat van beleg literally means "state of siege" but did not
give the military as much power as our "martial law".

50 See for instance, B. de Ligt, Opruiers? Het Dienst-
weigering Manifest voor de rechtbank te Utrecht verdedigd.
(Amsterdam, 1916).
L. van Mierop, Het recht der persoonlijke vrijheid tegen-
over de staatsmacht (Rotterdam, 1916).

51 B. de Ligt, Vrede als daad, I, pp. 307-308.

52 Ibid., pp. 301-302.

53 J.H. François, De dienstweigeringswet, haar toepassing
en gevolgen (Rotterdam, 1939), p. 2.

54 More information in J. Kies, Dienstweigering
(Amsterdam, 1926), pp. 6-8.

55 "Herdenkingsnummer", p. 6.

56 The No-Conscription Fellowship. A Souvenir of its Work
During the Years 1914-1919 (London, n.d.), p. 5.

57 C.J. Snijders, "De Nederlandse Landmacht 1898-1923", in
W.G. de Bas, ed., Gedenkboek 1898-1923 (Voorschoten, 1923),
pp. 206-208.

58 C.K. Elout, "De Nederlandse oorlogspsyche," in H. Brug-
mans, ed., Nederland in den Oorlogstijd, p. 358.

59 G.C.A. Fabius, De verhouding tussen volk en weermacht

60 Archief Generale Staf, Omslag 341, Pak CLXXXII, Bundel 2,
2950GS.

61 S.L. van der Wal, Herinneringen van Jhr. Mr. B.C. de
Jonge met brieven uit zijn nalatenschap (Utrecht, 1968), pp.32-33.

62 C.C. de Gelder, "Dienstweigering", Militaire Spectator
(1917), pp. 175-195.
Military Homes (Militaire Tehuizen) were recreation centers set up by the Protestants and Roman Catholics to provide "their" young men with an alternative to the camp canteen and pubs in the town. The respective religious groups thought of them as a "safe" place for "their" young men. Pastors and priests frequently visited the Homes to speak about the spiritual welfare of the conscripts.


Some of the publications were:
Socialistische Liederenbundel  Naar de Vrijheid
De Soldaten-Tribune  De Arbeider
De Soldatenalmanak  Het Anker
De Vrije Socialist  De Tribune


Ibid., pp. 114-115.


Chapter III: References

1 F.J. Krop, ed., Stelselmatig ondermijning van het gezag in Nederland (Rotterdam, 1934). The name of the association was Godsdienst, Gezin, Gezag (G.G.G.)—Religion, Family, Authority.

2 The information about the geographic distribution of the Extreme Left, and the social background of the members has been gleaned from the many brochures and articles published by the groups. Useful information was obtained from Dr. Rudolf de Jong of the International Institute for Social History who has studied the Extreme Left and who had a special link through his father, A.A. de Jong, a very active anarchist and anti-militarist. For information about the latter see R. de Jong, "Over mijn vader Albert Andries de Jong (1891-1970)", in, Mededelingenblad. Orgaan van de Sociaal Historische Studiekring, nr. 39, Oktober, 1971, pp. 16-62.

Dr. A.L. Constandse, a well known anarchist in the interwar years and presently still active as political commentator for the VPRO broadcasting organization, provided additional information in a personal letter which is in my possession.


6 Koejeman, David Wijnkoop, p. 155.

7 A.A. de Jonge, Het Communisme, p. 31.

The Communists polled 14,058 votes in Amsterdam; Rotterdam came second with 3,396. In the municipal elections the following year (1919) six communists were elected to city council in Amsterdam, three in the Hague, and one each in Rotterdam, Haarlem, Groningen, Enschede, Leiden, Arnhem, Nijmegen. In three agricultural towns in the province Groningen—Beerta, Finsterwolde, Nieuwe Schans—one representative was elected. These agricultural areas remained communist strongholds for many years.

8 A syndicalist political party appears to be an anomaly, but it was created for good reasons. In 1918 the first election with manhood suffrage was held. With it came compulsory voting. The Dutch syndicalists thought that it was better for their workers to vote for their own party than to destroy their ballot in the voting booth, or to vote for another party. Consequently the Socialist Party was formed.
See for instance the brochures D. Wijnkoop, *De ontwapening zwendel* (Amsterdam, 1921). J. Brommert Jr., *Geen man en geen cent voor het militarisme* (Amsterdam, 1922?). Anon, *De communisten en de ontwapening* (n.p., 1928?)

For general interest's sake it might be noted that brochures by all the different groups varied from 4 or 6 pages to 50 or more, the price varied from 3, 4, 5 cents to 25 cents or more, the quality of the paper and the printing ranged from very poor to very good. The printer, the place of publication, whether or not it was a reprint, and the year of printing were not always indicated with great accuracy. If the printing date could be determined from the content, it is given followed by a question mark.

Election figures are from A.A. de Jong, *Het Communisme*, pp. 41, 45. In 1922 the communists obtained 7.9% of the vote in Amsterdam, 3% in Rotterdam, 1.4% in the Hague, 3.4% in the province Groningen, and 1.6% in Overijssel. In 1925 Amsterdam gave the communists 6.9%, Rotterdam 1.7%, the Hague 1.3%, the province Groningen 2.6%. Since voting was compulsory election figures are a fairly accurate measure of the strength of a party.

It is not possible to go into details of the party strife. See *ibid.*, for more information.


"Hoe organiseren we den strijd tegen den oorlog?" *Verslag van het volkscongres te Utrecht* (Amsterdam, 1932).

The trips to the Soviet Union were inexpensive because Dutch workers were the guests of the Soviet trade unions. Only the trip to the Soviet border had to be paid.

The Independent Socialist Party was a break-away group from the Social Democratic Workers Party. The Independent and Revolutionary Socialist parties later combined into the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party. All were vituperative in their own antimilitaristic propaganda.
The Zeven Provincien affair is covered in more detail in Chapters IV, VIII, IX.


De Groot, Dertiger Jaren. 1930-1935, pp. 30-35. De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, pp. 221-224. The revolt had been the result of long term, large scale unemployment and the announcement that the government (once again) was going to reduce the welfare payments which were already too low to live on.

Election figures from A.A. de Jonge, Het Communisme, pp. 54, 65. In Amsterdam the communists polled 10% of the vote, in Rotterdam 4.5%, in the Hague 3.9%, and in the province Groningen 5.4%. In the provincial election in 1935 they captured 6 seats in Noord Holland, 2 in Zuid Holland, 2 in Groningen, 1 in Friesland and 1 in Overijssel. The party polled 136,026 votes in the 1937 elections but only 6,500 came from the three provinces—Noord Brabant, Limburg, Zeeland—south of the main rivers. In the 1939 elections the communists did not bother to have their party placed on the ballot in these provinces. They obtained 3.23% of the vote in that year.

Ibid., pp. 62-63.


A.A. de Jonge, Het Communisme, pp. 70-71.

That it was a mistake to stick so closely to Moscow was later admitted by the then Party Secretary de Groot. Dertiger Jaren. 1936-1939, pp. 113-114, Ch. 11.

"Herinneringsnummer", pp. 7, 38.

Cited in a Supplement to De Wapens Neder, January 1920. Italics and brackets in the original.

Verslag van het Internationaal Anti-Militaristisch Congres (Den Haag, 1921), pp. 61-62.


33 A. Storm, "IAMB en WRI", in Bevrijding, No. 4, August, 1931.


35 J. de Graaf, et al, eds., Handboek voor de Vredesbeweging, pp. 218-219. Most of the Dutch organizations were local ones, only ten were national. The more important ones were: the National Federation of Construction Workers, the National Federation of Social-Anarchists in the Netherlands, the Social-Anarchist Youth Organization, the Free Youth League, the Association of Social Anarchist Action, the Social Anarchist League.

36 S. Mok, De vakbeweging, pp. 142-143.

The Netherlands Syndicalist Trade Union Federation (the largest of the two) had the following unions as members: Construction Workers, Public Servants (both Amsterdam), Factory Workers (Krommenie), Textile Workers (Almelo), Metal Workers, Transport Workers (both Rotterdam), Mixed Syndicalist Society (Haarlem). Except for the latter all had "Syndicalist Federation of..." before their name. Information obtained from Syndicalistisch jaarboekje, 1932 (Amsterdam, n.d.).

37 "Herinneringsnummer", p. 9.

The Society's membership appears to have been largely located in the same areas as the syndicalists (see previous note). During the twenties most of the members belonged to the working class; in the thirties more intellectuals joined the Society. This judgement is based on reading the Society's material, small biographical sketches of certain members, and what R. de Jong told me (see note 2 this chapter).

38 For a few years the following organizations worked together in Antifo: the Independent Socialist Party and its youth organization; the National Workers Secretariat (the "old" syndicalist trade union federation), its youth organization and its women's league; the Netherlands Syndicalist Trade Union Federation (the "new" syndicalist federation—see note 36 above); the League of Anarcho-Socialists; the International Antimilitaristic Society.

39 De Wapens Neder, February and April, 1937.

40 This was Bart de Ligt's view. See "De gebeurtenissen in Spanje", Bevrijding, October, 1936.

41 There are no accurate figures for the last few years.

42 Giesen, Nieuwe Geschiedenis, pp. 182-183.

43 The letter is in ibid., pp. 213-214.

44 Cited in ibid., pp. 218-219
Throughout the interwar period many Extreme Left anti-militaristic brochures or regular publications listed names and addresses of speakers (sometimes as many as twenty or thirty). The evenings or days each person was available were listed as well as the topic a speaker was most familiar with or which he preferred—e.g. antimilitarism and trade unions; antimilitarism and youths; the arms race; the effect of chemical warfare, etc. Sometimes it was stipulated that return train fare (third class) was expected but apparently most speakers asked no money for their efforts. Popular speakers such as de Ligt, de Jong, Schermerhorn, etc., held a dozen or so speeches each month.

The law is cited in full in J. de Graaf, et. al., eds., Handboek voor de Vredesbeweging, pp. 173, 188-190.

Cited in Giesen, Nieuwe Geschiedenis, p. 277.

The articles by Heering are in Haags Maandblad, December 1924, and December 1925.

Cited in Th.W. van den Bosch, De bestraffing van principieele dienstweigeraars (Groningen, 1950), p. 7.


No official figures could be found for the Canteen Fund (mentioned in the next sentence) but the Central Intelligence estimated in 1934 that it had given out 120,000 guilders since its inception.

There are about 700 postcards (self-addressed to the Committee) with this message in the IAMV Archief, Map 126, Folder 1 "Comitee Mobiliseeren!"

Some of the postcards mention the occupation of the signatories and the lists of names and addresses in Dossier 125 do the same. It is tenuous to base conclusions on these incomplete lists but it appears that most of the people lived north of the big rivers and belonged to the working class. On the lists that I checked there were: 21 teachers, about 20 lawyers, engineers, draftsmen, etc.; 15 traders (these would probably be haberdashers, street and market sellers, etc.); 4 house painters; 5 agricultural workers; 13 dock workers; 8 carpenters; 8 metal workers; 3 factory workers; 18 warehouse, shop, or office employees; 9 typographers; 9 construction workers; 2 tailors; 3 barbers; 2 cigar makers; 2 street car drivers; and a few entries such as "mothers", "housewives", etc.

Dossier 125 also has the cash account books from 1925 to 1934. Intermittently signatories were requested to submit a 50 cent contribution. There was seldom more than 50 guilders available. A small amount was used to defray office and stationary cost, some money was spent on propaganda, most of it was given out as "support" (steun). Presumably this meant support for war resisters in jail or their families.
De Handelingen van het Algemeen Congres voor Dienstweigeraars. Utrecht 1925 (Blaricum, 1925), pp. 101-112 lists the names of those who signed.

Verslag van het landelijk congres voor Dienstweigeraars gehouden te Utrecht op 2 en 3 oktober, 1926 (Utrecht, 1926). In the Peace Palace, dossier Z 575 contains numbers 1 to 12 of Mededelingen Dienstweigerings Manifest Mobiliseeren! which provided information about new signers, finances, congresses, etc.

See the correspondence in IAMV Archief, Map 128, Folder 1.

Ibid., Map 129, Folder 1.

See Verslag 1926, op. cit., and ibid Map 126, Folder 1.

"Dienstdwang moet weg" Congres van 16 mei, 1932 (Amsterdam, 1932). There were speakers from at least twelve different pacifist and antimilitarist organizations at the congress.

Herinneringsnummer", p. 9. De Wapens Neder, May 1929. This could not be verified from non-left sources.

The names were published by De Wapens Neder, Bevrijding, De Vrije Socialist, and others.


Giesen, Nieuwe Geschiedenis, pp. 239-243 lists 813 names of men who had served jail sentences as war resisters between September 1915 and May 1923. At the 1925 War Resister Congres Giesen announced that there had been 1,000 war resisters to date. Handelingen van het Congres voor Dienstweigeraars. Utreht 1925, p. 59ff.

Th.W. van den Bosch, Bestraffing van dienstweigeraars, pp. 63-64. The figures in this paragraph are all from this book.

De Wapens Neder, September 1929.


Most of it was brought together by him in, Bart de Ligt, Kerk, Cultuur, en Samenleving. Tien jaren strijd (Arnhem, 1925). The book is also an autobiography to 1924.

Ibid., p. L.

Ibid., p. LI.

Ibid., p. LV.

Ibid., p. LIV.

B. de Ligt, De Antimilitaristen en hun strijdwezen (Den Haag, 1921), p. 5.

Ibid., pp. 5-10.

B. de Ligt, De SDAP en antimilitarisme (n.p., n.d.).

B. de Ligt, Nieuwe vormen van oorlog en hoe die te bestrijden (Huis ter Heide, 1927), pp. 56-64.

Ibid., p. 70.

Ibid., pp. 72-74.

Ibid., pp. 18-22.

B. de Ligt, "Maatschappelijke democratie" in Bevrijding, May, 1933.

The correspondence is published in Bevrijding, May, June, 1929, January 1930.

He discusses this in an article in Bevrijding, October, 1933.

"Gewapende defensie tegen Hitler", Bevrijding, November, 1933. By 1937 he had not changed his mind, see The Conquest of Violence (London, 1937), Ch. XII.

Bevrijding, October 1936.

"The Plan" is in The Conquest of Violence, pp. 269ff.

Ibid., p. 269.

See the many articles and testimonials in Mispelblom Beijer-van den Bergh van Eysinga, ed., Bart de Ligt 1883-1938.

See the article by Hans Kuysten in ibid., De Wapens Neder, September 1937, Bevrijding, October 1937. At the RIGM Congress in Paris (August 1937) about 100 Dutch people were present representing, among others, the Antimilitaristic Society, Socialist Anti War League, League of Anarcho-Socialists, War Resisters International, Church and Peace, Youth Peace Action, General National Peace Action, and several women organizations.
Chapter IV: References


The Social Democrats were much more strongly represented in the north than in the south. In 1918 the party received 30% of the vote in Groningen, Friesland, and Drente, but less than 10% in Limburg and Noord Brabant. Nationally the party polled 21% of the vote.

A few statistics gives an impression of Social Democratic Workers Party members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>1918</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1932</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friesland</td>
<td>4,347</td>
<td>5,071</td>
<td>6,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groningen</td>
<td>2,891</td>
<td>2,957</td>
<td>5,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeeland</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>2,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limburg</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>1,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Brabant</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>1,324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noord Brabant and Limburg were almost exclusively Roman Catholic and Zeeland was partly so with the remainder orthodox Calvinist. There were Catholic enclaves in the provinces Utrecht, Gelderland, in the textile area (Twente) of Overijssel, and around the city of Haarlem.

The statistics are from the various SDAP Congres Verslagen. The party kept very exact information about its membership, election results, etc., but not about the members' occupations. It is therefore not possible to give the percentage of skilled, unskilled, agricultural workers, or intellectuals in the party. No work has been done to date (1975) in the Netherlands on this.

2 Newspaper information from *Congres Verslag* 1924 and 1931. The publications of the Arbeiders pers (the party press) reached over 200,000 regular subscribers, see Boekman, Albarda, *Een kwart eeuw...*, p. 319

3 The resolution is cited in the Report of the International Peace Congress of the IFTU, 1922, p. 90.

4 *Onze partij en het militarisme. Het standpunt van den Partijraad* (Amsterdam, n.d.).
5 The motion and the discussions are in Oud, Jongste Verleden, I, pp. 282-293.


7 Verslag van het 25ste Congres der SDAP, 27-29 maart, 1921, pp. 13-15. The speech was printed in slightly altered version as a brochure. G.W. Sannes, Ontwapening! (Amsterdam, 1922).

8 The citations are respectively from Resolution I, "On the task of the labour movement in the war against war", and Resolution V, "On the task of pacifist organizations." Report of the International Peace Congress of the IFTU, 1922, pp. 201, 206.


10 J.W. Albarda, "Dienstweigering, Dienstplicht en Sociaaldemocratie", in De Socialistische Gids, Jaargang XII, June, 1927. The article was also published as a brochure. It had the same title.

11 P. Jh.J. Kies, "Dienstweigering, Dienstplicht en Sociaal-Democratie", in De Socialistische Gids, Jaargang XII, July, 1927.

12 J.W. Albarda, Aantekeningen bij Kanttekeningen (Amsterdam, 1927). This also appeared in De Gids that year.


14 G.K. van der Horst, Waarom ik als SDAPer het Manifest Mobiliseeren! ondertekende (Bussum, n.d.).

15 See for instance, E. Smedes, De vredeswacht als de sociaaldemocratische oplossing van het netelige vredesprobleem (n.p., 1931).

16 See Het Volk and De Socialistische Gids for those years and the pamphlets by Kleerekoper, Schaper, Zadelhoff, and others. Most of the brochures can be found in the International Institute for Social History.

17 See Het Volk, September, October, 1923.


19 Het Volk, October 26, 1923.
20 H.M. Ruitenbeek, Het ontstaan van de Partij van de Arbeid (Amsterdam, 1955), pp. 33, 80.

21 The party published its bill as a brochure, Naar de Ontwapening! Text van het ontwerp-ontwapeningswet van 3 maart 1925 (Amsterdam, 1925).

22 Verslag van de Commissie ingesteld door de SDAP en NVV tot onderzoek van het militaire vraagstuk (Amsterdam, 1926).

23 Ibid., pp. 47-54.

24 Ibid., pp. 131-134. My italics--JJB.

25 Ibid., p. 133.

26 Ibid., p. 194.

27 Ibid., pp. 228-229.

28 For the debates in parliament see Oud, Jongste Verleden, III, pp. 187-209. See also De Nieuwe Koers, July/August, 1928, for more specific information.

29 Het Volk, "Wetenschappelijk Bijvoegsel", January 30, 1928.

30 P.Jh.J. Kies, SDAP en Mobilisatie (Amsterdam, 1928).

31 Verslag van het 33ste Congres der SDAP, 7-9 April, 1928, Beschrijvingsbrief, pp. 4-10.

32 The speech is 19 pages in its shortened version in Verslag, pp. 52ff. The resolution is on pp. 103-104.

33 Additional justification for the position was provided by J. Oudegeest, "De Mobilisatie-Resolutie", De Socialistische Gids, Jaargang, XIII, April 1928, pp. 305-315.

34 For instance, see the detailed account in Het Volk, November 23, 1929, the brochure, J.W. Albarda, Denemarken en Nederland (Amsterdam, 1930).

35 Cornelissen, Taaie Rooie Rakkers, p. 115.

36 Cited in de Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 64.

37 Verslag van het 36ste Congres der SDAP (1931), Beschrijvingsbrief, pp. 3-16.

38 The many newspaper articles citing the speeches and opinions of party leaders are collected in the CI Report, Overzicht 2, 1931, pp. 7ff.


40 The resolution is in ibid., pp. 73-74.
The proposed bills were again published in pamphlet form. The title "Neither powder nor sword" was taken from a popular antimilitaristic song and was also the slogan on the pins worn on the coat lapel by thousands of Dutch people.

For the Social Democratic view see J.W. Albarda, Een ander licht—een ander oordeel over de gebeurtenissen met de Zeven Provincien (Amsterdam, 1933). For the way the party press reported the mutiny see Het Volk, Voorwaarts, and especially the satirical monthly De Notenkraker, of February and March 1933. The reaction of the right comes out best in Roseboek van de Muiterij (Den Haag, 1934). A balanced account is given in J.C. Mollema, Rondom de muiterij op de "Zeven Provincien" (Deventer, 1934). The official government report is named, De ongeregeldheden bij de koninklijke marine in Nederlandsch-Indie in den aanvang van 1933 ('s-Gravenhage, 1934).

The laws and their supplements are in L.A.W. Noorduyn, L.I. Frank, eds., Bijvoegsel tot het Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1933, 1934 (Gorinchem, 1934,1935), 1933 nos. 175, 176, 331, 349; 1934 nos. 7, 95, 115.

Cited in Oud, Jongste Verleden, V, pp. 118-119.

De Notenkraker ceased publication in 1936 probably as a result of the changing mentality of the Social Democrats.

The trade union "horror" book was entitled, Nie Wieder Krieg, No More War, Nooit Meer Oorlog (Amsterdam, 1929). It contained more than 60 pages of photographs of casualties, wounds, death in the trenches, destruction, etc. In the International Institute for Social History there are more than 25 SDAP/NVV antimilitaristic brochures. Some of them appeared as articles in De Socialistische Gids or had been sent out over the radio.

Not all these people were Social Democrats but they were widely read by them. For a short synopsis of the antimilitaristic Social Democrat culture see Cornelissen, Taal Rooie Rakkers, pp. 223-246. The songs of the period have been compiled by J. van de Merwe, Gij zijt Kanalje! heeft men ons verweten. Het proletariër lied in Nederland en Vlaanderen (Utrecht, 1974).

A good indication of the mood of the country is provided by the sales figures of a novel by A.M. de Jong, Frank van Wezels roemruchte jaren. Notities van een landstormman. It describes the life of a conscripted school teacher during the mobilization
1914-1918. The book makes a laughing stock of the Dutch army, its chances in case of war, its history, and its whole existence. Barring a few exceptions the officers are portrayed as stupid, bombastic, and militaristic. The tone of the novel is satirical and there are many funny anecdotes. The soldiers who "get away with things" are the most likeable. The book appeared in 1928, had its fifth printing in 1929 and its tenth in 1933. Before the war it was reprinted several more times in a cheaper edition. During the war the Germans prohibited the sale of the book. Perhaps it is an indication of the present mood of the Netherlands that the book is again popular. In 1974 the 22nd printing appeared (Querido, Amsterdam).

50 The comic, "De wereld van Bulletje en Bonestaak" was written by A.M. de Jong and drawn by Georg van Raemdonck.

51 Cornelissen, Taaie Rooie Rakkers, p. 246. The initials of the radio organizations have been used in accordance with Dutch custom. The full names of the organizations are seldom used and are probably as little known as the names behind the call numbers of radio stations in North America. Using the full names instead of the initials makes literary atrocities. For instance, VARA stands for Vereeniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs—Workers' Association of Radio Amateurs.

52 For the VARA see ibid., pp. 246-248, and Boekman, Albarda. Een kwart eeuw..., pp. 307-311. For the debates in parliament see Oud, Jongste Verleden, III, pp. 298-303; IV, pp. 229-248.

53 For instance, the speeches by Kies, November 20, 1926, Zadelhoff, February 19, 1927, and May 29, 1929, and others are available as brochures in the International Institute.

54 Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 404, Map 404/1, Comitee tot waarschuwing tegen eenzijdige ontwapening, "Verslag gebeurtenissen ingekomen stukken 1-2-1939".

55 The citation is from the issue of June 18, 1932.


For the smaller Christian-socialist groups see, R. Jans, Tolstoy in Nederland (Bussum, 1952), pp. 99-108.

57 Troelstra and Vliegen held positions in both the Second International and the Labour and Socialist International; Oudegeest and Flimmen were in the IFTU.

Cited in Ruitenbeek, Ontstaan van de Partij van de Arbeid, p. 33. See also Boekman, Alarda. Een kwart eeuw..., pp. 71-75, 90-92.

Cited in H. van Hulst, Het Roode Vaandel, p. 256.

Ibid., pp. 257-259.

Rapport van de Herzieningscommissie der SDAP (Amsterdam, 1933), pp. 29-30.

Ibid., p. 31.

Verslag van het 40ste Congres der SDAP (1934), pp. 8-11.

H. van Hulst, Het Roode Vaandel, p. 263.


Cited in ibid., p. 285.

Rapport van de Commissie ter bestudering van het militaire vraagstuk (Amsterdam, 1937), p. 3.

Ibid., p. 5.

Ibid., pp. 9-10.

Ibid., pp. 10-12.


Banning, one of those in the minority, protested very strongly against Alarda's article. See ibid., pp. 73-74. After the Congress Vliegen wrote an article in De Socialistische Gids defending Alarda's tactics. Banning's reply followed a short time later.

Alarda's speech, ibid., pp. 61-73; there is a short excerpt in Cornelissen, Taaie Rooie Rakkers, p. 124.


Cited in ibid., p. 296.
Chapter V: References


3 G.J. Heering, De Zondeval van het Christendom (Arnhem, 1924). The book was reprinted in 1929 and again in 1933. By the latter date it had been translated into English, German and Danish. I used the 1929 edition.

Some of the books explaining the orthodox-religious position on war are: E. Jansen Schoonhoven, Christelijk Pacifisme NU! (Arnhem, 1935).


4 Enka, Religieus-Socialistische stromingen in Nederland (Baarn, 1920). More information on the Society of Christian Socialists can be found in the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, B16.

5 Peace Palace, dossier Z580, B18.

6 Ibid., Z580, C30, C32.

7 Ibid., dossier Z575.

8 A.J. Koejemans, Van Ja tot Amen (Amsterdam, 1961) and the example he cites about Zutphen. J.J. Buskes, Het eiland, de stad en het Koninkrijk ('s-Gravenhage, 1946), and his experience in Amsterdam.

9 Information from the brochure, Wat wij zijn en wat wij willen (n.p., 1927), found in the Peace Palace, Z580, C28.


11 Ibid., p. 8.

12 The source of the conflict sheds a little more light on the Reformed Church mentality. It started when one pastor preached that the Paradise story could not have been literally true. The Synod demanded that he admit that Paradise, the Serpent, and words spoken by the Serpent had been "sensory perceptive realities". The "Question Geelkerken" resulted in the formation of Gereformeerden in Hersteld Verband who joined the Dutch Reformed Church after 1945.

13 The speech was later printed as a pamphlet, Fedde Schurer, Christendom en Oorlog (n.p., n.d.).

15 Ibid., pp. 6-7. See also F. Schurer, De beslagen spiegel. Herinneringen (Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 57-84.


18 De Standaard, June 29, 1929; the citation is from August 7, 1929.

19 Cited in B. van Kaam, Parade der Mannenbroeders, p. 169.

20 Information from the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, N18.

21 The letters to the classes and synod explaining the principles of the organization are in ibid., Z580, G8.

22 The Reports of the Congresses are in ibid., Z580, A30. The citation is from p. 42 of the 1928 Report. The 1937 Congress was held in Edinburgh.


24 The two papers, respectively called Bezinning and Vredeswil are in the Peace Palace, dossier Z575.


26 There is a copy of the letter in the Peace Palace, dossier Z 580, H16.

27 The resolution is on all the back covers of the early Kerk en Vrede issues and inside each issue in later years.

28 See note 3, this chapter.

29 Heering, Zondeval van het Christendom, pp. 101-119.

30 Ibid., Ch. 5.

31 Heering's standpoint is clearly encapsuled in "Vlug-schrift V", De zedelijke eisch tot ontwapening (Ammerstol, 1932).

32 See for instance the Kerk en Vrede issues of April 1926, and November 1927.

Kerk en Vrede, August/September, 1925.

Ibid., June/July, 1925, and in the issues preceding the 1929 election. Further information about the propaganda before elections in the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, C46.

Kerk en Vrede, July/August, 1929.

The citations from De Standaard and De Vrije Fries are in ibid., November 1929, April 1930.

Ibid., November 1925.

The Old Catholic Church, also known as "the Church from Utrecht" considered itself the true Catholic Church. It believed the Roman Catholic Church to have been subverted by the Jesuits, did not recognize the Council of Trent, differed about the meaning of the Eucharist and other church dogmas. It had a small but progressive membership with strong antimilitaristic sentiment. Many Old Catholics were active in the Roman Catholic People's Party. See B.A. van Kleef, Geschiedenis van de Oud-Katholieke Kerk van Nederland, second, enlarged printing (Assen, 1953).

Membership figures are from the various issues of Kerk en Vrede and from J.B.Th. Hugenholtz, ed., Handboek van Kerk en Vrede (Ammerstol, 1930). In the latter some information about the location of Church and Peace members is provided in 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>province</th>
<th>no. of local branches</th>
<th>individuals not part of a branch</th>
<th>number of pastors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Holland</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z. Holland</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friesland</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groningen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drente</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overijssel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelderland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utrecht</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeeland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Brabant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limburg</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local branches varied in membership from 14 (Schoonhoven) to 475 (the Hague). Membership in 1930 was 5,446 of whom nearly 300 were pastors. Of the latter nearly 30% were orthodox.

There is little information about the social classes Church and Peace members belonged to (but see note 47 this chapter). Dr. J.J. Buskes, one of the few surviving leaders of Church and Peace told me that initially there were many intellectuals in the organization; the many new members of the early thirties were mostly from the middle and lower middle class; the working class was very thinly represented. The lower middle class came
from the right as well as the left. At the many testimonial meetings that were held, there were always people from many different classes and "blocs". Members tended to be very individualistic which at times resulted in major disputes and self-examinations concerning the course Church and Peace should follow. (Dr. Buskes' letter is in my possession.)

41 Heering, Zondeval van het Christendom, p. 327.

42 Kerk en Vrede, June 1930.

43 Ibid., July 1931.

44 Ibid., January 1932, November 1933, April 1934.


46 Ibid., November 1933.

47 Ibid., November 1933. In addition to what is cited in the body of the thesis the questionnaire also provided information about the age and political affiliation of the Rotterdam members.

Three were younger than age 20, 31 were between the ages 20 and 30, 69 were between 30 and 40, 49 were between 40 and 50, 39 were between 50 and 60, and 23 were older than 60.

Of those who listed their political affiliation, 19 belonged to the Christian Democratic Union, 12 belonged to the Liberal Democratic League, 4 to the Social Democratic Workers Party, 3 to the Christian Historical Union, and 3 to the (Liberal) Freedom League.

There were 33 persons who, in addition to their membership in Church and Peace also belonged to another pacifist or antimilitarist organization.

There were 5 persons unemployed.

Six persons had called upon the conscientious objection law.

Although the information about the political affiliation is very slight, it does substantiate the information of Dr. Buskes (see note 40 this chapter). The two liberal parties and the Historical Union were predominantly middle class; the Democratic Union was a mixture of middle and working class.


49 Kerk en Vrede, August 1932, November 1938, "Vlugschrift no.6", Hoe onze anti-revolutionairen worden voorgelicht... Dr. Colijn over het oorlogs vraagstuk (n.p., 1932?)

50 For the comments on this see Kerk en Vrede, February 1, 1934, March 1, 1937.

Lord's Day 39 reads as follows:
Q. 104. What doth God require in the fifth commandment?
A. That I show all honour, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hands.

The first part of Article 36 reads:
We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, hath appointed kings, princes and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose he hath invested the magistry with the sword, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the protection of them that do well....

Both the Cathechism and the Confession of Faith were printed in the back of the Bibles or the Psalter Hymnals.

51 See Kerk en Vrede, August 1933, May 5, 1937, February 1, 1938.
52 Figures are from the respective issues of Kerk en Vrede.
53 Ibid., May 1933.
54 Ibid., March 1933, and "Vlugsschrift no. 8", De les van de Zeven Provincien (n.p., 1933).

The "Orange Furies" were a 19th Century phenomena. Orange-minded people demonstrated against the socialists who supposedly wanted to make the Netherlands a republic. Frequently such demonstrations resulted in the destruction of socialist meeting places, printing presses, etc. The police seldom intervened when these activities took place. In the thirties such tactics were a rarity but Orange-minded demonstrations were often anti-socialist and tried to intimidate the latter.

55 Kerk en Vrede, November 1, 1933.
56 Ibid., October 1, 1935.
57 Ibid., September 15, 1935; October 15, 1935.
58 See the obituaries by Buskes and Hugenholtz respectively in Ibid, September, October, 1938, and J.J. Buskes, Dienst aan het Woord (Apeldoorn, 1972), pp. 9, 11.
59 CI, Jaarbericht B, 1935, p. 38. Kerk en Vrede had been forbidden for the military in 1933 but this was part of a general prohibition of all publications which had criticized the government's way of ending the mutiny.
60 Minutes of the meeting of April 11, 1939, found in Box 404, Map 404/1, Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis.
61 A letter dated May 19, 1939 to the Council of Army and Fleet Padres, in Ibid.

63 J.M. Keulers, Oplossing van het militaire vraagstuk, of, Ontwapening volgens den H. Stoel (Leiden, 1921).

64 In the issues of May 14, 19, 29, June 1, 1923.

65 A.Th. Bart, Oorlog, Dienstdwang, Dienstweigering, of, Hoe geraken wij tot een practisch vredesideaal? (Den Haag, 1924).

66 De Nieuwe Koers, May 1934.


The men mentioned in the next sentence are the following. Prof. Dr. Franz Keller taught ethics at the University of Freiburg in Br. (Germany); Prof. Dr. Johannes Ude taught Christian ethics at the University of Graz (Austria). Both men frequently spoke before peace congresses, both were critical of the official Roman Catholic position on war. At the request of Church and Peace and the Roman Catholic Peoples Party both men visited the Netherlands a number of times. The Catholic State Party refused to comment on the visits. The Bishop of Haarlem and Archbishop of Utrecht tried unsuccessfully to prevent the professors from speaking in their bishoprics. Dr. M. Metzger from Meitingen near Augsburg was head of the "Mission des Weisschen Kreuzes", a well known German anti-militaristic organization. For more information see, Katholijken stemmen tegen de oorlog (Blaricum, n.d.), Liever landverrader dan Christusverrader (n.p., n.d.).


69 See G. de Langen-Wendels, De Christelijke Vredesgedachte (Utrecht, 1925), and J.D.J. Aengenent, God en het kwaad in de wereld ('s-Gravenhage, 1928).

70 G. Gorris, Katholieke Vredesgedachte ('s-Bosch, 1927), p. 35.

71 Program 1933 van de R.K. Staatspartij ('s-Hertogenbosch, 1933). The 1922 and 1929 party programs are also printed in this brochure.


73 Several issues of the paper can be found in the Peace Palace, dossier Z575, and dossier Z580, C12.

74 Hugenholtz, Handboek, p. 89.
The Roman Catholic People's Party was formed before the 1922 election. See Oud, Jongste Verleden, II, p. 41.

For the Roman Catholics in the Netherlands see, M. van der Plas, Uit het rijke Roomse leven. Een documentaire over de jaren 1925-1935 (Utrecht, n.d.).
A.A. de Jonge, Crisis en critiek der democratie (Assen, 1968).
For the warnings from the bishops see, Bisschoppelijke mandement, De Katholiek in het openbare leven van deze tijd (Utrecht, 1954).
For the changes since 1945 see NRC Handelsblad "Wetenschappelijk Bijvoegsel" June 29, 1974.

Oud, Jongste Verleden, III, pp. 4-6, and Ruitenbeek, Ontstaan van de Partij van de Arbeid, pp. 70-72, 138-9.

See, for instance, Katholieke stemmen tegen de oorlog, Wordt geen soldaat (Beroept U op de wet van juli '23), (Bolsward, n.d.).
B. Bulsing-van Besouw, De vredestaak der Katholieke Kerk (This was to have been a speech for the VARA radio but it was forbidden by the radio committee. The SDAP Press reprinted it in 1933).
W.C. Setteur; De Katholiek en de Dienstweigering (Utrecht, 1930).
J.A. Veraart, De Katholieken van Nederland en het militaire vraagstuk (Den Haag, 1929). This brochure is noteworthy. Veraart was a Member of Parliament and the leader of the "St. Michael clubs". He argues strongly that the State Party's position on war is shortsighted because all attention is focussed on "defensive war versus offensive war". The points brought up in Stratmann's book are ignored, the ethical question whether any kind of war is allowed in view of the present weapons is passed over in silence by both the Church and the State Party. He demands that the party's position for 1933 must not be vague and non-committal as in the past. It should state that the State Party is firmly convinced "that war in these times has become so terrible that a country that practises it for whatever reasons, makes itself guilty of a serious sin. Therefore, the Dutch nation is not allowed to use a war, not even as defence for its highest interests."

G.J. Heering, Katholiek Pacifisme (n.p., 1927).

W.C. Setteur was a well known speaker and publicist. He was very active in the War Resisting Congresses, was a member of the Anti Conscription Committee (see Ch. III), and was a member of the executive of the Roman Catholic People's Party.
Chapter VI: References

1 Information compiled from the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, and from the 1936 to 1940 issues of De Vredesgids. Jaarboekje ten dienste van de Vredesbeweging in Nederland ('s-Gravenhage).

2 This was written in a letter to most major newspapers. Clippings from several papers are in the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, Cl16.

3 Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 404, Map 404/1, "Verslag ingekomen stukken en gebeurtenissen".

4 Vrijzinnig Democratische Bond. The word vrijzinnig translates as "liberal" in political terms and "modern" or "latitudinarian" in religious terms. But the religious connotation remains in the Dutch use, also when used in the political sense.

5 Oud, Jongste Verleden, I, p. 33.

6 Wat de WDB hebben gedaan tot beperking van de militaire uitgaven (n.p., n.d.).

7 D. van Embden, Bezuininging, Vlootwet en Moraliteit (Amsterdam, 1923).

8 D. van Embden, Nationale ontwapening of Volksverdelging (Rotterdam, 1924). The title was a clever play on words. Volksverdediging means national defence; volksverdeling means genocide.

9 Fortress Holland was the area west of the city of Utrecht and north of the big rivers. The fortifications dated from the Napoleonic period and the areas in front could be inundated. More will be said about it in the last three chapters.

10 General Snijders wrote this in a long article in De Militaire Spectator, September 1923. The Committee investigated the riots and demonstrations in the military camps in October 1918. Its report is entitled, Commissie tot onderzoek naar de ontevredenheid in het leger ('s-Gravenhage, 1919).

11 For the speech and debate see Handelingen Eerste Kamer, 1924, pp. 390-421.


13 Text van het Gifgasrapport van de Volkenbond met een antwoord van Prof. Dr. D. van Embden op de brochure van Kapitein Maas en andere bestrijding (Amsterdam, 1925), pp. 1-23 is the Report, pp. 24-40 is van Embden's rebuttal to captain Maas.
14 D. van Embden, Waarom nationale ontwapening geboden is ('s-Gravenhage, 1932).

15 In addition to his many brochures he also wrote for newspapers from time to time. See his articles in De Telegraaf, November 27, 30, 1927; February 2, 5, 1930.

16 See for instance, Minister of Defence Lambooy in December 1927, Handelingen Tweede Kamer, p. 1056, and some of the utterances of two Prime Ministers, Chapter VIII below.

17 D. van Embden, De immoraliteit der landsverdediging (Rotterdam, 1930).

18 This Liberal Democrat also belonged to Church and Peace. His letter was published in Kerk en Vrede, April 15, 1934.

19 De Vrijzinnige Democraten en het Vredevraagstuk (Haarlem, 1937).

20 A.J. Maas wrote a few more brochures as did other people. They are available in either the Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis of the Institute for Social History.


22 Ibid., pp. 73-76, 93, 102-105.


24 Ibid., p. 170.


27 Information about membership, the branches and their location, and the important people belonging to the Association can be found in the sources cited in the two previous notes and in, Vereeniging voor Volkenbond en Vrede. Statuten: Geschiedenis: Samenstelling: Propaganda: Literatuur (Leiden, n.d.), and J.B.Th. Hugenholtz, ed., Handboek voor de Vredesbeweging in Nederland (Gouda, 1932), pp. 48-53. The Association had nearly 80 local chapters and 30 correspondence addresses in smaller places. Of the former only nine were in the provinces south of the main rivers. But several of the better known politicians who belonged to the Association were Roman Catholics.
In general it can be stated that the Association fulfilled a similar function for the Protestant north as the Roman Catholic Peace League did for the south—it provided a "proper" and respectable organization for the upper middle and upper class. But with both organizations there was a tendency for local groups, when directed by an active leader, to become more radical and more inclined towards antimilitarism than the national leaders desired.


30 Ibid.


32 De Nieuwe Koers, June 1930, March 1931.

33 Ibid., January, 1931.

34 Ibid., February 1927, January 1928.

35 Except for the films all this material is available in the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, N12.

36 J.B.Th. Hugenholtz, Het werk van de stichting "Nationale Vredes-actie" (Ammerstol, n.d.). The Social Democrats' annual parade coincided with the opening of parliament—the third Tuesday of September.


38 Information about the Press Service can be found in the Peace Palace, P1237, P1238.


40 Information from ibid., for the years 1938, 1939.

41 Jaarverslag van de commissie van voorlichting aan gewetensbezwaarden tegen den militairen dienst. Covers the period April 1, 1936 to April 1, 1938. Peace Palace, dossier Z 580, C48.

42 There is a copy of the document in Z580, C48.

43 The material is in Z580, C46.

44 De Nieuwe Koers, June 1930; May, July/August 1931.
De Nieuwe Koers, March 1932. These meetings were held where the Dutch, Belgian and German borders meet.

Ibid., July/August 1932.

In June 1932 the Peace Circles had 1,700 members. Peace Palace, dossier Z580, A18, N34 (I, II), V26.

The figures are from the Jaarverslagen van het landelijk Comitee van Mobilisatie, for the years 1933 to 1939. In ibid., Z580, C42.


See Vrede, September, November, 1938, and Vredesdaad, October 6, November 17, 1938; January 19, February 16, 1939, etc.

Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 404, Map 404/1, "Verslag ingekomen stukken 4-4-1939".

One of the better written and more clearly argued brochures is G.K.H. van der Molen, De Vrouw en de Vredesbeweging (Utrecht, 1924).

Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914), born in Austria, first heard of the international peace movement in 1887 when she was 44 years old. Within two years she wrote Die Waffen Nieder which became the best known antimilitaristic book of its time. It was translated in at least twelve languages. The first English edition appeared in 1894, Down the Weapons (Longmans & Co). After the success of the book Bertha von Suttner became an activist for peace. She travelled to many countries, attended both Peace Conferences in the Hague and became the female personification of what could be done for peace. Many books have been written about her; her own memoirs, Memoiren, appeared in 1907.

Vrouwen Vredegang (published by the Central Committee, 1937). There is much information about the Peace March in the Internationaal Archief Vrouwenbeweging.


58 **IVVV Rapport van de studie-conferentie Oorzaken, Aard, Middelen ter voorkoming van oorlog** (Amsterdam, 1934). The conference was held on May 11-13, 1934 in the Hague.


60 Ibid., in January 1936 *Vrede* reported that there were 6,400 members at that time.


62 Ibid., Book F, nos. 205-212.

63 For the "campaign" see Ibid., Book E, nos. 440-475; Book F, nos. 212J-215.

64 In 1933 HIRO had four hours broadcasting time a month, Ibid., Book G, vol. II, nos. 461-462. For the efforts on behalf of creating and maintaining HIRO see Book C, nos. 351-389; Book E, nos. 439-440; Book F, nos. 189A-199; Ordner 24, H35-80, R215; Ordner 30, R; Ordner 31, QR.

65 Ibid., Book Gl, nos. 461-511.

66 See *De Nieuwe Koers*, April 1931 and following issues for announcements of programs. Theosophists and Spiritualists also sent out programs so that each HIRO broadcast was directed by a special group. Any sudden cancellation of "their" program brought an immediate angry reaction.


68 CI Overzicht B, January 1935, pp. 77ff.
Chapter VII: References


2. Ibid., pp. 109, 111, 139-140.

3. De Moker, no. 8, 1928.

4. Ibid., June 1925. Italics in the original.

5. Ibid., April 20, 1924; June 1, 1924, etc.


7. Ibid., p. 170. De Moker, October 10, 1924, November 1, 1924.


9. The fake registration booklet is in the International Institute for Social History. It does not contain a date or place of publication.


   The police ransacked the office and printing rooms of *De Tribune* because they were certain that the registration books were printed there. But nothing was found. Much later G.J.M. van het Reve met a young communist in Almelo who had served three months in jail for distributing the booklet. He had "only" gotten three months because he was a minor figure. G.J.M. van het Reve, *Mijn Rode Jaren* (Utrecht, 1967), pp. 213-214.

   The booklets were also handed out, in plain envelopes, to soldiers going home after their tour of duty. This usually took place in train stations or on trains. Few of these booklets were recovered. The ones that were found in the barracks were only uncovered after many searches. CAD, II Div, Inv. GGL, dossier 365G, 1929. (For the location of this document see note 1, Chapter IX.)


12. CI Jaarbericht B, 1934, p. 23.


15. CI Overzicht 1, 1937, pp. 19-20


Much of the general information about the Workers Youth Federation comes from Boekman, Albarda. Een kwart eeuw..., pp. 298-300.


Many Dutch national holidays are religious days: Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Christmas.

Good examples of this are: Het vreugdelied van de dood, De Dood Spreekt..., De jeugd van Sjaak, Oorlog of Vrede, Wat wilt Ge?, and others in the Institute for Social History.


Ibid., pp. 308-309.

Verslag van het 39ste Congres der SDAP (1934). Beschrijvingsbrief, pp. 63-64.


The reasons the executive gave the rank and file were not quite honest, see Verslag van het 39ste Congres der SDAP (1934). Beschrijvingsbrief, pp. 63-64, and Ibid., 1935, p. 44. For the view from the other side see E. Smedes, De Vredeswacht als de sociaaldemocratische oplossing van het netelige vredesprobleem (n.p., 1931).

CI Overzicht 2, 1934, pp. 34-36, 41.


Cited in CI Jaarbericht B, 1937, p. 32.

Cited in Dirk Boer, Wat IS en WIL de Jongeren Vredes Actie? (n.p., n.d.). This brochure was also published under the title, Hoort onze roep. For a broader outline of the Youth Action principles see De Jongeren Vredes Actie. Karakter, Doel, Werkwijze (n.p., n.d.).


The information comes from Report of the World Youth Peace Congress, 1928 (Bilthoven, 1928), and Wereld congres der jongeren voor de vrede, 1928 (n.p., n.d.). The reports are by different writers and are not translations of each other.
The Youth Peace Action had a small section in *De Nieuwe Koers* to report its activities but the paper was generally too adult orientated to be read by many youths. The Peace Action therefore also had a section in *De Jonge Gids*, a youth-directed paper serving a number of clubs favourably inclined towards antimilitarism.

35 *Vredesstrijd*, May 15, 1929.
36 Ibid., June 1, 1929.
37 Ibid., May 29, 1930; December 1930; January 1931; June 4, 1931; May 11, 1933.
38 Ibid., November 22, 1930.
39 Ibid., July 17, 1930; November 22, 1930; January 7, 1932.
41 *Vredesstrijd*, November 24, 1932; April 24, 1933.
42 Ibid., March 9, 1933.
43 Ibid., June 8, 1933.
44 Ibid., April 17, 1934; October 11, 25, 1934.
46 *Schrijvers getuigen tegen oorlog en militarisme* (Rotterdam, n.d.).
49 In the Institute for Social History there are more than thirty brochures written by members of, or sold by the Youth Peace Action.
50 Dirk Boer, *Oorlog? Neen!* (Groningen, 1931). I used the seventh printing.
51 For instance, *Wij en de oorlog* (Groningen, 1931) third printing; *Wij en de nationale verdediging* (Groningen, n.d.), second printing, etc.
52 W.L. Warmelo, *Luchtoorlog en Gasmaskers* (Groningen, 1934).
Onze Vloot. Het scherm gaat op (Nije, 1934).

Dirk Boer, De waarheid over het Roode Kruis (n.p., n.d.).

Veiligheid?! Leiddraad voor gezinshoofden inzake gasaanvallen (n.p., n.d.). The topic was also covered in C. Huisman, Het vraagstuk der luchtbescherming (n.p., 1936).

Chemisch Weekblad, deel 34, No. 29, 1937. The title given to the brochure was, Oorlogsgassencommissie der Nederlandse Chemische Vereeniging (n.p., n.d.).

Vredesstrijd, April 4, 1935.

J. Valkhof and H. Roland Holst, Geweld, geweldloosheid, in den strijd voor het Socialisme (Den Haag, 1930).

The article "Doort de Vuren" appeared in Bevrijding, August 1931. The brochure received the same title and had no place or date of publication.


Pacifistische Volks Verdediging (n.p., n.d.).


A rather similar message can be found in G. Stuiveling, Volksweerbaarheid zonder oorlog (Amsterdam, 1939).

The estimate is made in E. Boekman, Albarda. Een kwart eeuw..., p. 245. The Roman Catholics tried to organize their children at a very early age and therefore their number is higher than that of the Protestants even though the latter were in the majority. In the thirties there were slightly more than two million children between the ages 5 and 20 in the Netherlands.
Chapter VIII: References

1 The information is compiled from Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 403, Map 403/8, a typed report from the Raad van Defensie, "Advies omtrent het verslag van de commissie voor de reorganisatie van de weermacht, 1933", p. 3; J.J.C.P. Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen en hun twintigjarige voorgeschiedenis (Assen, 1960), p. 29.

De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, pp. 64 n4, 597, 598 n2.

The sign for the guilder is fl. (from the old name of the guilder--florin).

2 Information has been obtained from the following:

Programma van de Landdag 1923, Landdag 1924, Jaarboekje 1925.
Gedenkboek Tien Jarig Bestaan 1928.


3 Boulogne, Handleiding, pp. 71, 73.

4 This was in 1936. Van der Does, Als 't Moet, p. 326.

5 Ibid., p. 279.


7 Ibid., pp. 187-207. My count of the names on these pages.

8 Ibid., p. 47.

9 Ibid., p. 57. The government ordered the guns as part of its own order from the foreign supplier. The industries and municipalities paid the government for the guns.

10 Ibid., p. 60.

11 Ibid., pp. 120-121.


13 Ibid., 1929, pp. 21-26, 31-34.

14 Ibid., 1932, p. 90.

15 The information about the Committee is obtained from the Peace Palace, dossier Z580, C16, and Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 404, Map 404/1, Voorgeschiedenis W.O. II, Nederland 1922-1938.
16 Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 404, Map 404/1, "Notulen van de vergadering 16-3-37".

17 Ibid., "Verslag van de gebeurtenissen en ingekomen stukken 13-10 t/m 8-12-1938".

18 Ibid., "Notulen van de vergadering van 14-2-1939".

19 Ibid., A letter dated March 3, 1938, and the pencilled comments on the last page of "Verslag gebeurtenissen 9-1 t/m 4-2-1936".

20 Ibid., In a memorandum dated February 17, 1939.

21 See, for instance, the following:
    M.P. Kokje, De weg naar de vrede. Antimilitaristische en pacifistische methoden (Harderwijk, 1928?).
    K.E. Oudendijk, Vragen en antwoorden over eenzijdige ontwapening en dienstweigering (Breda, 1933).

22 W. Prak, Voor een reëele defensiepolitiek! ('s-Gravenhage, n.d.).
    J.Th. Alting von Geusau, De strategische positie van Nederland in Europa (Amsterdam, 1938).
    C.J.W. Waning, De weermacht voor het behoud van de staat (Amsterdam, 1939).

23 M. Verkaak, Onze weermacht en de veiligheid der zuidelijke provincien (Lieshout, n.d.).

24 Nederland en het oorlogsgevaar (Tilburg, 1937). This brochure set out the aims of the Association for National Security.

25 See also M. Verkaak, De positie van Neerlands zelfstandigheid politiek en weermacht (Lieshout, 1935), which compares the Dutch and Belgian defence efforts.


27 Commissie tot onderzoek naar de ontevredenheid in het leger ('s-Gravenhage, 1919).


29 For the German reasons not to invade the Netherlands in 1914 see H. von Moltke, Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente (Stuttgart, 1922), pp. 16-17, 429-431.

30 Oud, Jongste Verleden, I, p. 174. During the war all mobilization expenditures were listed separately from the defence budget so that it was possible to speak of an increase over the regular 1918 defence budget in 1919.

31 De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 64 n4.


33 Oud, Jongste Verleden, I, pp. 310-311.


35 De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 68.

36 Oud, Jongste Verleden, I, pp. 170-173.

37 De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 68.

38 Ibid., p. 69.

39 For the discussion in parliament see Oud, Jongste Verleden, II, pp. 107-137.

40 Cited in Ibid., I, p. 270.

41 Information from de Jong, Koninkrijk, I, pp. 66-67, and Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, pp. 27-29.


44 Rijksarchief, Notulen van de Ministerraad, No. 23, March 22, 1920.

45 Cited in Oud, Jongste Verleden, II, p. 175.

46 Ibid., IV, pp. 101-103.

47 These, and more examples in Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p.20, J. Visser, Vijf dagen oorlog in Nederland 10-14 mei, 1940 ('s-Gravenhage, 1946), and
the documentary television program by the VPRO sent out on October 15, 1974, 'Vastberaden maar soepel en met mate. Herinneringen aan Nederland uit de jaren 1938-1948.'

48 The principal cause for the mutiny was the repeated reductions in pay: 5% in the summer of 1931, 5% six months later, and an announced 7% for Indonesians and 4% for Dutch sailors in 1933. For the literature on the mutiny see note 44 Chapter IV.

49 For the laws see note 45 Chapter IV.

50 More will be said about the unions in the next chapter. Information on them was obtained from: De ongeregeldheden bij de koninklijke marine in Nederlandsch-Indie in den aanvang van 1933 ('s-Gravenhage, 1934);
J. Swarte, Spreekpunt 1971. 25 jaar VBZ en wat daaraan voorafging (n.p., 1971);
Militair-Rechterlijk Tijdschrift, deel XXIX, 1933/1934, pp. 5-12, "Militaire bonden en krijgstucht".

51 Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis van den Generale Staf, Beknopt overzicht van de Krijgsverrichtingen der koninklijke landmacht 10-19 mei, 1940 (Leiden, 1947), pp. 2-3. (Cited as Beknopt overzicht...)

52 Helfrich, Memoires, I, p. 5.

53 Pre-training was ended in 1936; the capitulantentestelsel went into effect that same year.


55 For more information see de Jong, Koninkrijk, I, pp. 587-588, Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 34. To get from Germany to the Hague one has to cross at least one major and several smaller rivers.

56 De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 597. Beknopt Overzicht... has a separate map folder, Bijlage Ia and Ib, which are schematic impressions of the weapons and munitions requested by the Chief of Staff in 1937, the updated requests of 1939, and what was available in January 1939 and January 1940. Except for the old field artillery pieces the deficiencies in all cases were 50% or more.

57 De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 597.

58 The speech is in Oud, Jongste Verleden, V, pp. 368-369.

59 Cited in Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 36.

60 Cited in H. van Houten, Ons Standpunt (Amsterdam, n.d.). This was a brochure by the Christian Democratic Union.
Oud, Jongste Verleden, V, p. 370.

For a discussion of the border battalions see de Jong, Koninkrijk, I, pp. 594-597.

Colijn had been an army officer and took part in the expedition against Atjeh on north Sumatra. The rebellion was brought to an end and Atjeh was "saved" for the Netherlands. Thereafter he became one of the directors of the British Petroleum Corporation and was quite wealthy by the time he became a politician. He was editor of the Anti Revolutionary paper, De Standaard, and wrote extensively in the paper.

The work provisions were the usual: roads, canals, bringing land under cultivation, etc. In order to provide as much work as possible no machines were used. The work was thus very heavy, but all those physically fit had to go or their dole would be cut off. Earnings were only slightly higher than the dole, barracks were inadequate and the foremen often coarse and dictatorial. If one worked extra hard it was possible to earn an extra 10% but if too many reached this the norms were increased so that all had to work harder. Resentment against this system was high, especially since the work seemed so useless. There was, for instance, a great housing shortage in the country but the government refused to inject money into housing projects.

Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 47.

Enquetecommissie, 1C, p. 254 (witness H.A.C. Fabius).

Cited in Oud, Jongste Verleden, VI, p. 85.

This telegram activated certain units and brought the organization into readiness for the mobilization. De Geer's absence, and his choice of vacation site were not appreciated at the time. See Enquetecommissie, 2A, pp. 12-13.

See ibid., 1A, pp. 33-108, for the differences between Reynders and the government. More will be said about this in the next chapter.


H.A. van Karnebeek, De Internationale positie van Nederland in de laatste veertig jaren ('s-Gravenhage, 1938), p. 11.

For the debate see Oud, Jongste Verleden, I, pp. 261-266.

For the debates see ibid., IV, pp. 313-321.
75 Oud, Jongste Verleden, V, p. 337.
76 Ibid., V, p. 349.
77 The political reasons for this are discussed in Karnebeek, De Internationale positie van Nederland, pp. 10-13.
78 P. de Groot, De Dertiger Jaren 1936-1939, p. 84.
79 For the debate see Oud, Jongste Verleden, VI, pp. 72-82.
82 Cited in ibid., p. 7.
84 One reason the Dutch clericals opposed communism was the anti-church mentality in the Soviet Union; the wildest stories were printed about this. One anti-Soviet pamphlet listed 98 brochures directed against specific evils existing in the Soviet Union. Another reason for the dislike might very well be that the Dutch lost about 1-1/4 billion guilders in investments in Russia when the Bolsheviks came to power and which they were not willing to repay.
For the affinity of many Dutch Roman Catholics for fascism see L.M.H. Joosten, Katholieken en fascisme in Nederland 1920-1940 (Nijmegen/Hilversum, 1964).
86 See the various newspaper citations in B. van Kaam, Opstand der gezagsgetrouwen. Mannenbroeders en zonen in de jaren 1938-1945 (Wageningen, 1966), pp. 19-23.
87 D. Cohen, Zwervend en dolend. De Joodse vluchtelingen in Nederland in de jaren 1933-1940 (Haarlem, 1955), pp. 122, 262-263. As an aside it might be mentioned that Canada need not be proud of its efforts. From 1931 to 1943 she took in about 9,000 Jews—-who formed 5% of the total immigrants. Another 3,000 Jews were given temporary asylum. Ibid., pp.169-170.
88 Ibid., p. 299.
89 See the newspaper articles in B. van Kaam, Opstand der gezagsgetrouwen, pp. 23-27, 40-44.
90 De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, pp. 485-486.

91 The Dutch fascist movement was very fragmented. In 1933 the six largest groups were forbidden for civil servants. The largest fascist party was the Nationaal Socialiste Bond. Its membership stood at 1,000 in 1933, reached a high point of 52,000 in 1936 and was down to 32,000 in January 1940. In the elections for the First Chamber the party polled 295,000 votes and gained two seats; in the 1937 elections for the Second Chamber it won four seats but in the 1939 elections it only polled half the votes it had two years earlier. For more information see A.A. de Jonge, Het Nationaal-Socialisme in Nederland (Den Haag, 1968), and H. van Galen Last, Nederland voor de storm, pp. 59, 85.

92 A.C.J. Jitta, Het Nederlandse Volks karakter, pp. 21-27.

93 J. Huizinga, Nederland's geestesmerk, revised edition.

94 Nederland in Oorlogstijd. Redevoeringen gehouden te Leiden op december 14 en 15 door Prof. Dr. F. Muller, Prof. Mr. A.C.J. Jitta, Mr. Dr. van Waldré de Bordes, Mr. J. Linthorst Horman (Leiden, 1940).

95 Ibid., p. viii.

96 Ibid., p. 29.

97 The speech is cited in de Jong, Koninkrijk, II, p. 131.

98 Cited in the VPRO television documentary of October 15, 1974, Vastberaden maar soepel en met mate.

Chapter IX: References

1 Schn, H.K.V., omslag 423, dossier 3745, 1922. This chapter is based largely on material found in two military archives; the Centraal Archief Depot in the Hague and the "hulp" archive in Schaarsbergen (near Arnhem) which is the "overflow" archive of the Algemeen Rijksarchief in the Hague where there is not enough room. In order to give an exact indication of the location of each document the letters "Schn" (Schaarsbergen), or "CAD" (Centraal Archief Depot) are placed before each item. The letters that follow, "H.K.V. (Headquarters Field Army), "A.H.K." (General Headquarters Army), and others, denote the respective archive and the letters or short forms are found on most documents in their Dutch abbreviation. See the bibliography for the complete list of archives in each location.

2 W.E. van Dam van Isselt, "De bloedarmoede van het Nederlandse leger inzonderheid de infanterie", Militaire Spectator, 1930, p. 516ff.

3 See CAD, Generale Staf, pak, CCCXIX, bundel 5; A.H.K. (Kab) inv no ZG3, stuk 5282, augustus 1918; A.H.K. (Kab) inv no GG1, bundel 2274, 1918; A.H.K. (Kab) inv no ZG3, dossier 6066, 1918; A.H.K. (Kab) ZG3, stuk 6190, 1919.

4 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 947, stuk XXII, 1919-1926

5 This involved a lot of correspondence, all CAD, I Div., pak GG1, stuk G97P, 1919; I Div., pak GG1, stuk G418P, 1919; I Div., inv no GP2, bundel 188GP, 1919; I Div., inv no GP2, dossier 26GP, 1919; I Div., pak GG1, stuk G547P, 1920; I Div., inv no GP2, stuk 23GP, 1920.

6 CAD, II Div., inv no A.A.1, dossier 682, 1920.

7 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 397, dossier 8, 1920.

8 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 426, dossier 126, 1923 (49 items); omslag 442, dossier 95, 1924.

9 Some of the investigations are in the following: all Schn, H.K.V. omslag 438, dossier 3037, 1923-1926 (6 items); H.K.V. omslag 640, dossier 2155 and dossier 2147, both 1931; H.K.V. omslag 647, dossier 3334, 1931 (5 items).

10 The reports about the troubles in Ede are in CAD: I Div., inv no GP3, bundel 107GP, 1924, and bundel 18GP, 1925; A.H.K. (Kab) inv no ZG4, stuk 135, 1925.

11 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 448, dossier 2396, 1924.

12 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 486, stuk 2280 and 2689, 1926.
13 CAD, I Div., inv no GP4, bundel 65GP, 1926.
14 CAD, II Div., inv no PP3, bundel 89, 1926.
15 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 948, 1926-1930.
16 The letter is in CAD, I Div., inv no PP2, bundel 81P, 1925.
17 The order is in CAD, I Div., inv no PP3, stuk 45P, 1926.
18 The letter is in CAD, A.H.K. (L/VL Pred.) inv no AA1, stuk 315, 1927.
19 CAD, A.H.K. (L/VL Pred.) inv no AA1, stuk 316, 1926.
20 CAD, Com't der Marine archief, inv no GG5, dossier 350, 1930.
21 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 486, stuk 2695, 1926.
CAD, II Div., inv no PP4, bundel 77P, 1929
22 In a letter to the Commander Field Army. CAD, I Div., pak GGD2, stuk G206P, 1927.
23 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 560, dossier 3282, 1929.
25 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 947, bundel XXIII, 1925-1936 (57 items); H.K.V. omslag 950, bundel XXI, 1934-1937 (29 items); H.K.V. omslag 949, 1932 (13 items).
26 CAD, Com't der Marine archief, inv no GG5, dossier 305, 1930; I Div., inv no PP3, dossier 193P, 1930; I Div., inv no PP4, bundel 16P, 1931. The initials "VARA" are purposely used for the reasons cited in note 51, Chapter IV.
27 The orders are respectively in CAD, I Div., inv no PP4, dossier 139P, 1931; II Div., inv no GG2, stuk 144G, 1932.
29 CAD, I Div., inv no PP6, dossier 134, 1933.
30 See for instance Ons Leger, 1927, p. 54.
32 The 21 unions are listed in Schn, H.K.V. omslag 681, stuk 961.
The Protestant and Roman Catholic unions had 300 to 400 members each, but their membership included all ranks below officer.

Some of the correspondence between Ons Belang and the minister of defence and senior officers in CAD, I Div., inv no PP4, dossier 75P, 1931.

See for instance, Poilu, Neerland's militaire zelfmoord (Amsterdam, 1924).

Reported in Ons Leger, 1927, pp. 65ff.

De Telegraaf, September 1, 3, 7, 1927.

See the article in the Militaire Spectator, 1933, pp. 300-305 among others found in the various issues. A report from Headquarters Field Army noted that reserve officers could only be called up for 27 days a year and that it might be better to leave them at home since there was nothing for them to do: Schn, H.K.V. omslag 639, dossier 2200, 1931-1932.

Militaire Spectator, 1927, pp. 116-118; 1929, pp. 356-358 and many other articles deal with this problem.

This was repeatedly written about, see ibid., 1930, pp. 29-47, 513-532, 569-590, etc.

Orgaan der vereeniging ter beoefening van de krijgs-wetenschap, 1929/1930, pp. 413-507.

Letter is in CAD, I Div., inv no GP5, stuk 86GP, 1929.

Cited in G.J.M. van het Reve, Mijn rode jaren, p. 92. Wie zijn vader heeft vermoord/ Zijn moeder heeft vergeven/ Die is nog veel te goed/ Voor het soldaten leven. Een dief en moordenaar/ Word in een cel gesmeten/ Maar die krijgt mG op tijd/ Zijn brood en warrem eten! Maar eenmaal komt de tijd/ Dat wij de rotzooi gaan verlaten/ Vervloekt zij't regiment/ Maar nimmer de soldaten.

CAD, Archief I Artillerie Brig., inv no PP1, bundel 6P and 7P, 1933.

CAD, I Div., pak GG4, dossier G435, 1933; I Div., inv no PP6, bundel 52P, 1933 (79 items).
The Declaration is in CAD, I Artillerie Brig., inv no PP1, stuk 20P, 1933.

CAD, I Div., inv no PP6, bundel 85P, 1933; I Div., inv no PP7, bundel 33P, 1934.

The letter is dated May 5, 1933: CAD, I Div., pak GGD4, dossier G33, 1933.


In CAD, I Div., pak GG5, dossier G136, 1934.

The reports are in CAD, I Div., pak GG5, dossier G383, 1935 (8 items).


Rates of pay in the Dutch army can be found in Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 398, Boekwerk inhoudende bezoldigingsregelingen over de periode 1 Jan. 1909 t/m 1 Jan. 1957 (Handschrift 282).

Some of the prices were as follows: a cup of coffee cost 5 cents, a bowl of peasoup 7-8 cents, a cigar 3 cents, a draft beer 8 or 9 cents, an orange 3-4 cents, one liter milk 5 to 7 cents, a shave 10 cents and a haircut 25 cents. Butter was 75 cents a pound, rice 18 cents a pound, and a bicycle cost fl. 25.

In 1929 a good carpenter earned 90 cents an hour, and a metal worker 75 cents an hour. But this was before the depression. The average dole paid out in Amsterdam was fl. 12.72 a week but was reduced in 1934 to fl. 11.51 a week. Of this amount about one-third usually had to be paid for rent.

Information from J. Bieshuizen and E. Werkman, De magere jaren. Nederland in de crisistijd 1929-1939 (Leiden, 1968), pp. 36, 114; H. van Galen Last, Nederland voor de storm, p.34; and from personal discussions with many people who remember the pre-1940 period quite well.

Gedenkboek "Ons Belang", II, p. 102.

For the new regulations see CAD, I Div., pak 2AA, stuk 1878AA, 1933; CAD, Marine Staf A74, "Instructies van de marine attache, 1-11-1933".

For more information see J.L. Swarte, Spreekpunt 1971. 25 jaar WBZ en wat daaraan vooraf ging (n.p., 1971).

Cited in Gedenkboek "Ons Belang", II, p. 161

Ibid., II, p. 186.

No doubt certain NCOs were forced to leave for other reasons. In the Schön archives there are at least twenty reports about NCOs, many in administrative positions, who were caught stealing, fixing books, selling military equipment, etc. Others were considered unfit for promotion because of repeated punishment.
The report is in Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1025, stuk 1177G, 1933.

Orgaan van de Vereniging van Officieren van de Koninklijke Landmacht, Jubileum Nummer, April 1935, pp. 21-60.


Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1025, dossier 1165G, 1933, and omslag 1030, stuk 1066G, 1934; CAD, I Artillerie Brig., inv no PP1, stuk 177P, 1936; I Div., inv no PP9, bundel 111P, 1936 (10 items); II Div, inv no PP6, stuk 252P, 1936.

Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1931-1939.


CAD, Alg. Hoofdkwartier, sectie III, GG6, bundel II, and GG7, bundel II, and GG8, no bundel number.

In CAD, I Div., pak GG9, stuk G10, 1939.

The order of May 8 is in CAD, I Div., pak GG10, dossier 626G, 1939; the order of the Utrechtse Volksblad is in pak GG10, dossier 813G, 1939.

CAD, I Div., inv no PP10, bundel 146P, 1937. The Jager and Grenadier Regiments were the "elite" regiments somewhat like the British Guards Regiments.


The orders are in CAD, I Div., pak GG10, stuk 631G, 1939; Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1112, stuk 3339G, 1939.

Duplicates of the letters written by the officers for their men are in Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1941, dossier 1362G, 1935-1939 (19 items); H.K.V. omslag 1056, dossier 1105G, 1936-1939 (13 items). In Gedenkboek "Ons Leger" 1912-1937, p. 93 the secretary of the Association to Aid Conscripts calls it shameful the way employers used the draft to get rid of their people.

It might be remembered that the government reduced the re-training manoeuvres of the 1926 draft to 34 days, the 1928 and 1930 drafts to 30 days for financial reasons (see above, p. 249). Other circumstances sometimes prevented proper training.
The 1936 summer and 1937 winter draft in Assen (a large garrison) were insufficiently trained because of influenza, bad weather, and the unavailability of the rifle range. Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1066, stuk 331G, 1937.


80 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1091, dossier 1380G, 1938.

81 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 491, stuk 3272, 1926; omslag 578, stuk 109, 1928; omslag 579, dossier 45, 1930; omslag 654, stuk 299, no date. There are more folders with this kind of information.

82 Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1103, stuk 682G. Report is dated February 25, 1939.

Incorrect or sloppy saluting emerges in nearly every military report. It was the most hated part of military life for conscripts. For left-wing soldiers it was a constant reminder that people were divided into different classes. For all conscripts it was a nuisance because outside military compounds everyone of a higher rank had to be saluted. Privates thus had to salute corporals who shared the barrack rooms with them and ate at the same table. Inside military compounds only officers had to be saluted. It is a rather great contrast with the present situation in the Dutch forces where, except for formal parades, saluting is optional regardless of the rank.

83 Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Box 403, Map 403/6, 403/7, 403/11. Of these 300,000 men 50,000 were in training depots in May 1940. Of the reserve officers, 7,525 were first and second lieutenants. Almost all officers in immediate contact with the men were thus non-professionals.

On January 1, 1940 the Netherlands had 8,833,977 inhabitants; Belgium had 8,396,305 and had an armed force of about 600,000 men. Beknopt overzicht..., p. 36 n 1.

84 Enquetecommissie, 1B, p. 144.

85 Ibid., p. 183.

86 For the difficulties this could lead to see H. van Heerde, Tusschen vuur en ijzer (Meppel, n.d.), sixth printing, pp. 38-39.

87 But this draft was sent home two weeks before the invasion. Enquetecommissie, 1B, p. 143.

88 H. van Heerde, Tusschen vuur en ijzer, pp. 10ff.

89 Enquetecommissie, 1B, pp. 143-144.
"O and O" stood for Ontwikkeling en Ontspanning—Development and Entertainment, but the accent was much more on the latter than on the former. My opinion is that this was done so that there would not be a recurrence of the dullness, boredom and frustration which had been the cause of so much dissatisfaction from 1914 to 1918 when the entertainment had been much less. See the unpublished M.A. thesis, J.J. Bout, The Dutch Army During World War I, pp. 93-96 (University of British Columbia).

The reports rating the proficiency are entitled, Oefeningverslagen der infanterie. All are in Schn, H.K.V.; some of the numbers are omslag 1040, stuk 1242G, 1934-1935; omslag 768, stuk 3212, 1936, etc.

Minutes of a meeting of senior officers, October 14, 1939. Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1116, item is not numbered.

Reports are in Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1123, 1940, item is not numbered.

This was a report by the Commander Field Army, Schn, H.K.V. omslag 1121, dossier 1600G, 1940.

Enquetecommissie, IB, p. 144.

Cited in de Jong, Koninkrijk, II, p. 386.

These, and other examples, are cited in Enquetecommissie, IB, p. 104.

Ibid., LC, pp. 39, 91, 136, etc.

Ibid., IB, p. 145.


Enquetecommissie, LC, pp. 131-132.

Molenaar, Luchtverdediging, II, pp. 926-946, 1022-23.

Ibid., I, pp. 70-75.

De Jong, Koninkrijk, II, p. 373.

K.W.L. Bezemer, Zij vochten op de Zeven Zeeën (Utrecht, 1954), p. 3 for details of the anti-aircraft guns, p. 14 for ships totals, pp. 16-31 for the role of the ships in the war.


De Jong, Koninkrijk, II, p. 365.
Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 67.

Beknopt overzicht..., pp. 12-16.

Enquetecommissie, IB, p. 83.

De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 638.

J. Koolhaas Revers, Evacuaties in Nederland 1939-1940 ('s-Gravenhage, 1950). This is the semi-official history of the evacuation plans and the actual evacuations.

See the maps on pp. 360-363 above. They have been taken from de Jong, Koninkrijk, I, II, III, with permission from the author. (His letter is in my possession.)


Ibid., p. 25.

Enquetecommissie, 1C, p. 99.

De Jong, Koninkrijk, I, p. 676.

Ibid., p. 685.

Enquetecommissie, 1C, p. 235.

I.R. Reynders, De wisseling in het opperbevel..., the answer to which was A.Q.H. Dijxhoorn, Antwoord op de wisseling in het opperbevel... ('s-Gravenhage, 1946), and Reynders rebuttal, Nogmaals de wisseling in het opperbevel... (Den Haag, 1946). The official investigation is in Enquetecommissie, 1A, pp 7-98, and the Bijlagen in 1B as referred to in 1A.

Successive ministers of defence had promised that martial law would be instituted at the same time a mobilization was called. When that time arrived, the government balked. Gradually various areas were placed under martial law, but only on April 19, 1940 did it take effect throughout the whole country. See Beknopt overzicht..., pp. 17ff.

The document has been lost. After the war those involved agreed that this had been the gist of the instructions. See Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 61, Enquetecommissie, 1A, p. 36.

Of the eight divisions in the Field Army, two were in Noord Brabant and two in Fortress Holland. This was later changed.
126 Enquetecommissie, 1C, p. 77.

127 Ibid., 1A, pp. 36-43; 1C, pp. 69, 116, 610.

128 For the various reactions to this meeting see the three brochures cited in note 122 above, and ibid., 1A, pp. 44-65.

129 The constitution of the Mobilization Clubs is in ibid., 1B, p. 68.

130 The order is in ibid., 1B, p. 64.

131 Dijxhoorn's letter is in ibid., 1B, p. 63.

132 For his pronouncements see ibid., 1C, pp. 9, 11, and his De wisseling in het opperbevel..., p. 16.

133 Cited in de Jong, Koninkrijk, II, p. 201 n 7.


135 Ibid., 1A, pp. 103-108.

136 Ibid., 1A, pp. 87-94, the bijlagen in 1B, and testimonies in 1C. For the many warnings see also de Jong, Koninkrijk, II, the German plans and the clothing caper, pp. 73-77; the Venlo incident, pp. 80-115; the warnings communicated to Sas by Oster, pp. 116-120, 272-274, 464-466, etc. Also useful for this topic are, Harold Deutch, "The Conspiracy against Hitler", The Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1960), and Jean Vanwelkenhuyzen, "Die Niederlande und der 'Alarm' im Januar 1940," in Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 8 (January, 1960), pp. 17-36.

137 Cited in de Jong, Koninkrijk, II, p. 132.

138 Enquetecommissie, 1A, pp. 91-92; 1C, pp. 23, 222, 251-252.

139 Ibid., 1B, p. 25.

Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Document I-456T, a typed report by Lt-General H.A.C. Fabius.

Chapter X: References

1 Commissie tot onderzoek naar de ontevredenheid in het leger. See above, p. 246.


3 See above, p. 115.

4 See above, p. 242.

5 This included the Moerdijk bridges, which were one kilometer long, were completed in 1936, and were at that time the longest in Europe.

6 To "set" inundations means to bring the water onto the land and up to the desired depth. To bring this about as quickly as possible, certain measures have to be taken in advance, such as ensuring that there is a high water level in the canals and rivers which are to supply the water, possibly a partial cutting of dikes, etc. Even when this is done it still takes several days to flood a large area of land.

7 These accusations can be found in many right-wing publications, both official and unofficial ones. A good example is a book which appeared in 1939, H.J. Kruls and H. Staring Jr., Op de bres voor Neerlands onafhankelijkheid (Amsterdam). One of the authors was an officer; Premier Colijn and the Minister of Defence van Dijk each wrote a foreword. The book blames the antimilitarists and "defeatism" for the poor state of the military (pp. 14-16). "But now the Netherlands is finally preparing herself properly to defend her independence." This self-assurance and optimism sounds anachronistic since it is brought in connection with the past military exploits in 1572, 1813, and 1830. The battle at Quatre-Bas proved that Dutch soldiers can fight well (p. 94), the 1914 mobilization proved that Dutch defence capabilities forced the Germans to leave the Netherlands neutral (pp. 95-103). Three centuries of military advances are ignored when it is explained that when the Field Army is forced to fall back to the Fortress Holland line, "it will find there a strong, nearly impregnable defence. The military history of 1672 has taught how difficult it is to conquer inundated defences." (p. 247) Such statements give a clear example of the myopia in both military and civilian circles.

8 The first local air raid drill was held in 1933 on the invitation of the town Winterswijk; few cities followed the example because it cost money. One military observer wrote about an air raid drill in Nijmegen where the planes dropped the bombs in the wrong places. It ruined the exercise but the writer found solace in the fact that this proved that the hysterical voices of the antimilitarists about destroying all
inhabitants of a city with a few bombs was highly exaggerated. Anon., "Luchtbescherming oefeningen in Nijmegen", Militaire Spectator, 1934, pp. 498-504.

9 These "stickers" were about the size of Christmas or Easter seals and like them were placed on letters or other postal material.

10 The parties who obtained a place in parliament were: Social Democratic Workers Party, Liberal Democratic League, Communist Party, Christian Democratic Union, Roman Catholic People's Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Socialist Party (Syndicalist), Christian Socialist Party (Society of Christian Socialists). Other antimilitaristic parties were the Independent Socialist Party, Revolutionary Workers Socialist Party, the several Roman Catholic parties referred to in Chapter V, and a few smaller ones which have not been mentioned.

11 See the military sections of the Social Democrats' election booklets for more information. Especially useful is J.H. Schaper, De strijd van '22. Verkiezingsgids van de SDAP in Nederland (Amsterdam, 1922), pp. 297ff. For the way parties voted in parliament on important bills, including most military ones, see G.F. Lindeyer, Let niet alleen op hun woorden, maar ook op hun daden. Een aantal stemmingen in de Tweede Kamer 1925-1933, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, n.d.).

12 See the maps for the positions of the armies. The German 6th army only passed through the southern part of Limburg before moving into Belgium. The 18th army was to capture the Netherlands as quickly as possible to prevent any threat to the flank of the 6th army.


14 All leaves had been cancelled on May 7. This new order came as a result of requests by local commanders if men with death or serious illness in their immediate family were allowed to go home. That the leaves were only to be granted in cases of great urgency was not made clear in the telex message.

15 Dutch Army Headquarters had first hand information about the Oslo landings from a KLM pilot who had landed his regular airline flight a few minutes before the German landings. He had been able to watch the whole operation but was allowed to leave once the Germans had occupied Oslo.

16 Molenaar, Luchtverdediging, I, pp. 90-95.
The account of the battles around the airfields is based on, Beknopt overzicht..., Nierstrasz, Inleiding, Molenaar, Luchtverdediging, 2 vols., Enquetecommissie, 1A, pp. 118-125.

Molenaar, Luchtverdediging, I, pp. 357-360.

Ibid., pp. 362-363.

The German air-borne operation had as aim the quick capture of the Hague and with it the Royal Family, the government, and army headquarters (also located in the city).

The German ruses included German soldiers dressed as Dutch railway workers, Dutch military police bringing in prisoners, Dutch civilians with identification cards of various kinds, etc. For more information see the Official Histories.

Beknopt overzicht..., p. 45, p. 82.

Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, pp. 132-134.

Beknopt overzicht..., p. 69.


Beknopt overzicht..., p. 72. Enquetecommissie, 1A, pp. 143-144.

Molenaar, Luchtverdediging, II, pp. 809-815.

Ibid., II, pp. 844-845.

Ibid., I, pp. 20-22.

The Dutch employed about 20,000 men which gave them a six to one ratio in their favour.

Molenaar, Luchtverdediging, II, pp. 868-869.

Ibid., II, pp. 922-923. Of the 51 modern fighters and 9 modern bombers the Dutch possessed, respectively 33 and 2 were destroyed on the ground the first day.

Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 83. For the Moerdijk see also the Enquetecommissie, 1A, pp. 139-143.

Beknopt overzicht..., p. 30.

Ibid., p. 108.

Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, pp. 143ff. Enquetecommissie, 1A, pp. 120-122.

38 Many more examples are given in the Official Histories. For an authoritative discussion of the Fifth Column see L. de Jong, *De Duitse vijfde kolonne in de tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam, 1953), pp. 90-107, 230-251 are of special importance for the situation in the Netherlands.

That Dutch troops believed all the stories told them was just one more indication of their lack of training and discipline. Reports from civilian "observers" were passed through military channels without first checking their validity. In one military barrack in Amsterdam soldiers started firing on each other because rumour had it that Germans had infiltrated the barracks. The nearest German troops were more than 25 miles away.


40 For a short account of the bridgeheads and Waalhaven see *Enquetecommissie, 1A*, pp. 134-139.


42 *Enquetecommissie, 1A*, p. 126.


44 *Enquetecommissie, 1A*, p. 130.


46 *Enquetecommissie, 1B*, p. 168.

47 *Ibid., 1A*, p. 133.


51 The Commander Field Army later cited the units who, in his opinion, fought bravely. See *Enquetecommissie, 1B*, p. 145.


53 Examples of such conduct can be found in, Nierstrasz, *Oostfront*, pp. 180-185, 232, 233, 260, 261, 266-269, 423, 499,

54 There are many examples in de Jong, Koninkrijk, III, pp. 342-343, and Nierstrasz, Oostfront, pp. 286, 333, 391, 423, 432-433, 681.

55 Nierstrasz, Oostfront, p. 434 n 1, and de Jong, Koninkrijk, III, p. 342.


57 Cited in Enquetecommissie, 1C, p. 447.

58 Ibid., 1B, p. 183.

59 De Jong, Koninkrijk, III, pp. 408-409. Army Headquarters ordered the destruction of the archives but many units acted on their own and many papers were destroyed which had no direct connection with the war.

60 Nierstrasz, Oostfront, p. 498.

61 This statement does not exclude the fact that anti-militarism in these countries contributed to their defeat, but it did so on a much smaller scale than in the Netherlands.


In support of what has been said for the reasons for the French defeat, the following sources can be cited.

R.D. Challener, "The Military Defeat of 1940 in Retrospect" in Edward Mead Earle, ed., Modern France. Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics (New York, 1946), pp. 405-420. "I believe that the military defeat itself is largely explicable in military terms and rises out of the failure to develop a theory of warfare adequate for the twentieth century." (p. 407)

I.M. Gibson, "Maginot and Liddell Hart: The Doctrine of Defence" in Edward Mead Earle, ed. Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton, 1966, eighth printing), pp. 365-387. "But it was the political and military factors which were mainly responsible for the fall of France." (p. 365)

T. Ropp, War in the Modern World (New York, 1973, new revised edition), p. 303. "The Third Republic...continued to spend large sums on armaments, but this money was spent for the wrong things at the wrong time....The French army relied
on steel and concrete and old fashioned infantry-artillery offensives with tanks supporting the infantry."

B.H. Liddell Hart, Defence of the West (New York, 1950). "The French had almost as many tanks...[but] still clung to the 1918 idea that tanks were the servants of the infantry.... (p. 6) This breakthrough near Maastricht [at Eben Emael and in Noord Brabant]...created a whirlpool which sucked in the French mechanized divisions, so that these could not be drawn out and switched to check the deadlier menace that arose further south [from the German armour coming through the Ardennes]." (p. 8)

The foregoing hardly exhausts the judgements of the reasons for the fall of France. Samuel M. Osgood, ed., The Fall of France, 1940. Causes and Responsibilities (Boston, 1965), gives a good indication of the diversity of opinions that exist. It is noteworthy that the excerpts in the book say very little about antimilitarism as one of the main causes for the collapse of France.


64 The distance to Fortress Holland was slightly greater than that across the German corridor separating the encircled armies from the French forces in the south. But the German troops in that corridor were primarily armoured divisions and the allies could not cope with them. The German troops in the Netherlands and northern Belgium had very few tanks.

65 It is worth noting that the French troops who broke and ran the earliest were the so-called "B" series divisions. Older reservists, up to age forty, poorly armed and trained, formed the largest group by far in these divisions. These men were largely indifferent, undisciplined, and nonchalant. The similarity with Dutch troops is very marked. Insufficiently trained, improperly armed, and indifferent troops do not fight well. For a description of the "B" series divisions see, A. Horne, To Lose a Battle, pp. 188-190, 253-254, 304-309, and J. Williams, The Ides of May. The Defeat of France, pp. 134-135, 150-151.


68 The cost of the occupation in lives lost, property destroyed, and misery suffered can never be fully documented. Official Dutch estimates prepared in 1960 state that between
300,000 and 400,000 Dutchmen were forced to work in Germany of whom 5,000 died. Between 2,000 and 3,000 persons were executed in the Netherlands and 600 died in concentration camps. Approximately 20,000 perished in prisons and concentration camps in Germany. Between 104,000 and 105,000 Dutch Jews were exterminated, most of them after deportation to the east. The total cost of the occupation, including fl. 3.6 billion worth of goods taken to Germany, has been estimated between fl. 11.4 billion and fl. 15 billion (in 1938 value guilders).

In 1975 there are still people suffering the psychological effects of the occupation and the government has opened a special institution to treat those who still suffer from the "concentration camp syndrome".

One good English source which deals with the occupation of the Netherlands is W. Warmbrunn, The Dutch under German Occupation 1940-1945 (Stanford, 1963). See pp. 60, 68, 77, 78 for some of the information cited above.

The information has been obtained from newspaper articles of the late 1960s and early 1970s and most recently from the long articles in Elsevier Magazine, no. 34, August 25, 1973, the monthly Avenue, December 1974, the weekly Panorama, no. 8, February 21, 1975, and from the various publications of the VVDM and BVD. Both are military unions, the initials of the first stand for Association of Conscripts, those of the second for League of Conscripts. Initially the second was the League of War Resisters (the initials are the same in the Dutch language) but this was changed when it proved to have no viable existence. The BVD is the more radical of the two unions but the VVDM is the larger union and is more influential. In August 1975 a third military union was organized; its initials are AVNM which stands for General Union of Dutch Soldiers, and its position appears to be more conservative than the VVDM.


This objection lost its foundation when in 1974 Portugal granted its colonies independence.

This information comes from various newspaper articles which appeared in the latter part of March 1975 as a result of discussions in the Second Chamber and a preliminary report issued by the Cabinet. At this point in time, September 1975, no final decision has been made.

All newspapers wrote about the Labour Party Congress, of course. For a fairly comprehensive discussion see Elsevier Magazine, no. 16, April 19, 1975, pp. 78-82.

For the view of the rank and file of the Labour Party see, PK Tijdschrift van de Partij van de Arbeid, April 1975, pp. 9-14. Certain Labour Party MPs and Cabinet members did not share the Congress view on NATO and the proposed path for the Netherlands.
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Appendix I

A list of major organizations, parties, committees, etc., and their full Dutch names. The first number indicates the page number of first mentioning; subsequent numbers refer to pages with additional information.

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