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Damsma, J.M.

Publication date

2013

Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Damsma, J. M. (2013). *Nazis in the Netherlands: A social history of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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Nazis in the Netherlands

A social history of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945



Josje Damsma

Nazis in the Netherlands

A social history of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom

ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde
commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit
op woensdag 3 juli 2013 te 11:00

door Josje Mariska Damsma
geboren te Alkmaar

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Introduction

Family fights can have different causes: eating preferences, the in-laws, or political standpoints regarding the neighboring Nazi army that occupies your country. The last caused ongoing arguing between members of the family of Willem Hoebee. Hoebee was a director of a large company in Amsterdam. In May 1940, the Hoebee family members started an enduring family fight. Mr. Hoebee had sympathized with the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (National Socialist Movement, NSB) in the 1930s but turned against the NSB when National Socialist Germany invaded the Netherlands. However, his wife, daughter and son continued to actively support the NSB throughout the German occupation. One might say that the Hoebee family would constitute an “unhappy family” in its own particular way. At one moment during an argument, Mrs. Hoebee even threw a silver pitcher at her husband’s head. On top of that, Mr. Hoebee’s daughter expressed the hope that her father would be arrested as soon as possible. When Mr. Hoebee’s health deteriorated significantly in 1944, his wife announced that she would rather see him “die today than tomorrow.” The hatred was mutual. At the end of the occupation and of his life, Mr. Hoebee wished to name one of his friends as his heir, instead of his family members.¹

I have found this information in the postwar files of the NSB members within the Hoebee family, collected after the liberation for the purpose of their prosecution on grounds of collaboration. These files included letters and testimonies of the suspects, neighbors, friends, and of Hoebee’s housekeeper, who followed the family disputes closely. The story of the Hoebee family reveals the devastating dynamics of NSB membership on family relations and brings up many new questions about the social history of NSB members during the German occupation.

During the German occupation, NSB members were in general unpopular in the Netherlands. They were mocked in rhymes, such as:

‘NSB’er, traitor,
Job-hunter, hypocrite,

¹ *National Archives The Hague*, Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (NA-CABR) file 17828; Josje Damsma and Erik Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB’er. Nationaalsocialisten in bezet Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 2010) 53.

Brownoser of the enemy²

Members of the NSB were generally perceived as traitors, opportunists and social degenerates. In the literature about Dutch National Socialists, their “isolated position” is often mentioned.³ As a group, the NSB members may have been outcast; however, it is unclear whether and how this general rejection determined interactions in individual cases.

Most of the Dutch historiography of this period has focused on collective isolation, but stories of individual NSB members such as the Hoebee family raise many more questions about the interactions of NSB members with their social environment. Take for example another NSB member, Johannes Oldenbroek, an accountant living in Woerden, a small town in the central Netherlands. He actively participated in the NSB during the German occupation. In an internal NSB report from 1942, he was characterized as a “very diligent National Socialist [...] Therefore some people blackened his name and thwarted him.”⁴ He had many fights with his wife – they separated for a while during the occupation – and often quarreled with both NSB members and NSB opponents. Thus, he was unpopular inside and outside the NSB. The last sentiment may lead to the impression that general rejection by their social environment led to isolation of individual NSB members. Still, the question remains: not if, but how did these “fractured” relationships develop? There is a possibility that some of the people who joined the NSB were already “social outsiders” before their membership; they were already “rejected” people. Thus such rejection can be seen as independent of their NSB membership. Besides, not all NSB neighbors were rejected. For example, Hendrik Schuilenberg, an active NSB member who founded the National Socialist museum, managed to keep in touch with his neighbors throughout the

² Original: ‘NSBer, landverrader, Baantjes-jager, huichelaar, Hielenlikker van den vijand’, NIOD, Instituut voor Oorlog, Holocaust en Genocidestudies (NIOD), Dagboeken, archive 244, file 1362 A.H.J. Nord. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author of the dissertation.

³ Bart van der Boom, *We leven nog. De stemming in bezet Nederland* (Amsterdam 2003) 39-40; Ronald Havenaar, *Anton Adriaan Mussert. Verrader voor het vaderland, een biografische schets* (Den Haag 1978) 98; J. Th.M. Houwink ten Cate and N.K.C.A. in ‘t Veld, *Fout. Getuigenissen van NSB'ers* (Den Haag 1992); Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie. Nederland tijdens de oorlogsjaren 1940-1945* (Haarlem 1991) 226, 247; Dietrich Orlow, *The lure of fascism in western Europe. German Nazis, Dutch and French fascists 1933-1939* (2009) 155.

⁴ “Bevraagde is een zeer ijverige Nat.Soc en heeft niet altijd vrienden gemaakt in de Groep Woerden, tengevolge van zijn openhartig en scherp optreden tegenover slappelingen. Deswege werd hij door sommige personen beklad en gedwarsboomd.” August 22nd 1942, NA-CABR, file 52561.

occupation. They even visited “his” NSB museum.⁵ It is still unclear what determined which relationships endured and which fractured over NSB membership.

How did members of this small contested group function in a hostile society? Both NSB members and nonmembers shaped their mutual interactions. Interactions are not one-way social contacts. Interactions are dynamic, reciprocal social actions between individuals or groups. People interacting cause a two-way effect on the two (or more) people who participate in the interaction: thus, between NSB members and nonmembers. In the interaction between individuals belonging to these groups, there may have been repetitive patterns: the patterns of interaction. The patterns of interaction are related to the issue of the mindsets and actions of NSB members during the German occupation.

The main question of this study is: what was the influence of NSB membership on a members’ life and on his or her social relationships? In order to answer this question I will study different themes. First, I will analyze the mindset of NSB members; the ideology of the party and the influence of ideology on individual members. Second, I will study the participation of local members and the local party organization: did all NSB members express their membership as openly as did Johannes Oldenbroek? In other words: were they committed to the NSB? The issue of participation is related to the level of organization. How was the organization internally organized; how were the relationships between local members and party leaders? Third, what was the role of violence? And finally: how did these different themes work out in the final phase of the occupation, with an impending National Socialist defeat? These questions will in the end lead to answers on the level of politicization of NSB members on a local level.

Studying the daily life of Dutch Nazis in the occupied Netherlands is a study not only about Dutch Nazism but also about Dutch society, and the level of politicization on a local level. One of the key terms describing Dutch society in the first half of the 20th century is “verzuiling” (pillarization). Pillarization is a description of Dutch society in which almost all Dutch citizens were more or less locked into various ideological or religious segments of society. They were divided into roughly four groups: Catholics, Protestants, socialists, and liberals.⁶ One might say that pillarization depoliticized Dutch citizens because people who

⁵ NA-CABR, file 64233.

⁶ Arend Lijphart, *Verzuiling, pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek* (5th edition 1984; Amsterdam 1968) 28-29.

belonged to a certain group bonded with other people of the same group but failed to bridge to other groups. Thus, members had to mobilize their own group because reaching out to other groups was very difficult. This pillarized society is interesting for the study of Dutch Nazis, who lacked a natural constituency. Moreover, fascists tried to abolish all divisions in society.

The structure of the introduction is as follows: first I will briefly present a historiography of the NSB. Then I will explore the international debates about fascism and National Socialism. After the international debates, I will present a brief overview of the history of the NSB before May 1940, and of the political history of the NSB under German occupation. Hereafter, I discuss analyzing patterns of NSB members.

Historians and the NSB

During the NSB's existence, contemporary historians had already begun to interpret the party and its members. In the 1930s the writer Menno ter Braak explained the NSB as a movement full of resentments. He described the typical NSB member as follows: "He is quasi-heroic, he's quasi-public, quasi-decent he is, he's quasi-Germanic ... but behind all these quasi's resentment howls."⁷ During the occupation, the Communist Theun de Vries published a novel about a member of the paramilitary division of the NSB. De Vries too named resentment as the main motive behind Dutch National Socialism. He gave a Marxist interpretation about a young man who was attracted to National Socialism, not out of political reasons, but out of frustration about his own place in society.⁸

After the downfall of the NSB, historians analyzed the NSB from different perspectives. Historian Loe de Jong wrote about the NSB in his *magnum opus* about the Dutch occupation. One may say he incorporated a history of the NSB into his books. His study is based on a wide range of archival material from the NSB itself and from individual members. Therefore, his study remains one of the most important contributions to the

⁷ "Hij is quasi-heroïsch, hij is quasi-volks, hij is quasi-fatsoenlijk, hij is quasi-germaans... maar achter al die quasi's loeit het ressentiment," Menno ter Braak, "Het nationaal-socialisme als rancuneleer" (1937) in: Idem, *Verzameld Werk*, III (1949) 574-594, here 576-578, 583-584, 589.

⁸ Theun de Vries, *W.A.-man* (Amsterdam 1982, first published in 1944).

history of the NSB. Like Ter Braak and De Vries, De Jong saw the NSB as a party full of resentment and failures.⁹

De Jong's study is not the only one on the NSB bookshelf. From the 1960s until the 1980s several studies on the NSB were published.¹⁰ A.A. De Jonge studied the prewar history of the NSB. De Jonge focused mainly on the ideological developments of national propaganda.¹¹ Others studied the local level. G.A. Kooy analyzed the nazification and denazification of NSB members in Winterswijk, a village close to the German border. The study focuses on the reasons for joining and leaving the NSB. It offers many interesting insights about NSB members: it reveals the great extent to which the local dynamics depended on the capacities of local NSB leaders. However, it deals to a lesser extent with the actions of NSB members during their membership.¹²

Other researchers analyzed the political and social backgrounds of people who voted for the NSB. They revealed a pattern of NSB voters who were mostly loosely attached to political or religious groups. Plus, they argued that NSB members came from all socio-economic backgrounds.¹³

The NSB leader Mussert was analyzed by three scholars: Ronald Havenaar in 1978, Jan Meyers in 1984, and Tessel Pollmann in 2012. Havenaar portrayed Mussert as an ideologically “empty” man, a colorless man.¹⁴ In 2012, Tessel Pollmann wrote a debunking

⁹ However, his analysis of the social surroundings of NSB members remained one-dimensional stating that they were despised and isolated within society; Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Deel 1 voorspel* (Den Haag 1969) 317. And the whole series, 14 parts, published between 1969 and 1994: De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog: deel 1-deel 14* (Den Haag 1969- 1994)

¹⁰ Also on NSB-propagandist Max Blokzijl: René Kok, *Max Blokzijl. Stem van het nationaal-socialisme* (1980); an autobiography by Catharina Gosewins, *Een licht geval* (Amsterdam 1980); in 1984: J. Zwaan, ed., *De zwarte kameraden: een geïllustreerde geschiedenis van de NSB* (Weesp 1984); Harmjan Dam, *De NSB en de kerken. De opstelling van de Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederland ten opzichte van het christendom en met name de Gereformeerde Kerken 1931-1940* (Kampen 1986).

¹¹ A.A. de Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland. Voorgeschiedenis, ontstaan en ontwikkeling* (Den Haag 1968); mainly based on: A.A. de Jonge, *Crisis en Critiek der democratie. Anti-democratische stromingen en de daarin levende denkebeelden over de staat in Nederland tussen de wereldoorlogen* (Utrecht 1982, first published 1968).

¹² Gerrit Andries Kooy, *Het ebec van een volkse beweging. Nazificatie en denazificatie in Nederland. 1931-1945* (Assen 1964). In the same year about Catholics and Dutch fascism: L.M.H. Joosten, *Katholieken en het fascisme in Nederland 1920-1940* (1964).

¹³ Nico Passchier and Herman Hendrik van der Wusten, ‘Het electoraal succes van de NSB in 1935. Enige achtergronden van verschillen tussen de gemeenten’ in: P.W. Klein and G. J. Burger, *De jaren dertig. Aspecten van crisis en werkloosheid* (Amsterdam 1979); H.W. von der Dunk, ed., *In de schaduw van de depressie. De NSB en de verkiezingen in de jaren dertig* (Alphen aan de Rijn 1982).

¹⁴ Havenaar, *Mussert*, 83-85; Havenaar also wrote: Ronald Havenaar, *De NSB tussen nationalisme en ‘volkse’ solidariteit. De vooroorlogse ideologie van de Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (Den Haag 1983). Because Meyers based his study more on material from Mussert himself and interviews with people around Mussert, he wrote a more positive portrait of Mussert: Jan Meyers, *Mussert. Een politiek leven* (Amsterdam 1984).

study of Anton Mussert and his surroundings, showing how corrupt and unconventional Mussert actually was.¹⁵

The new study by Pollmann is one of the many studies recently written on the NSB: the NSB seems to have become a trending topic.¹⁶ Historian Gertjan Broek studied paramilitary groups in Amsterdam, from the party's emergence until 1942. Broek revealed the violent character of members of these groups.¹⁷

In 2009, Edwin Klijn and Robin te Slaa produced the most important recent contribution to the history of the NSB. They analyzed local and national party archives from 1931 until 1935, presenting a rich study of that period. They convincingly argued that the NSB was already radical and fascist in its first years of existence.¹⁸ Klijn and Te Slaa also broadened their scope from ideological developments to organizational structures and practices of local NSB members, an approach which is still underexplored for the wartime NSB.

The recent studies show that there is a basis for a new study on NSB members during the German occupation. In addition, recent international perspectives on indigenous fascist organizations have led to new questions regarding the Dutch case.¹⁹ Scholars of fascism²⁰ have broadened their scope from the political elite to the local members and the man in the street. In their studies of fascism, the behavior of individual fascists takes a central place. One of these authors, sociologist Michael Mann, points to the need to explain fascism by understanding fascists. He states that a sociology of the party's members is

¹⁵ Tessel Pollmann, *Mussert & Co. De NSB-leider en zijn vertrouwelingen* (Amsterdam 2012) 25-27.

¹⁶ In 2001 Chris van der Heijden wrote a controversial study on the Second World War with an underlying assumption regarding the role of chance in the choice for or against the NSB; Chris van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden. Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam 2001).

Koen Vossen, *Vrij vissen in het Vondelpark. Kleine politieke partijen in Nederland 1918-1940* (Amsterdam 2003); Bart van der Boom, 'De lokroep van de beweging. De NSB beloofde een nieuwe wereld en een nieuwe mens', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 16 (2007) 30-36; Theo Gerritse, *Collaboreren voor een betere wereld. De memoires van vier Nederlandse nationaal-socialisten* (Soesterberg 2007); Gerard Groeneveld, *Zo zong de NSB. Liedcultuur van de NSB 1931-1945* (z.p. 2007); Zonneke Matthée, *Voor volk en vaderland: vrouwen in de NSB 1931-1948* (Amsterdam 2007); Anton Adriaan Mussert and Gerard Groeneveld, eds, *Nagelaten bekentenissen. Verantwoording en celbrieven van de NSB-leider* (Nijmegen 2005); Alic Noorlag, *Een leven lang gezwegen. Getuigenissen van voormalige NSB'ers en hun familie* (Bedum 2007).

¹⁷ Gertjan Broek, *Weerkerpsen, verantwoording*, (forthcoming, AUP).

¹⁸ Robin te Slaa and Edwin Klijn, *De NSB. Ontstaan en opkomst van de Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging, 1931-1935* (Amsterdam 2009) 782-784.

¹⁹ From for example Aristotle Kallis, Michael Mann, Roger Paxton and Roger Griffin. The most important English contribution is Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi rule and Dutch collaboration. The Netherlands under German occupation, 1940-45* (Oxford 1988).

²⁰ I use fascism with a capital letter F for Italian Fascism and without referring to the ideology.

necessary as well as taking into account their ideological motives.²¹ From a different perspective, Robert Paxton focuses on the practices of fascists. Thus, the latter “socio-political” approach has changed its focus to a more bottom-up methodology. This methodology is closely connected with *Alltagsgeschichte*, or microhistory, which has become popular in the study of National Socialists in Nazi Germany.²² This approach of bottom-up methodology should produce new insights about the NSB members and about the Dutch occupied society.

Studying the NSB is also related to international studies on fascism. Since the turn of the 21st century, the study of fascism has been booming. Many handbooks were published: in 2003 Aristotle Kallis completed *The Fascism Reader*, in 2009 Richard Bosworth published the *Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, and Constantin Iordachi *Comparative fascist studies: new perspectives* in 2010. Also Robert Paxton, Michael Mann, and Roger Griffin added new perspectives on the study of fascism.²³ These authors discuss how to approach the subject: as a cultural, political, or social history.

In 2012 Aline Sax defended her thesis on Flemish collaborators under German occupation. Her study was on a broader group: that of collaborators instead of only on members of the National Socialist movement. She studied a group of more than 300 collaborators, and used letters and judicial material as sources. Her main focus is on the worldview and motives of these people. She concludes that many Flemish collaborators were indeed ideologically committed. She also argues that most networks of collaborators were

²¹ Michael Mann, *Fascists* (New York 2004) 1-3, 140-147.

²² Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York 1992); Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London 1996); Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror. The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York 2000); Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler. Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford 2001); Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge 2003) Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What we knew. Terror, Mass Murder and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany. An Oral History* (New York 2005); Robert Gildea, Olivier Wieviorka and Anette Warring, eds, *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini. Daily Life in Occupied Europe* (Oxford 2006); Bernward Dörner, *Die Deutschen und der Holocaust. Was niemand wissen wollte, aber jeder wissen konnte* (Berlin 2007); Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge 2008).

²³ Aristotle Kallis, *The Fascism reader* (London 2003); R.J.B. Bosworth, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford 2009); Mann, *Fascists*; Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism. The Sense of a New Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke 2007); Aristotle Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism. The eliminationist drive in fascist Europe* (New York 2009); Shlomo Avineri and Zeev Sternhell, eds, *Europe's Century of Discontent, the Legacies of Fascism, Nazism and Communism* (Jerusalem 2003) 4; Mark Mazower, *Dark continent. Europe's twentieth century* (New York 2000) 10-11. And on European fascist groups: Charles S. Maier, 'Taking Fascism Seriously', in: Avineri and Sternhell, *Europe's Century of Discontent*, 43-59, here 50; Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London 2004) 73-74; Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Comparative fascist studies. New perspectives* (London 2010).

closed; only in a few cases did people break out of these closed networks.²⁴ This evidence, of course, makes it interesting to see how the social dynamics functioned in the Dutch case.

International debates about fascism and National Socialism

The German Nazi occupation impacted many aspects of the social and personal lives of Europeans.²⁵ Inhabitants of occupied countries had to make up their minds about whether to support, ignore, or resist the German occupier. Support for the occupying regime took different forms: collaboration by officials, economic collaboration, or political collaboration. In Western Europe, fascists had the choice to actively collaborate with Nazi Germany (in Eastern Europe the German Nazis left ample room for political collaboration).²⁶ All collaborating fascists had to maneuver within the context of an – in their eyes – ideologically friendly occupying regime, which was unpopular in the collaborators' society.

I will briefly elaborate on the (dis)similarities between fascism and National Socialism. Fascism and National Socialism have many – but not all- characteristics in common. National Socialism used to be seen as the most radical expression of fascism. Ernst Nolte's radicalization theory implies a logical development from fascism to National Socialism, which is a rather deterministic and finalistic approach.²⁷ Recently, scholars have examined National Socialism much more as a specific type of fascism. Thus, fascism is the overarching term and Nazism the outstanding example.²⁸ Nazism distinguishes itself by its racial-biological anti-Semitism, whereas fascism (in first instance) aims at a national unity and a purified race without specifically defining it by the exclusion of Jews. However, many fascist parties gradually adopted anti-Semitic and racial-biological language.²⁹ I will use this debate to pose a questions as: did NSB members accept or embrace racial theories in general and anti-Semitism in particular?

²⁴ Aline Sax, *Voor Vlaanderen, Volk en Vaderland*, 381-393.

²⁵ Gildea, Wieviorka, and Warring, *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini*, 1-15.

²⁶ Cornelis Lammers, 'Levels of collaboration. A comparative study of German occupation regimes during the Second World War', *The Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences* 31 (1995) 3-31.

²⁷ Ernst Nolte, *Die faschistischen Bewegungen. Die Krise des liberalen Systems und die Entwicklung der Faschismen* (Munich 1966); Vossen, *Vrij vissen in het Vondelpark*; 165; De Jonge, *Crisis en critiek der democratie*, 16.

²⁸ Mann, *Fascists*, 9, 44-47; Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*; Roger Griffin, Werner Loh and Andreas Umland, eds, *Fascism past and present, west and east: an international debate on concepts and cases in the comparative study of the extreme right* (Stuttgart 2006) 29.

²⁹ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 117, 121.

The definition of fascism is highly debated, but there are some overarching elements. Looking at the core of fascism, one should focus not only on the things fascists were fighting *against*; one should primarily focus on everything they fought *for*.³⁰ Putting together elements proposed by the historians Roger Griffin, Aristotle Kallis, Robert Paxton and Mark Mazower and the sociologist Michael Mann, I define fascism as:

A revolutionary ideology, originated in the first half of the 20th century, which rejects the old order, and aims to rebuild a completely new national community, based on a corporatist economy, the struggle of a hierarchy of race, with a focus on empire and with paramilitarist groups using violence means.³¹

Fascism is *revolutionary*. Fascists tried to radically reshape society and politics by radical means.³² With these radical means fascists aimed at unifying the community. The fascist revolutionary faith in a unified community is the key for understanding fascist élan.³³ In order to create the revolutionary shift in political structures, the fascist movements needed manpower. To be more precise: they needed revolutionary men and women. Revolution involves an emphasis on youth. Fascism in all countries made a “fetish of youthfulness.”³⁴

Fascist movements demanded total dedication and subjection of the individual to politics. Members of fascist parties not only had to believe in fascist political ideology, they also had to act according to it. Fascism is more than a policy; it is a style, a way of being, and

³⁰ Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 3, 5.

³¹ “Fascism is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism.” (Michael Mann), “Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.” (Roger Griffin 1991) “Fascism is a form of programmatic modernism that seeks to conquer political power in order to realize a totalizing vision of national or ethnic rebirth. Its ultimate end is to overcome the decadence that has destroyed a sense of communal belonging and drained modernity of meaning and transcendence and usher in a new era of cultural homogeneity and health.” (Roger Griffin 2007); “Fascism may be defined as a form of political behaviour marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalists militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elite groups, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion.” (Robert Paxton), all in: Iordachi, ed., *Comparative fascist studies*, 19-27

³² Bertrand Russel, ‘Extract of the Ancestry of fascism’ in: Griffin and Feldman, eds, *Fascism. Critical concepts in political science* (2003) 34; Roger Griffin, ‘Fascism and modernity’ in: Griffin and Feldman, eds, *Fascism*, 76.

³³ Griffin and Feldman, *Fascism*, 78. Also on Nazism: George Mosse, *Nazi culture. Intellectual, cultural, and social life in the Third Reich* (New York 1966) XXV. On the revolutionary aspect of fascism: Michael Howard, *Liberation or catastrophe? Reflections on the history of the twentieth century* (London and New York 2007) 7.

³⁴ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, xxxiii.

a way of behaving or reacting to the circumstances of life.³⁵ In the words of historian George Mosse in his study of Nazi culture: “the boundaries between public and private were abolished, just as the dividing line between politics and the totality of life had ceased to exist.”³⁶ All individuals had to be brought under control of the party as the representative of state and nation. This aspect of totalitarianism is, as Mosse explains, very visible in the German Nazi state. In Germany, the party was the spider at the center of the web. Attaining such a position was far more difficult in an occupied society, where the nazification largely came from outside.

In the occupied Netherlands nazification was more problematic than in Germany. Initially, the opportunities for nazification were far more limited than in German society, and one of the assignments of National Socialists would be to establish Nazism’s grip on society. In addition, the Netherlands had a political culture that is generally perceived as moderate and pragmatic or even as nonviolent.³⁷ Thus, was the NSB revolutionary, and if so, did the non-NSB members recognize the party’s revolutionary character?

Another essential element in fascism is the idea of a: “volksgemeenschap,” a *national community*.³⁸ Fascists maintained a collectivist view of society and the economy: the collective was more important than the individual. Creating a unified national community was a fundamental purpose of fascism. Unlike in liberalism, individuals were not the key components of society. The party was of all-embracing importance, more important than individuals, and than the state. One could say that the party fused with the state and in the end made it wither away. However, this also meant that the non-party members were seen as less important than members or as outsiders. They did not belong to the revolutionary vanguard movement.

Fascists aimed at a unified and purified *national* community, which in the case of the NSB became complicated because the NSB depended on a foreign power; the Nazi regime

³⁵ Eugen Weber, ‘Extract from Varieties of Fascism (1964) in: Griffin and Feldman, *Fascism*, 76.

³⁶ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, xx.

³⁷ About Dutch non-violent political culture and the objections against this image: Hermann von der Dunk, ‘Toen werd het levensgevaarlijk ... Nederland oorlog en geweld’ in: Conny Kristel et al., eds, *Met alle geweld. Botsingen en tegenstellingen in burgerlijk Nederland* (Amsterdam 2003) 13-34; Peter Romijn, ‘The image of collaboration post-war Dutch society’ in: 1945. *Consequences and sequels of the Second World War. Bulletin of the International Committee of the History of the Second World War*, 27/28 (1995) 311-324, here 311-312; Bob Moore, ‘The Netherlands’ in: Bosworth, *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford 2009) 453-471, here 453.

³⁸ Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* 17, 38-56; Te Slaa and Klijn, *De NSB*, 792; Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, ed., *Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main 2009).

facilitated the position of the NSB. For a fascist organization in theory this was complicated because of its “hyper nationalist” nature.³⁹ Fascist movements glorified their own national past and included these into their national myths in order to serve national regeneration. This distinction made it, in theory, even more difficult for indigenous collaborating fascist movements to formulate their ideas about loyalty towards a foreign occupier. The closeness of indigenous fascist parties to the occupier required compromises. To what extent could the NSB still propagate a *Dutch* national united community?

The revolutionary ideals included restructuring the economy into a *corporatist* system. Corporatists interpret the community as an organic body, in which everybody – employees, employers and state officials – had a fixed place. In fascist corporatism the state controlled the economy from the top down but left space for private enterprise. Consequently, fascists fought against communism, which aspired to abolish classes and the state. At the same time, they contested capitalism because it undermined, weakened or marginalized the state.⁴⁰ The corporatist element of fascist ideology is particularly interesting in the Netherlands when one thinks of the specific, divided structure (the pillarization) of society during that time. The Dutch fascists saw this pillarization as a body in which every limb worked separately instead of as a collective. Thus, they had to fight against the specific and strong divided structures in Dutch society. In fact, Dutch historians perceived pillarization as one of the main limitations working against a vital fascist movement because people were already locked into groups and were not interested in new political movements.⁴¹

The fascist concept of restructuring state and society involved a constant “*struggle*”, one of the key terms of fascism.⁴² The term is derived from the social Darwinist discourse of survival of the fittest. This struggle was related to the party’s hierarchical view of society and the aim for a “purified” race. According to fascists, society was by nature hierarchical and should be hierarchically organized. In order to build this ideal, hierarchical state, they had to

³⁹ Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe. 1919-1945* (London 2003) 117, 159.

⁴⁰ Kallis, *Fascism Reader*, XV; Mann, *Fascists*, 6.

⁴¹ Moore, ‘The Netherlands’, 453; Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 98; For the debate about pillarization see: Piet de Rooy, *Republiek van rivaliteiten* (Haarlem 2002) 174-180; Lijphart, *Verzuiling. Pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek*, 62-67, 99, 119-127, 131; J.C.H. Blom and J. Talsma, eds, *De verzuiling voorbij. Godsdienst, stand en natie in de lange negentiende eeuw* (2000) 207-212.

⁴² Paxton, *The anatomy of Fascism*, 41. Also for the National Socialists in Flemish Belgium: Aline Sax, *Voor Vlaanderen, volk en Führer. De motivatie en het wereldbeeld van Vlaamse collaborateurs tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog 1940-1945* (n. p. 2012) 388-389.

struggle. The struggle included race “purification.”⁴³ The (re-) establishment of the *hierarchy of races* was a central revolutionary ideal of fascism: the superior race (the Germanic one) was supposed to struggle to establish its domination over all other races.⁴⁴

Fascist parties were in favor of a national community; however, not all subjects belonged to that community. Some were considered superior to others; they were more “national” than others. For that reason, one common element in all fascist movements was the enforcement of “us” versus “them.”⁴⁵ National Socialist movements were exclusivist parties in the extreme. The inequality of people was one of the main principles of National Socialism.⁴⁶ The main target of National Socialists was the Jews. The targeting of the Jews transformed an abstract ideology into a fighting movement with concrete aims.⁴⁷ In constantly repeating claims about the inferiority of the Jews, fascists placed them outside society. It was not only about excluding one group; fascists in fact propagated physical removal by means of violence.⁴⁸ Exclusion and violence were not just venerated theoretical concepts; they were brought into practice. Fascism required total dedication towards the fascist goals: a unified community where all members actively participated in creating a new fascist society or were excluded from society.⁴⁹ With its demands for members’ dedication to the struggle, fascism lays a claim on the lives of fascists. If Dutch fascists were indeed dedicated strugglers for the New Order, they had to actively exclude everybody who did not support or fit in with that aim.

The principal violent actors were members of the *paramilitary* organizations of fascist movements.⁵⁰ In sociologist Michael Mann’s definition of fascism, the paramilitary element is essential: “Fascism is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism.”⁵¹ Thus, the paramilitary groups are supposed to play an important role in every fascist organization. Members of this group are the ones who actively show their

⁴³ Harald Welzer, *Daders. Hoe heel normale mensen massamoordenaars werden* (Amsterdam 2006) 50; Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience*, 103-130.

⁴⁴ On the superiority of collectiveness above individualism (and race): Welzer, *Daders*, 31-33.

⁴⁵ Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 253-255.

⁴⁶ Welzer, *Daders*, 31.

⁴⁷ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, xxvii.

⁴⁸ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 137.

⁴⁹ Bosworth, *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, 1; Griffin and Feldman, eds, *Fascism*, 76, 78; Griffin, Loh and Umland, eds, *Fascism past and present, west and east*, 29; Kallis, *The Fascism reader*, 5, 7; Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire. Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London 2008) 7, 12; Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 85; Mann, *Fascists* 16, 358.

⁵⁰ Michael Howard, *War in European History* (updated edition 2009, London etc. 1976) 109-110.

⁵¹ Mann, *Fascists*, 13.

political choice and bring their ideas into practice. They were the ones who, in the words of historian Michael Howard “would wrest the destiny of mankind from the frock-coated old dodderers round their green baize tables and shape a cleaner, more glorious future”.⁵²

The paramilitary groups were very visible in Italy and Germany, but how visible were the paramilitary men in the Netherlands? And how did such units contribute to the image of Dutch National Socialists?

The fascists’ wish for national unity and a purified race coincided with their wish to build an *empire*. Fascists looked back on glorified pasts and believed strongly in expanding the current nation state. Mark Mazower convincingly stated the central importance of the Nazi’s imperial fantasy.⁵³

In the case of the Netherlands, the indigenous aims clashed with the aims of the Nazi Germany. The Dutch lost their most important colonial possession the Dutch Indies during the German occupation, as a result of the imperial hunger of Japan, an ally of Nazi Germany. Here is another problem the Dutch National Socialists had to solve in order to remain credible in their own eyes and in those of their fellow countrymen. How did the Dutch fascists cope with the ideological problem that the aim for a colonial empire was thwarted by Japan? Did they consider subscribing to the German Nazi ideal of colonization of Eastern Europe as a substitute or not?⁵⁴

The previously presented issues lead to questions about the “Dutch” versus the “fascist” character of the NSB and its members and about developments regarding this issue. During the occupation, the NSB was influenced by the Germans but at the same time struggled with its own interpretations of fascism. Collaboration with the Germans did not mean that NSB members thought and acted exactly in the same way as German Nazis. In the years before the occupation, the NSB built up its own ideology that it developed further during the years of collaboration with the Germans. The NSB had also developed its own organizational structure. Its members were part of an international fascist development and were at the same time indigenous National Socialists. The difference between the two lies in the origin of the political organization and ideology. The NSB was indeed inspired by the German

⁵² Howard, *War in European History*, 119-120.

⁵³ Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 7, 12.

⁵⁴ Jennifer Foray, *The Kingdom Shall Rise Again. Dutch Resistance, Collaboration, and Imperial Planning in the German-occupied Netherlands* ([New York] 2007).

Nazis and the Italian Fascists; their collaboration was indeed based on feelings of mutual understanding. And because the NSB had developed its own ideas in the 1930s, the NSB had to maneuver between these ideas and the German ones during the German occupation.

NSB before May 1940

The largest group of Dutch fascists was organized in the NSB, an organization founded by civil engineer Anton Adriaan Mussert on December 14th, 1931. Thus, by May 1940, the indigenous fascists had been active within the Dutch political spectrum for more than eight years. These formative years were relevant for the wartime NSB in several aspects. The party had already experienced brief success. The prewar NSB peaked in 1935, when it succeeded in winning 7.94 percent of the popular votes in provincial elections, an unprecedented result for a newcomer party in contemporary Dutch parliamentary history. Thus, the NSB had been a political player, visible in the public sphere and represented in Parliament.⁵⁵

In 1935, 50,000 Dutch citizens out of a population of nearly nine million aligned themselves with the NSB. Compared to the movement of the communists, who in its heyday of 1939 gained the support of 10,000 members, the National Socialists were quite successful indeed.⁵⁶ The NSB attracted members from different strata of society⁵⁷ and with different socio-economic backgrounds. The NSB also won the support from Dutch colonists in the Dutch East Indies, present-day Indonesia. In fact, in the first years 50,000 guilders came from overseas to the NSB in the Netherlands.⁵⁸

The NSB constructed its ideological framework in the 1930s. The movement had to position itself in the national political discussions and in debates about international politics. The NSB had – like other fascist parties abroad – adopted a revolutionary program and ideology. Some Dutch historians considered the NSB to be a conservative petit-bourgeois

⁵⁵ In several towns NSB members used violence in their confrontations with opponents: Te Slaa and Klijn, *De NSB*, 21-23.

⁵⁶ Communists in 1939: G. Voerman and J. Wormer, 'De CPN in cijfers, 1909-1991' in: M. Schrevel and G. Voerman, eds, *De communistische erfenis. Bibliografie en bronnen betreffende de CPN* (Amsterdam 1997) 164-165.

⁵⁷ As the NSDAP was in Germany: Detlev J.K. Peukert: 'Fascism and the crisis of modernity: NSDAP members and supporters' in Kallis, *The Fascism Reader*, 401; Mann, *Fascists*, 20.

⁵⁸ Moore, 'The Netherlands', 456; Tessel Pollmann, "Men is fascist of men is het niet". De Indische NSB als imperiale droom en koloniale melkkoe' in: M. Bloembergen and R. Raben, eds, *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief* (Leiden 2009) 169-186; Pollmann, *Mussert & Co*, 241-242.

party.⁵⁹ That image of a conservative party is challenged. Recently, several historians have pointed out that the NSB was radical or revolutionary from its early years onwards.⁶⁰ According to them, the NSB was to a certain degree revolutionary in its propaganda in its first years.

NSB members expressed themselves openly on the streets. In order to overthrow the liberal, democratic political order, the NSB had established an active paramilitary organization: *Weer(baarbeids)afdeling* (referred to as WA). Members of the WA were looking for confrontations with their political opponents, such as communists.⁶¹ WA men –like the *Sturmabteilung* of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) – carried out many violent actions against Jewish people and others considered enemies of the movement. The paramilitary division fits into the central elements of fascism discussed above.

The relative success of the NSB was partly due to the same factors that had caused the rise of fascism in surrounding countries: the Netherlands had been hit by the Great Depression as well and suffered from an economic slump while the legitimacy of its democratic political system was called into question.⁶² In the course of the 1930s, the political climate grew more polarized. Due to the economic problems public opinion was heavily divided over how to solve the crisis. In these years, extreme anti-democratic parties were active in the political arena and on the streets. In addition to these factors, Dutch historians connect the success of the NSB with the wish for strong leadership, its well-built organization, and its rather vague ideology, so that a wide range of people could find something they liked in the ideas.⁶³

One of the other main causes of fascist success elsewhere was absent in the Netherlands: the existence of a front generation. Unlike France, Belgium and Italy, the Netherlands had maintained its neutrality during the First World War and lacked that war's

⁵⁹ De Jonge, *Crisis en critiek*, 27, 384; Bart van der Boom, *Kees van Geelkerken. De rechterhand van Mussert* (Utrecht 1990) 32.

⁶⁰ The NSB program was unambiguously fascist from the start: Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 101; Gertjan Broek *Ploertendoders, koppelriemen en boksbeugels. De Bijdrage van de radicale Amsterdamse NSB'ers aan het politieke klimaat in de jaren 1935-1937* (unpublished Masters' thesis Open Universiteit Nederland) 3-4, 41; Te Slaa and Klijn, *De NSB*, 782-784.

⁶¹ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 172-173.

⁶² Mann, *Fascists* 23, 81; Paxton, *The anatomy of Fascism*, 16, 77, 79.

⁶³ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland.*, 40, 76-77.

painful legacy.⁶⁴ Another factor impeding the success of fascism may have been the pillarization of Dutch society. Therefore, the number of people willing to change their political allegiance was rather low.

A broader public beyond the party membership shared some ideals of fascism in the Netherlands as in other countries. From the 19th century onwards there existed critiques of liberalism and the liberal-capitalist state from both the left and the right. Moreover, groups other than the fascists embraced the wish for a homogenous state. At the same time, the mobilization of the masses created an opportunity for mass politics. It was in this political landscape that the Dutch fascists argued for a strong state, an imperium, a national community and the creation of a new man, belonging to the national community and obedient to the strong state.

During the 1930s the success of the Dutch Nazis was brief. Between 1936 and May 1940 the number of NSB members declined. During that time the democratic establishment organized a *cordon sanitaire* to curb the influences of radical political groups like communists and members of the NSB.⁶⁵ The Dutch government introduced a ban on the public display of uniforms by political organizations, and members of the radical movements were excluded from government jobs. These people were not allowed to be teachers, members of the police, or be employed in the local administration.

Thus, in 1940, when these indigenous “real” fascists found the opportunity to gain power by collaborating with the German Nazi occupier, their peak lay five years behind them and their influence in the local administration was non-existent. In the 1930s they had developed a fascist ideology and style. That starting point has consequences for the analysis of Dutch fascists during the occupation. When the Germans occupied the Netherlands, a group of Dutch National Socialists stood ready at their service. Radical National Socialists aspired to take over local power positions. Its pro-German orientation made the NSB the main candidate for a platform of political collaboration. In their Dutch context of the time, the NSB was a movement past their political heyday and marginalized in the political sphere.

⁶⁴ WWI experience is one of the explaining factors of the rise of Fascism, however, neutral states were heavily affected too: Mann, *Fascists*, 9, 66; Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 80-81, 105; Kees van Geelkerken, *Voor Volk en Vaderland*, 75-81.

⁶⁵ In Sweden we can observe a similar process: Lena Berggren, ‘Swedish Fascism: Why Bother?’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37-3 (2002) 395-417, here 411. According to Stanley Payne countries with stable democracies, like Britain, France and the Low countries, were largely immune to Fascism; Kallis, *The Fascism Reader*, 186.

Now history seemed to offer new chances. Thus, when their ideological example – Nazi Germany – invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, the Dutch National Socialists persuaded themselves that it was their turn to take the fate of the nation into their hands.

Dutch National Socialists under German occupation

“After eight years of struggle, the day has come to harvest.”⁶⁶ (*De Daad*, May 31st 1940, Amsterdam)

The German invasion in May 1940 was not totally unexpected, but still many Dutchmen were shocked by German Nazis’ hostile move.⁶⁷ Any last hopes for the Dutch to again (after WWI) remain neutral were destroyed. In preparation for a possible German invasion the Dutch government had made a list of 2,300 leading National Socialists to be imprisoned in order to prevent treasonous actions and chaos in the streets. However, this plan largely failed; reality turned out to be difficult to handle. Germans and German-oriented people were put in improvised camps. In the end, over 10,000 National Socialists were interned, seven of whom died in prison.⁶⁸

Many Dutch citizens believed – wrongly, it turned out later – that a “fifth column” had assisted the Germans in their conquest of the country; this charge is often stressed in diaries and newspapers, and even after the war it was still believed as true. This accusation strongly contributed to the anti-patriotic image of Dutch National Socialists.⁶⁹

In May 1940, German authorities took control of the Dutch administration. All over Europe they chose different approaches for the occupied territories, depending on how they perceived the inhabitants. The German occupier believed the Netherlands might play a crucial role in the expansion of the German empire. Mazower puts the aims of the German occupier in the context of an expanding empire, where the Netherlands had to fulfill a central position. The Netherlands were part of North-Western Europe and its people

⁶⁶ *De Daad*, May 31th, 1940; NIOD.

⁶⁷ Van der Boom, *We leven nog*, 30.

⁶⁸ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 165.

⁶⁹ Van der Boom, *We leven nog*, 29, 39-40, 87; Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch collaboration*, 265; Loe de Jong, *De Duitse vijfde colonne in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, (Amsterdam 1953) 249-251.

belonged to the “Germanic race.” Thus, it seemed even more necessary in the end to integrate the Netherlands into their German empire.⁷⁰

By the end of May 1940, Hitler decided to establish a civil administration under the Austrian *Reichskommissar* Arthur Seyss-Inquart, which strongly tied the Netherlands to the powers in the center of the Nazi empire.⁷¹ The German occupation administration needed Dutch helpers in order to be able to control and eventually to nazify the Netherlands.⁷² The process of nazifying the Netherlands could be executed or supported by NSB members, the first candidates for political collaboration. Thus, the participation of political collaborating movements was crucial for the implementation of the policies of the German Nazi occupier. According to Kallis indigenous fascists were often more radical and violent than the German occupation authorities. According to historian Stathis Kalyvas occupation forces are generally “looking for active collaboration from a small number of dedicated supporters, and passive but exclusive collaboration from the population at large.”⁷³

The promising statement “after eight years of struggle, the day has come to harvest” was spread to all members of the NSB in Amsterdam in May 1940.⁷⁴ The outburst of hope came after days of despair and confusion when prominent members of the NSB were arrested and interned. The NSB had in fact never failed to support the German policies in the 1930s. Nevertheless, they had stayed mostly inactive during the days of the German invasion, while some NSB members even had fought in the Dutch army against the invaders.⁷⁵

June 22, 1940 marked a defining moment. On that day, the NSB organized one of the biggest party events in its history; thousands of members came together for a rally in the

⁷⁰ Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 207; Ido de Haan, ‘Imperialism, Colonialism and Genocide. The Dutch Case for an International History of the Holocaust’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden (BMGN)-The Low Countries Historical Review(LCHR)* 125-2/3 (2010) 301-327, here 314-315.

⁷¹ The organization of the German administration was scattered; though, for most Dutch inhabitants and also for “ordinary” members of the NSB, the distinction between various bodies and parties was hard to see; De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, V, 50. The installment of a civil administration had various reasons; Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, ‘Vertrek van Wilhelmina was niet van wezenlijk belang voor hoge aantal joodse slachtoffers’, *NRC Handelsblad*, August 19th, 1997, 7.

⁷² Lammers, ‘Levels of collaboration’.

⁷³ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 282. The role of the NSB members was therefore essential in the implantation of Nazi policies, by taking over the institutions of government and civil society. Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (2006) 104; Peter Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd. Besturen onder Duitse bezetting* (Amsterdam 2006). 308-309, 315, 322. Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 18, 233, 261, 317-319; Bob Moore, *Victims and survivors. The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherland. 1940-1945* (London 1997) 73, 81.

⁷⁴ *De Daad*, May 31th, 1940.

⁷⁵ De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, III, 112-113, 505.

village of Lunteren. The most striking act was their presentation to Hermann Göring, commander of the *Luftwaffe* (the German Air Force) of a huge bronze bell, which they offered for the purpose of being melted down to provide raw material for ordinance manufacture. Thus, they embraced the German occupier and denounced the Queen of Holland and her Dutch government, who fled to England.⁷⁶ This gift to Göring was even more remarkable because of the devastating bombardment by the same *Luftwaffe* of Rotterdam on May 14th, killing between 600-900 people and destroying over 20,000 houses, which secured the victory of the German army and made an equally deep impression on the Dutch people.⁷⁷ From that symbolic handover to Göring onwards, the NSB would actively collaborate.

After the German victory, members of the NSB were filled with confidence in their own possibilities. The period of the occupation was the first and only opportunity for NSB members to put their ambitions into practice. This period enabled the Dutch National Socialists to seek fulfillment of their ideals, even while it became increasingly clear that the German authorities would set the parameters.⁷⁸ During the first period of the occupation, the NSB developed from a nonconformist and protesting outsider organization into a party that aspired to sharing power with the foreign occupier and bearing responsibility for leading the Dutch state.

The inverse experiences of NSB members and the anti-National Socialist part of the population set the stage for their perspectives and interactions during the German occupation of the Netherlands. The NSB perceived the German occupation as liberation and a window of opportunity. They believed that political power was within reach, just as indigenous fascist groups in other countries did.⁷⁹ For the NSB, the German victory was the new point of departure for their political aspirations: not a period of occupation and repression but an opportunity to gain power.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Van Geelkerken, *Voor Volk en Vaderland*, LXVII; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* IV, 241-246.

⁷⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* III, 394-395.

⁷⁸ Paxton, *The anatomy of Fascism*; Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 4-5; e.g. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* IV, 603, 820; De Jong, *Koninkrijk* V, 58, 235-238; Van der Boom, *We leven nog*, 29, 40, 81.

⁷⁹ Bruno De Wever, *Greep naar de macht. Vlaams-nationalisme en Nieuwe Orde. Het VNV 1933-1945* (Gent 1994) 349; Bruno de Wever, 'Belgium' in: Bosworth, *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford 2009) 470-487, 514; Martin Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium. Léon Degrelle and the Rexist movement. 1940-1944* (1993) 59; Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling. A study in treachery* (Cambridge 1999) 173-213; Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 183-184.

⁸⁰ Van Geelkerken, *Voor Volk en Vaderland*, 290.

Nonmembers disapproved of the choice and the chances of the NSB. The NSB leadership and members had deliberately chosen in favor of the German regime and against the prewar system. Therefore NSB members were, according to fellow Dutchmen, “even worse than the Germans.”⁸¹ Moreover, both NSB members and nonmembers expected the NSB members to receive many lucrative positions within and through the German administration of occupation. This contributed further to the party’s negative image.

However, in political terms the NSB still remained an outsider; contrary to all expectations, the Dutch fascists initially failed to gain a major position within the occupation regime, and they proved to be unable to rally other Dutch behind them. While the estimations differ, the membership rates did not exceed 100,000.⁸² Information about the generally negative image of the NSB reached the German headquarters as well. The Germans saw this widespread attitude towards the NSB as an obstacle to making use of the unpopular NSB. In several reports of the *Generalkommissariat für das Sicherheitswesen* (General Commissar for Security Matters), the German sources mentioned the unpopularity of the NSB.⁸³ Moreover, they wished to set their own agenda and to avoid a situation like the one that Quisling had created in Norway, immediately after the 1940 invasion. Unlike in Norway they chose not to make use of the local fascists to rule the country; Mussert did not seize power by a coup-d’état as Quisling had. In the beginning, the German authorities still tried to appease the conservative elite instead of siding with the eager Dutch National Socialists. Germany’s initial gentle approach to the Dutch non-National Socialist politicians was also influenced by the Germans’ inability to protect the colonial empire: the Dutch Indies. Seyss-Inquart immediately stated that the Germans did not have any imperialistic aims regarding the colony and tried to appease the conservative elite.⁸⁴

A movement that competed with the NSB was the Nederlandse Unie (NU), founded in July 1940. The aim of the NU was to recognize the changed political landscape in the Netherlands and Europe and to build a society based on a broad national cooperation,

⁸¹ A.D. Belinfante, *In plaats van bijtjesdag. De Geschiedenis van de Bijzondere rechtspleging na de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Assen 1978) 464. See also: Jeffrey W. Jones “‘Every Family Has Its Freak’: Perceptions of Collaboration in Occupied Soviet Russia. 1943-1948”, *Slavic Review* 64 (2005) 747-770, here 768.

⁸² Kooy, *Het echee*, 101.

⁸³ Generalkommissariat für das Sicherheitswesen (HSSPF), NIOD, archive 077, file 359, June 3, 1940; Generalkommissariat für das Sicherheitswesen (HSSPF), NIOD, archive 077, file 353, July 6, July 21, August 26, September 23, October 1, 8, 22, 1940. According to Paxton Hitler was reluctant to use local fascist movements and preferred to work with conservative elites; Paxton, *The anatomy of Fascism*, 111, 114; Dahl *Quisling*, 173-213, 242, 291.

⁸⁴ Mazower, *Hitler’s empire*, 105-106.

harmonious arrangements and social justice. In order to build that society the NU had to cooperate with the German and Dutch authorities.⁸⁵ The number of followers of the NU greatly exceeded those of the NSB: approximately one million sympathizers of whom 600,000 were members of the NU. Despite several concessions to the Germans, the Germans decided in December 1941 to ban the NU.

When the German authorities banned the NU, the NSB became their only option. The initial unwillingness of the German authorities to use the NSB as a political partner changed in 1941. From then on, The Germans used the NSB in two ways: the NSB as a political organization and as a political partner, and NSB members to recruit for positions locally. In both ways the role of the NSB increased.⁸⁶ By then, the German authorities had recruited many Dutch National Socialists for positions such as mayors, local administrators and policemen.⁸⁷ The NSB was not allowed to form a government, as the Quisling movement had in Norway in 1942. Actually, one of the reasons the German rulers in Holland chose to keep their distance from the NSB was the fact that Hitler regretted his decision to allow Quisling to obtain a prominent political position.⁸⁸

However, the NSB became a political player on the local level. Gradually, the NSB was a designated provider for candidates for vacant local government positions. Thus, at this level, the NSB became a willful participant in sharing power. In addition, Mussert received the title of “leader of the Dutch nation” in December 1942.⁸⁹ The NSB became an insider in the political sphere but on the illegitimate ground of its solidarity with the Germans. NSB’s claim to leadership in national and local politics was not based on a large constituency but was due to its relationship to Nazi Germany and the shared National Socialist ideology. Its members had National Socialist missionary ethics of sacrifice in common with the German occupiers; their loyalty towards the fascist cause set them apart from other forms of wartime collaboration.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Wichert ten Have, *De Nederlandse Unie. Aanpassing, vernieuwing en confrontatie in bezettingstijd. 1940-1941* (Amsterdam 1999) 221-228.

⁸⁶ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 277; Martin Conway and Peter Romijn, eds, *The War for Legitimacy in Politics and Culture 1936-1946* (Oxford 2008) 86, 112; Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 315.

⁸⁷ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 322, 372-373, 380-381, 413.

⁸⁸ Dahl, *Quisling*, 291.

⁸⁹ Pollmann, *Mussert & Co*, 126-127.

⁹⁰ Their ideological affinity with a foreign ruler “collaborationist”; Yves Durand, 'Collaboration French-style. A European Perspective' in: Sarah Fishman et al., eds, *France at war. Vichy and the historians* (2000) 61-76; Jones, 'Every Family Has Its Freak', 748, 750; Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 282.

With the support of the German occupation regime, the NSB could expand all their political subsidiary organizations for National Socialist women, men and children. Moreover, they were able to exercise considerable influence in new fascist state organizations. Dutch historians have already analyzed the structures of these organizations.⁹¹ However, it remains unclear how many and how often members participated in these organizations. The organizations created a network for NSB members. It is possible that these National Socialist social networks led to higher political participation.⁹² In a polarized atmosphere such as an occupied society, groups may develop into an increasingly distinct entity with common goals and a common fate.⁹³ The mutual support of Dutch and German Nazis created an atmosphere in which the Dutch National Socialists increasingly linked their fate to the German Nazis.

Analyzing interaction patterns

The study of social relations of NSB members can perhaps benefit from discussions on different concepts of social interaction. All social relations were under pressure during the German occupation. In this period, many questions arose about loyalties towards the occupier, standpoints towards National Socialism and about whom one could trust in an occupied society. While a shift of governments in a democratic political system does not require taking a stand, a foreign occupier may put this burden on every individual. Making a choice about collaboration– working with the enemy– will in the end be an issue for each individual citizen.⁹⁴ This makes it even more important to focus on individuals throughout society instead of only on the elite when analyzing war and occupation.⁹⁵

⁹¹ De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, De Jonge, *Nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, Kooy, *Het ebec*.

⁹² Structure and strength of a social network can even lead to higher political participation; Scott D. McClurg, 'Social Networks and Political Participation. The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation', *Political Research Quarterly* 56 (2003) 449-464 here 459.

⁹³ David K. Sherman, Michael A. Hogg, Angela T. Maitner, 'Perceived Polarization. Reconciling Ingroup and Intergroup Perceptions Under Uncertainty', *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 12 (2009) 95-109, here 96.

⁹⁴ Collaborateurs de sentiment (Rex): the collaborationists: for a large part social misfits and political deviants; Jan T. Gross, 'Themes for a Social History of War Experience and Collaboration' in: Istvan Deák, Jan T. Gross and Tony Judt, eds, *The politics of retribution in Europe. World War II and its aftermath*, 15-37, here 24-28; Durand, 'Collaboration French-style. A European Perspective', 70-72.

⁹⁵ Gildea, Wiewiorka and Warring, eds, *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini*, 5. It was a dilemma for people in the Netherlands and in all occupied areas of the Nazi empire; Cornelis Lammers, *Vreemde overheersing. Bezetten en bezetting in sociologisch perspectief* (2005) 19; Peter Davies, *Dangerous Liaisons, collaboration and World War Two* (Harlow 2004) 13, 105.

The traditional image of NSB members is that they were “isolated” and “non-Dutch” and therefore placed outside Dutch society. As mentioned before, the ruling perception has been that most NSB members were conservatives and developed into alien and isolated radicals. The origins of this image originated from portraying Dutch political society as a pillarized one, with every traditional ideological or religious community locked into its own institutions. Challenging the old ideas about NSB members may lead to new insights about Dutch society during the German occupation. Until recently, these perspectives were rather binary and static.⁹⁶ One group belonged to the NSB and supposedly was alien and hated; another group organized themselves into resistance movements and was thus perceived as representing the “real” Dutchmen.⁹⁷

Such binary logic is also related to the dominance of the national Dutch perspective in the history of the German occupation. In the history of individuals, this perspective was dominated by normative questions, about having been either “right” or “wrong.” Dutch historians Jan Bank and Hans Blom challenged his perspective in the 1980s.⁹⁸ Lately, the discussions about the choices and the behavior of the Dutch have reheated.⁹⁹ In these discussions, one of the main disputes involves whether it is possible or desirable to use a “normative” approach. This dispute is also related to the question about the underlying causes behind an individual’s choice to support National Socialism, take part in the resistance or remain a bystander. Historians have debated whether the choice for joining one

⁹⁶ Josje Damsma and Erik Schumacher, ‘De strijd om Amsterdam. Een nieuwe benadering in het onderzoek naar de NSB’, *BMGN-LCHR* 124:3 (2009) 329-348, here 347-348.

⁹⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk I*, 308-310; idem, *Het Koninkrijk V*, 232-240; idem, *Het Koninkrijk VI*, 511; De Jonge, *Nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 188; idem, *Crisis en kritiek*, 260; Kooy, *Het ebec*, 5; Dam, *De NSB en de kerken*, 52; Groeneveld, *Zo zong de NSB*, 119-120; Havenaar, *Mussert*, 42, 81; Sytze van der Zee, *Voor Führer, volk en vaderland. De SS in Nederland* (Meppel2008) 99; Van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden*, 210; Vossen, *Vrij vissen in het Vondelpark.*, 194; Van der Boom, *Kees van Geelkerken*, 42.

⁹⁸ Jan Bank, *Oorlogsverleden in Nederland* (Baarn 1983) 3-30; Hans Blom, *In de ban van goed en fout. Geschiedschrijving over de bezetting in Nederland* (Leiden 2007) 25.

⁹⁹ Martijn Eickhoff, Barbara Henkes and Frank van Vree, ‘De verleiding van een grijze geschiedschrijving. Morele waarden in historische voorstellingen’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 123 (2010) 322-330; Barbara Henkes, ‘De Bezetting revisited. Hoe van De Oorlog een ‘normale’ geschiedenis werd gemaakt die eindigt in vrede’, *BMGN-LCHR* 125 (2010) 73-99; Barbara Henkes, ‘Verschillende opvattingen over taak en wezen van geschiedschrijving’, *BMGN-LCHR* 125:4 (2010) 108-110; Hans Blom, ‘Een heel eigen manier van kijken’, *BMGN-LCHR* 125:4 (2010) 90-107; Evelien Gans, ‘Iedereen een beetje slachtoffer, iedereen een beetje dader. De Nederlandse Historikerstreit over de grijze oorlog’, *De Groene Amsterdammer* 134:4 (2010); Chris van der Heijden, ‘De oorlog als mensenverhaal. Grijs verleden revisited’, *De Groene Amsterdammer* 134:17 (2010). In the line of “perpetrators” and “victims”: Sytze van der Zee, *Vogelvrij. De Jacht op de Joodse onderduikers* (Amsterdam 2010); Koos Groen, *Fout en niet goed. De vervolging van collaboratie en verraad na de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Hilversum 2009); Jan Sintemaartensdijk and Yfke Nijland, *Operatie Black Tulip. De uitzetting van Duitse burgers na de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam 2010).

of the National Socialist organizations was determined by an individual's ideology or character or by his or her socio-economic conditions.¹⁰⁰

An element in De Jong's study is the general public opinion towards the NSB. Recently, historian Bart van der Boom added to the study of public opinion an analysis of the daily lives during the occupation through a sample of diaries.¹⁰¹ In these diaries, negative attitudes towards the NSB are often expressed. The disparagement was shown publicly in different ways. Examples of misbehaving NSB members were magnified to strengthen the negative image of the group.¹⁰² Through all these ways, the negative image became widespread in public opinion. However, it remains unclear what determined opinions regarding individual NSB members.

The NSB itself also published regularly about its isolated position in Dutch society.¹⁰³ The NSB leaders used its "isolated" situation to portray its members as victims. By constantly proclaiming their isolation and victimhood they tried to enhance the internal group solidarity and activity of NSB members. Therefore they reinforced the image of suffering, heroic National Socialists, who struggled for their ideals despite the opposition they met. These patterns of "victimhood" fit into theories about fascism. Cultivating a sense of victimhood was a common element in many fascist parties, and, as mentioned before, at the same time "struggle" was one of the fascist's key words.

In addition to considering theories of fascism, it is also important to observe which other theoretical frameworks are useful in explaining the interactions between NSB members and their surroundings. As Kevin Morgan, Gidon Cohen and Andrew Flinn argue in a connected field in their study of the social history of communists in British society, there is no such thing as a "closed society."¹⁰⁴ In general, the NSB was a strongly hated political organization. However, feelings and attitudes towards a group tend to be different from the attitude or feeling towards its members. It still remains an open question how the general feeling of revulsion against the NSB as a movement affected opinions towards individual NSB

¹⁰⁰ Josje Damsma, 'Los van "nieuw fout" en "grijs"', *Holland. Historisch Tijdschrift* 43:2 (2011) 98-107.

¹⁰¹ Van der Boom, *We leven nog*; Bart van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot. Gewone Nederlanders en de Holocaust* (Amsterdam 2012).

¹⁰² Norbert Elias, *Gevestigden en buitenstaanders* (Amsterdam 2005) 12; in 1965 published in English as N.Elias and J.L. Scotson, *The established and the outsiders: a social enquiry into community problems*.

¹⁰³ Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen: 'In ons isolement ligt onze kracht' (n.p. [1937]); Vossen, *Vrij nissen in het Vondelpark*, 191.

¹⁰⁴ Kevin Morgan, Gidon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Communists and British society. 1920-1991* (London 2007) 8.

members. To what extent could an individual member be appreciated, despite the widespread revulsion towards the NSB? We need to take into account the special conditions of a country occupied by an ideologically inspired occupier who is fighting an internal (to nazify occupied territory) and external (to expand its territory) war. What concepts are illuminating when we discuss interactions between people inside and outside the NSB?

One of the relevant concepts may be *social exclusion*. The concept of social exclusion has multiple genealogies and meanings. The framework of social exclusion deals with a person's ability to enjoy "full participation in all aspects as an end in itself." So it concerns the most fundamental social relations: a person's belonging to society and participation in social life. A socially excluded person is deprived of social networks, or his or her only entry is to the networks of other outsiders.¹⁰⁵ Social exclusion differs from theories of "social capital" because social-capital research is mainly concerned with consequences; social ties are resources, while social exclusion is concerned with causes. In addition, social capital deals with relations of an individual, while social exclusion deals with groups. Enclaved communities or sects score high on social capital but may be socially excluded. And because this study is not only about Dutch National Socialists among each other but mainly about Dutch National Socialists within Dutch society, the concept of social exclusion is extremely relevant.¹⁰⁶

Social exclusion is a dynamic process in which two groups are involved: the excluding actors and the excluded.¹⁰⁷ In this case, the NSB and non-NSB categories were each active in excluding the other. Each groups felt itself to be superior to the other. Dutch National Socialists saw themselves as true patriots, fighting for the right future for the nation.¹⁰⁸ However, their feelings of superiority did not always have to mean they excluded the others; in the end they hoped to win the support of their countrymen with the exception of the Jewish population, whom they rigorously excluded. At the same time NSB opponents saw themselves as the representative of the true Dutch spirit and culture, and viewed NSB

¹⁰⁵ Alison Woodward and Martin Kohli, *Inclusions and Exclusions in European societies* (2001) 1-10.

¹⁰⁶ It is also related to one of the other main concepts in this research: participation. Goodin considers "participation as the antidote of social exclusion." Mary Daly and Hilary Silver, 'Social exclusion and social capital. A comparison and Critique', *Theory and Society* 37 (2008) 537-566, here 539-540, 546, 555, 558; Woodward and Kohli, *Inclusions and Exclusions in European societies*, 2-4.

¹⁰⁷ Daly and Silver, 'Social exclusion and social capital', 539-540, 546, 555, 558. Socially excluded groups and individuals lack social relations and opportunities to fully participate in society and therefore they are more likely to suffer from poverty; Hilary Silver 'Social Exclusion Comparative Analysis of Europe and Middle East Youth', *The Middle East Youth initiative working paper 1* (2007) 1-48, here 15-16, 37-38.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. The title of the national NSB newspaper was *Volk en Vaderland* (People and Country).

members as pure traitors and even as “un- Dutch.” Social exclusion takes place when people are excluded at different levels at the same time: state, market and (civil) society.¹⁰⁹ If a person or a group is excluded from all these three levels, one might label the phenomenon as social exclusion. In the 1930s members of the NSB could be labeled as outsiders on all three fronts; however, during the occupation they could no longer be labeled as outsiders on political and economic levels. Their membership brought them many opportunities on the job market and in local politics. In such cases, social exclusion becomes a difficult concept to use.

Moreover, once again, one has to be aware of the fundamental problem of a binary logic. Subdividing Dutch society into NSB and non-NSB groups could lead to a dichotomous and unrealistic view of society, and this has in fact been the case in the post-war politics of meaning.¹¹⁰ It is necessary to keep in mind that NSB members may have had identities outside their political identity. Many members wore their uniform only when they attended the weekly party meetings. In more recent years, historians and other scholars have taken their distance from such binary views. As Martin Blinkhorn states about Italian Fascism: “even the most fundamentalist fascists were buffeted constantly by their national, local, class, gender, family, religious, and a host of other pasts, presents, and futures.” And “all fascists were in some sense part-time ideological warriors and any serious historical understanding must reckon with that partiality.”¹¹¹ The same thing pertains to nonmembers: they too had different identities and different reasons to reject or not to reject NSB members.

Belonging to a fascist group only partly shaped a person’s identity. National Socialists had other activities, loyalties, and relationships outside their own political group. Kevin Passmore argues that we need to abandon the notion of fascists as “just fascists”: “Members of fascist parties are not fascists all the time, even when they attend party meetings. They are also husbands, wives, workers, lawyers, Catholics, Protestants, atheists, and so on. These shifting, interlinked, mutually constructing and sometimes conflicting

¹⁰⁹ David Byrne, *Social Exclusion* (1999) 2; Woodward and Kohli, *Inclusions and Exclusions in European societies*, 2-9.

¹¹⁰ Daly and Silver, ‘Social exclusion and social capital’, 556.

¹¹¹ Martin Blinkhorn as quoted by Bosworth in: Bosworth ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, 6.

identities shape their actions as much as their Fascism' does."¹¹² Being a fascist was not a fixed, but a mixed identity.

Both groups saw themselves as "insiders" and the others as "outsiders." Of course, there are many differences within the two groups, as there were different opinions towards the out-groups. Dutch Nazis saw the Jews as "the other" in extreme, with all its devastating consequences. In contrast to the actor-victim dynamic of social exclusion, the insider-outsider framework suggests a more reciprocal process, two groups claiming to be the real insiders and looking at the others as outsiders. Normally, members of a group value themselves more highly than people outside their own group.¹¹³ The use of an in- and outsider paradigm supposes that polarized public opinion caused alienation between the two groups and indirectly strengthened the internal coherence of the NSB organization. It is also possible that during a dynamic and reciprocal process of deeper internal integration within the group and rejecting the other group as a whole in a polarized political atmosphere, opportunities for individual contact across party lines perhaps still remained.

The plan of the book

This study will examine the social aspects of membership in the Dutch National Socialist party during the Second World War. The main question is: what was the influence of NSB membership on a members' life and on his or her social relationships? To answer this questions I will first focus on the influence of NSB membership: how it affected them ideologically, how they participated in the party and what the role violence in the public sphere played. After having answered these questions I will turn to the issue of interaction with nonmembers.

In the first chapter I will examine the role of Dutch National Socialist ideology for individual members of the NSB. Ideology is an essential part of defining identity and interaction with people with other identities, in particular in Dutch society, where ideological

¹¹² Griffin, Loh and Umland, eds, *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, 171; Bosworth ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, 6.

¹¹³ Sabine Otten and Dirk Wentura, 'Self-Anchoring and In-Group Favoritism. An Individual Profiles Analysis', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 37 (2001) 525-532, here 525-526; Vivian V. Vignoles and Natalie J. Moncaster, 'Identity motives and in-group favouritism. A new approach to individual differences in intergroup discrimination', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 46 (2007) 91-113, here 91-92, 107.

divisions defined social and political relations. The attitudes or worldviews provide structures of meaning, within which identity is formed.¹¹⁴ Different worldviews – ideas about Jews, religion and the occupier – may have caused tensions and frictions between NSB members and those around them, particularly because National Socialist believed that several groups did not belong to the nation. In the ideological framework of Fascism ideas about “otherness” or “outsider” shaped the drive to eliminate the other¹¹⁵

Chapter 2 examines the political participation of NSB members. A question arises regarding the visibility of Dutch National Socialists as members of the National Socialist movement. To what extent did they actively participate in the movement and show their membership in public? In order to explore the political activities of NSB members during the occupation, I will focus on political participation, which fits into a new international perspective on fascist movements. I will follow Robert Paxton, who proposes concentrating on members’ activities and participation rather than on their ideology alone.¹¹⁶ Political participation includes more than activities. According to Michael Spurr, a historian of British fascism, a fascist lifestyle went beyond simple political ideology; it also included networks, socialization, friends and an identity.¹¹⁷ In order to examine the fundamental elements of the NSB as a political organization, one should include the methods used by local NSB leaders in mobilizing party members, as well as the levels of participation of those members in order to be able to make statements about political participation throughout the war.

Chapter 3 discusses the role of violence in the NSB. In the monographs about Western European collaborating National Socialist organizations, violence is an under-explored subject.¹¹⁸ Most authors focus on the ideological development of the leadership and do not analyze the day-to-day practices of local members.¹¹⁹ The same mechanism can be

¹¹⁴ Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 23-30.

¹¹⁶ Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*; Robert O. Paxton, ‘The Five Stages of Fascism’, *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998) 1-23.

¹¹⁷ Michael A. Spurr, ‘Playing for Fascism’. Sportsmanship, antisemitism and the British Union of Fascists’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 37:4 (2003) 359-376, here 362; Michael A. Spurr, ‘Living the Blackshirt Life’. Culture, community and the British Union of Fascists. 1932-1940’, *Contemporary European History* 12:3 (2003) 305-322, here 305, 313-315, 318, 321-322.

¹¹⁸ Eve Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists? The German Communists and Political Violence. 1929-1933* (Cambridge 1983); Pamela E. Swett, *Neighbors and enemies. The culture of radicalism in Berlin. 1929-1933* (Cambridge 2004); Thomas Kühne, *Kameradschaft. Die Soldaten des nationalsozialistischen Krieges und das 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2006).

¹¹⁹ De Wever, *Greep naar de macht*; Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium*; Paul Hayes, ‘Quisling’s Political Ideas’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 1(1966)145-157; Fritz Petrick, ‘Die norwegischen Kollaboration. 1940-1945’ in: Werner

seen in the historiography of the NSB. The main interest has been in leadership and ideology instead of in members and practices. However, the NSB was a fascist party, and violence is an essential aspect of fascism.¹²⁰ During the era of fascism, violence was not limited to fascist parties alone. One important difference, though, is that fascists saw struggle as an aim in itself, not only as an instrument to reach a certain goal. In other words, violence was seen as something positive in itself, related to other concepts worth pursuing, such as war and struggle. In addition to this “intellectual” argument, the fascists also saw the “instrumental” side of violence. Fascists accepted violence as an inevitable instrument to accomplish a New Order free of racially “inferior” groups.¹²¹ It is impossible to analyze the functioning of the NSB without its National Socialist ideology and its violent practices. Moreover, violence shaped the image of National Socialists. A threat of violence existed on both sides, which could widen the gap between National Socialists and other parts of Dutch society and is thus an essential concept when discussing processes of interactions and polarization.¹²²

Chapter 4 analyzes the interactions between NSB members and nonmembers. The occupation polarized political opinion: one could choose a position only in favor of or against the occupier.¹²³ The occupied society was also highly politicized; the smallest decision had political implications: whom to befriend, where to shop, which paper to buy, where to work.¹²⁴ The occupation united the inhabitants of the occupied territory in their negative attitudes towards the occupier and those who collaborated with the occupier. The latter were labeled as “traitors.” Their choice to cooperate with the German Nazis had even made them “un-national.” In studies of Belgian, French, Norwegian, and British fascist groups, their members are often pictured as socially unpopular; they are described as being “isolated” from their society. In literature on collaborating Nazi movements, historians seem to agree that collaborators’ commitment to the local National Socialist representative led them into an isolated position.¹²⁵ However, in all cases the “isolated position” is a hypothesis, which has not been tested or even well explained.

Röhr, ed., *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz: Okkupation und Kollaboration (1938-1945)* (Berlin and Heidelberg 1994) 119-130.

¹²⁰ Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 4-5, 64.

¹²¹ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 106-108, 112.

¹²² Political violence not only divides people, but polarizes them; David E. Apter, *The legitimization of violence* (Basingstoke 1997) 1.

¹²³ Occupation is a threat to national unity; Mazower, *Hitler's empire*, 417.

¹²⁴ Swett, *Neighbors and enemies*, 22.

¹²⁵ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 282; E.g. De Wever, *Greep naar de Macht*, 349, 483, 484, 594, 626; Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium*, 18-19, 76, 156.

The last chapter examines the final phase of the occupation. By September 5th, 1944, almost everyone in the Netherlands believed the Nazi defeat was not far off. These developments pleased most Dutch citizens but troubled NSB members. Thinking their defeat was imminent, the German and Dutch National Socialists panicked. So, the interactions, ideological commitments, activities, and violence changed dramatically after the putative Allied victory in September 1944. Because the levels intertwined strongly, I analyze all levels together in this final stage.

I have opted for a new approach by designing research on the grassroots level. I believe that a bottom-up approach may bring us new ways of understanding Dutch National Socialists and National Socialism during the Second World War. It fits into recent international studies on fascism, the daily life of fascists and daily life in the Second World War.¹²⁶ I have selected five towns in the most industrialized, highly populated and richest areas of the Netherlands: Amsterdam, the capital and the area in which most of the Jewish population lived and therefore the most important focus of the Holocaust in the Netherlands; Utrecht, where the Dutch National Socialist movement was founded and established; Hilversum, the heart of intellectual national-socialism; Leiden, where most of the National Socialists came from a working-class background and were less dominantly present on the streets; and finally Haarlem, where NSB members were highly visible.

I have analyzed local newspapers: *De Daad* (Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Hilversum), and *De Werker* (Utrecht), and national newspapers: *Volk en Vaderland* and from the WA: *De Zwarte Soldaat*. In addition, I analyzed party archives from the NSB and NSB sub-organizations and over a dozen diaries of both members and nonmembers. I also looked at local police archives in order to analyze clashes in the public sphere. Finally, I looked at the postwar files of former NSB members, which recently became more easily available. I decided to analyze approximately 1 percent of the wartime NSB members.¹²⁷ I took a random sample from the different areas of my research. Because I have not corrected for gender and education, the sample is not representative. In addition to this random sample, I

¹²⁶ Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*; Browning, *Ordinary Men*; Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*; Johnson, *Nazi Terror*; Gellately, *Backing Hitler*; Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience*; Johnson and Reuband, *What we knew*; Gildea, Wieviorka and Warring, eds, *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini*; Dörner, *Die Deutschen und der Holocaust*; Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*; Sax, *Voor Vlaanderen, Volk en Führer*.

¹²⁷ In the research area lived approximately 30.000 NSB-members, I have analyzed 327 dossiers.

was able to conduct deep-dive case studies because of a detailed list of NSB members in Amsterdam, who were aligned to the NSB in 1942. I have constructed a local case study of three streets in Amsterdam, in different neighborhoods: the Kromme Mijdrechtstraat in Amsterdam-South, a neighborhood with a high percentage of Jewish inhabitants; Zacherias Jansestraat in Amsterdam-East with many middle class/white-collar residents; Hudsonstraat in Amsterdam-West with mainly lower-middle-class and working-class residents. Analyzing all members in a street makes it possible to create a better picture of the relationships of individual members and of the neighborhood dynamics.

Until recently, it was difficult to carry out bottom-up history in the field of Dutch fascism studies.¹²⁸ The subject of social interaction in daily life is indeed not easy to research. The difficulties lie in the sources; not many records describing social life are available. There are some diaries and letters, but they remain scarce. The main source of this study is the neighborhood surveys in postwar files, conducted after the liberation, and therefore even more problematic. The neighborhood testimonies are not a contemporary source; these testimonies were given in the years following the liberation. Moreover, these surveys were taken during a judicial procedure, which makes them even more problematical. However, if we take these conditions into account, these surveys may offer new insights; these files contain statements of members and those around them taken not long after the occupation. Besides, the files often also include notes, letters and documents from the period of the occupation. For these reasons, while this source is perhaps not ideal, it remains by far the best source available.¹²⁹ An analysis of these statements demonstrates that the statements came from many different neighbors. The postwar files also reveal insights on the other themes of this thesis: the ideology and participation of local members. The information offered by these testimonials is supplemented with other information from the NSB archives, diaries of members and nonmembers and police reports. The police reports are a valuable source for (violent) public confrontations. Therefore, the postwar records combined with other local sources may offer interesting insights about the local community during the German occupation.

¹²⁸ A.A. de Jonge, 'Het fascisme en nationaal-socialisme' in: P. Luykx and N. Bootsma ed., *De Laatste tijd. Geschiedschrijving over Nederland in de 20^e eeuw* (Utrecht 1987) 166-191.

¹²⁹ In 2025 the files will be fully opened; Greta Donker and Sjoerd Faber, *Bijzonder gewoon. Het Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (1944-2000) en de 'lichte' gevallen* (Zwolle 2010) 83-104.

1. Propaganda and consciousness

Introduction

“We are so revolutionary and reject obeying all those older people whose chatter prevents us young people from actively participating in the building of our country.”¹³⁰ (Ernst Zilver, October 12th, 1942, Amsterdam)

Ernst Zilver, leader of the National Socialist youth organization (*Nationale Jeugdstorm*, NJS) in Amsterdam, expressed his revolutionary National Socialist feelings in a national NSB newspaper on October 12th, 1942. He was eager to participate in the building of a so-called “New Order.” During the years of the Nazi occupation, he was committed to the NSB and its aim to nazify the Netherlands. He continued to actively express his National Socialist ideas until the very end of the German occupation.¹³¹ This chapter focuses on the ideas of the NSB and its members during the German occupation.

In many national discourses, the ideological foundation of collaborationist movements is seen as something foreign or rather “un-national.” The fascist ideas were seen as imported from outside; they were, by all means, not supposed to be indigenous.¹³² Fascism is thus pictured as something alien that illegitimately infiltrated the national political culture. This “smuggling” mechanism fits into the widespread discourse that fascism is pre-eminently an “uncomfortable past.” According to Aristotle Kallis, fascist history raises too many “awkward questions about continuities with the past, about social attitudes to it and its political legacy for the future.”¹³³ By portraying fascism as imported, people could erase this painful history and ignore the fact that fascism too was part of the historic continuity of

¹³⁰ Translation of Dutch: “wij zijn revolutionnair en weigeren dus al die ouderen van dagen te gehoorzamen, die met hun keuveltjes ons jongeren verhinderen, actief mee te werken aan den opbouw van ons Nederland.”; NA CABR-file 21419.

¹³¹ NA CABR-file 21419; NIOD, Ernst Zilver, ‘Alles voor het vaderland’.

¹³² Idea of something “alien”; Lena Berggren, ‘Swedish Fascism’ 395-417; John F. Sweets, ‘Hold that Pendulum! Redefining Fascism, Collaborationism and Resistance in France’, *French Historical Studies* 15 (1988) 731-758.

¹³³ Kallis, *Fascism Reader*, 1.

national history.¹³⁴ In occupied Western Europe, the National Socialist regime was imported through military violence, but the ideology was – at least partly – homegrown. The idea of “fascism from outside” was reinforced by the supposition that all fascists were “isolated” within society. Collaborating fascists were tied only to their ideologically similar foreign occupier and thus distanced themselves from the indigenous society.

The same “isolated fascists from outside” discourse is visible in the Dutch case. According to De Jong, possibly *the* historian of the Second World War in the Netherlands, Dutch fascism came mainly from Germany. De Jong stated that the NSB was copied from the NSDAP and members of the NSB were “semi-Germans,” isolated within Dutch society. De Jong’s ideas were widely accepted and followed by other scholars.¹³⁵ This image of National Socialism as something un-Dutch is related to ideas about Dutch political culture. Dutch political culture is generally portrayed as inherently anti-violent and moderate.¹³⁶ The nonviolent political culture clashed with the obviously violent character of fascist parties, with their paramilitary organization and its preference for uniforms and parades. For that reason, it was unthinkable that a group of “real Dutchmen” could become hardcore fascists. Dutch fascism seemed a *contradiction in terms*.¹³⁷

Lately, Dutch National Socialism is increasingly analyzed as a fascist movement with radical roots. As explained in the introduction, the NSB was an inherently fascist movement in its first phase. Thus, by the time these indigenous “real” fascists got the opportunity to gain power by collaborating with the German Nazi occupier they had already adopted a fascist ideology and style. In the years before the occupation, the NSB had built up its own ideology and organization that it developed further during the German occupation. In this period, the collaborating fascists could expand their organization and gain power; the NSB had the chance to actively express and practice its ideas.¹³⁸

In this chapter, I will examine the fundamental principles of fascism from different angles. First, I will examine relevant theoretical concepts and debates. The relationship

¹³⁴ Kallis, *Fascism Reader*, 1, 14.

¹³⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk I*, 309; Havenaar, *Mussert*, 42; Van der Boom, *Kees van Geelkerken*, 42; Damsma and Schumacher, ‘De Strijd om Amsterdam’, 347.

¹³⁶ About Dutch non-violent political culture and the objections against this image: Hermann von der Dunk, ‘Toen werd het levensgevaarlijk ...’, 13-34; Romijn, *Image of collaboration*, 311-312.

¹³⁷ ‘Nederlandse immunitet voor revolutie’; Johan Huizinga, *Nederland’s Geestesmerk* (Revised edition 1946; Leiden 1934) 25; Jacques van Doorn, ‘Schets van de Nederlandse politieke traditie’ in: Jos de Beus, Jacques van Doorn and Piet de Rooy, eds, *De ideologische driehoek* (Amsterdam 1996) 13; Romijn, ‘The Image of Collaboration Post-War Dutch Society’, 311-313, 315; Damsma and Schumacher, ‘De Strijd om Amsterdam’.

¹³⁸ Paxton, *The anatomy of fascism*, 10, 56 etc.

between ideology and practices was quite problematic in fascism, as fascism presented itself as the movement of “action” instead of “books.” I will also discuss the different relevant concepts of ideology, propaganda and conscience. Furthermore, I analyze to what extent the NSB members were ideologically motivated and what role opportunism may have played.

Second, I will discuss NSB propaganda and internal discussions during the Second World War. The NSB propaganda and ideas about the Nazi occupier are relevant because the NSB was a collaborating movement. To what extent did the NSB follow the German National Socialist lines of thought? What was discussed at local meetings? To what extent was there room for internal discussions? Finally, I will explore the role of Dutch National Socialist ideology in the lives and consciences of individual members of the NSB to see what influence NSB ideology may have had on the lives of individual members and how they perceived (from a bottom-up perspective) regional and national political discussions.

Principles of fascism and fascists

The concepts of ideology, propaganda and conscience

Fluid borders between ideology and action generally characterize fascist organizations. In fact, the fascist ideological framework is built around actions; a member of a fascist organization was an “action man” par excellence.¹³⁹ Thus, in fascist movements in particular, it is of crucial importance to be aware of the connection between ideas and actions. And therefore, both political ideas and practices have to be analyzed.¹⁴⁰ This chapter examines the interrelationship between action and ideological principles, propaganda and conscience.

Why should someone bother about ideology if fascists themselves valued action above ideology? One answer to this question could be that in fact they did take ideology seriously. Fascists felt the need for ideology to develop a common goal and the promotion of internal cohesion. It made sense to put their ideas together in a consistent agenda in order to secure internal unity and to distinguish themselves from their political competitors. To mobilize people, fascist movements needed a narrative, a systematic body of concepts about

¹³⁹ Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 4-5; Mosse, *Nazi culture*, xxvii-xxviii.

¹⁴⁰ Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 10, 56, etc.

society and human life.¹⁴¹ Although we have to keep in mind the centrality of action, fascist movements had unifying aims and principles.¹⁴²

The function of propaganda was to spread the movement's ideas; it was the transfer from political ideology to the minds of individuals. In other words: it was the propagation of a doctrine.¹⁴³ The task of translating ideology into a coherent narrative aimed at individuals took place in the propaganda offices where specialized party officials tried to influence people's political opinions and decisions. Propaganda was spread through diverse media, such as newspapers, pamphlets, speeches, radio and film.¹⁴⁴ Through these channels, propaganda made ideology accessible to a broader public. Thus, the content of propaganda dealt with what the party told the people, not what the conscience of individuals may have contained.¹⁴⁵

Historian Claudia Koonz made an important contribution to the study of Nazi ideology by formulating the concept of "Nazi conscience," which includes elements of identity, awareness, idealism and an ethical standard.¹⁴⁶ Nazi conscience is not about what to believe or what not to believe, but it defines the obligations of individual members to others. Therefore, it is strongly tied to the community because the moral obligations apply only to the own community and exclude everyone not belonging to that community.¹⁴⁷ This community-centered concept is relevant in the analysis of a social history of Dutch National Socialists because it focuses on who belonged to the insider group and who belonged to the outsider group. National Socialists increasingly saw non-National Socialists as outsiders and Jews as extreme outsiders, who had to be permanently excluded from Dutch society. In addition, conscience included the sense of moral goodness together with an obligation to do (thus to act) right or be good. The Nazi concept of conscience includes the action of propagating a fascist community while excluding Jews.¹⁴⁸

The concept of conscience produces a possible connection between ideas and individual behavior. To what extent do people act according to their consciences? It is very difficult to explore the mindsets and true beliefs of individual people, even for those

¹⁴¹ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 116.

¹⁴² Griffin, *Modernism and fascism*, 181-182.

¹⁴³ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy. Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge 2006) 13-14.

¹⁴⁵ Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 15, 264.

¹⁴⁶ Koonz, *The Nazi conscience*, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 3-5.

¹⁴⁸ Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 3-5.

currently alive. Determining the reasons for certain decisions taken by people in the past can be even more problematic. How to distinguish between acting as a National Socialist and being a National Socialist? It may be that many members expressed themselves as National Socialists but did not really believe in National Socialism as an ideology. All members could just have acted fanatically assuming that everyone else believed.¹⁴⁹ In that sense, belief is not a precondition for action; group cohesion is.¹⁵⁰ Thus, there are many objections that could be raised to discussing ideology.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, the fact that ideology is difficult to track down does not mean that one should not try to reveal some of the ideals of individuals, especially because these ideals were targeted at action and thus had real implications.

We can identify at least two ways in which ideology functioned in tying individuals to the party. First, Nazi ideology had an external function: attracting individuals to join the party. On an individual level this means that people were ideologically motivated before they joined the NSB and would develop this motivation further after becoming members. Second, ideology had an internal function: to socialize the individual in a framework of political ideology and to immerse someone in National Socialist propaganda. Ideology played a role in attracting new members by offering new horizons. While the focus on personal reasons for membership is important, one should not focus solely on the reasons of becoming a member because the effects of ideology on those who had enlisted as NSB members were significant as well. Every member was exposed to National Socialist ideology or, to put it more precisely, to a specific form of Dutch National Socialism.

As the impact of action on ideology was important, three stages should be distinguished: feelings regarding National Socialism before, during and at the end of one's membership. One could be a National Socialist before becoming a party member, or one could be socialized in an ideology of fascism during his or her membership. The changing political opportunities during the last phase of the occupation affected ideological pathways of beliefs as well. This chapter will deal with the first two phases; the last phase of disillusion will be discussed in the final chapter.

¹⁴⁹ Mario Ferrero, 'Extremist groups tend to become more extreme' in: Albert Breton et al., eds, *Political Extremism and Rationality* (Cambridge 2001) XIX.

¹⁵⁰ Even the leaders did not necessary have to believe in the political organization they stood for, if they were interested in power the only thing was to act as if they believed; Russel Hardin 'The Crippled Epistemology of Extremism' in Breton et al., eds, *Political Extremism and Rationality*, 20.

¹⁵¹ For lively academic discussions about ideology; Mosse, *Nazi culture*; Herf, *the Jewish enemy*; Koonz, *Nazi conscience* et.al.

Discussing ideology of political movements includes the relationship between idealism and opportunism. Opportunism in politics can be seen as the absence of any ideological dedication. Much of fascist opportunism is inherent in the nature of every ideology called upon to shape a new society and is related to the discrepancy between the original ideals of building an entire “revolutionary society” and the harsh reality of day-to-day politics. Revolutionary ideals are extremely difficult to fulfill.¹⁵² Fascism is not exceptional in that sense. And opportunism is perhaps even more relevant in the case of collaborating political movements, where membership of this party could enhance the chances of success in the political sphere.

Opportunism could be separated into two forms: opportunism as a political strategy on a national level and opportunism as political motivation on an individual level. In fascist movements, the opportunistic element of leaders and followers is often stressed. Philip Morgan described leaders of interwar fascist parties: “they are usually portrayed as political opportunists (which politician is not?), politicians of action whose actions did not marry with their words, which were literally propaganda, and fixated on power ‘for its own sake’.”¹⁵³ For that reason, I intend to combine the study of ideology with the study of political practices, confrontations and interactions.

Ideology of individuals

Within Dutch historiography about Dutch National-Socialism, ideology is analyzed but always on a collective, national level, as determined by the top leadership and discussed in their publications.¹⁵⁴ The individual level is underexplored, while the thoughts and actions of individual NSB members actually shaped the National Socialist movement in the Netherlands.

Individual NSB members can have been more than opportunists; they may have been ideologically motivated. We need to go beyond the assumption of opportunism as political motivation; there could be something ideological that made them tick. In fact, the

¹⁵² “There is no denying that as the gap widens between the final objectives and the initial blueprint for the remodeling of society, the discrepancy between ideology and practice becomes more important and thus encourages the tendency to accuse the regime of opportunism, or to disregard completely the ideology on which it claims to rely.”; Zeev Sternhell, ‘Fascist ideology’ in: Griffin and Feldman ed. *Fascism Critical concepts in political science*, 85.

¹⁵³ Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Havenaar, *De NSB tussen nationalisme en volkse solidariteit*; De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*.

ideological foundation of their collaboration distinguished NSB members from economic or administrative collaborators. For these reasons, the ideological motivation of individuals should be included in the analysis of Dutch National Socialism. This decision does not exclude another crucial question: to what extent did their ideas correspond with those of non-NSB members? Were the ideas of NSB members generally nonconformist or were some of them actually widespread?

In order to formulate answers to these questions, I have studied the judicial records – brought together in the postwar procedures for the punishment of political collaboration – of the CABR sample from all ranks of the party and representing members from different socio-economic backgrounds. The testimonies of former NSB members are an important source when one analyzes individual membership. Of course, one has to take into account that those statements were made *after* the liberation of the Netherlands and, moreover, within the context of a judicial procedure. It could be even more problematic had ideological beliefs influenced the punishment meted out. That is not the case; No clear relationship can be discerned between the punishments and whether those punished were generally recognized by the judges as ideologically or financially motivated.¹⁵⁵ It did not matter whether the accused were “real” fascists or stated that they did not believe in fascism at all. Keeping such criticism in mind, it is possible to say something about the ideological mindset of NSB members on the basis of their judicial records.

Their contemporaries generally saw individual members as opportunistic during and after the war.¹⁵⁶ The NSB itself tried to use this image to encourage its members to work harder. To show everyone that the NSB was full of hardworking National Socialists instead of lazy opportunists, even NSB papers made fun of the opportunistic nature of many NSB members, whose only concern was to obtain a job.¹⁵⁷ The NSB proclaimed that they preferred a “loyal known opponent” above a “fellow job hunter.”¹⁵⁸

However, opportunism does not tell the whole story. The NSB aspired to gain

¹⁵⁵ Difference between top and base; Belinfante, *In plaats van bijltesdag*. “Brood-NSBers” were generally sentenced to 9 months’ imprisonment. Only if NSB members had enriched themselves publicly were longer sentences imposed. 474-479.

¹⁵⁶ Damsma and Schumacher, ‘De strijd om Amsterdam’ 329-348.

¹⁵⁷ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, 23 III 1944.

¹⁵⁸ NIOD, clippings file, *De Volkskrant*, June 20th 1941.

power, but reality turned out to be quite different. Actually, in the first year of the occupation NSB members confronted an unexpected lack of opportunities. It was only after that first year that the NSB managed to become more involved in acquiring local political power and exploring economic opportunities. Therefore, the opportunities for individual members were actually rather limited. During that period there would have had to have been more than just the possibility of personal gain that attracted Dutchmen to the NSB. And after all, ideology and opportunism may in fact go hand in hand. Somebody could have become a member hoping to pursue a career and then have been transformed into a fanatic National Socialist during his or her membership.¹⁵⁹

On the national level, one can point to Anton Mussert's opportunism and to shifts in national propaganda. In Dutch historiography, Mussert is often portrayed as an opportunistic leader, who, for instance, did not actually believe in anti-Semitism, but made many anti-Semitic statements in order to appease his followers: a so-called "man without properties."¹⁶⁰ It is true when one looks at Mussert's views they were not always consistent over time. His anti-Semitism became more virulent when he thought it was profitable. One can see the same pattern in national and local propaganda. This radicalization of ideas could be related to opportunism, as a way to appease the German occupier. However, the fact Mussert uttered increasingly anti-Semitic and pro-German phrases during the course of the occupation can be attributed not only to opportunism. Idealism could have played a role as well; Mussert may very well have believed in the things he said. It is difficult to analyze whether Mussert really believed in anti-Semitism as an ideology. The only evidence is what he said and what he did. His words indicate that he did believe in the ideology of the NSB, from the party's early beginnings onwards.

Whether or not NSB members were indeed opportunistic career hunters, ideology did play a significant role in the minds and lives of NSB members. Analyzing the personal statements of the CABR sample about ideology produces the following results. Approximately fifteen percent of them said they actually did not believe in National Socialism, neither before nor during their membership. So, for a minority of the NSB members ideology played a less significant role. In approximately fifteen percent of the cases in this sample not enough evidence could be found to label the statements accurately. These

¹⁵⁹ NA, CABR, file 57408.

¹⁶⁰ Havenaar, *Verrader voor het vaderland: een biografische schets van Anton Adriaan Mussert* (1978) Jan Meyers, *Mussert*.

statements were sometimes contradictory or too fuzzy to pinpoint the respondent's mindset. Seventy percent of the NSB members in the sample were ideologically driven or formed, according to their statements.¹⁶¹ Thus, it is apparent that the majority of NSB members were indeed attracted or affected by National Socialist ideology. For them National Socialist ideology was not an empty shell but a very real thing.

Hence, ideology played a significant part in the political lives of most NSB members, but the question remains: in which phase did it start to assume significance to them? Was it before or in the course of their NSB membership? What role did ideology play in attracting and recruiting NSB members? As in other decisions in life, the choice to join a fascist party was the result of a combination of different factors. Some members were passionately committed to fascism; others were drawn to the party by material incentives or peer pressure to follow family or friends.¹⁶² National Socialist ideology did attract new members to the NSB before and during the occupation. Many members aligned themselves with the NSB because of their belief in its program.¹⁶³ The young NSB-member mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Ernst Zilver, hoped that the NSB could bring unity and break through all party quarrels.¹⁶⁴ The aesthetics of fascism –its uniforms and military parades– could also be a reason for joining the NSB.¹⁶⁵ An active NSB woman stated that she was affected by “the increasing unemployment in big cities, the weak Dutch defense of the Dutch East Indies, and the state of emergency in the country side and the general moral weakening of our people.”¹⁶⁶ Her husband, a leading National Socialist, shared these thoughts and saw the NSB as the party that could unify the nation under a strong central authority.¹⁶⁷ This idea of “rebirth” or regeneration of the nation through implementing the fascist program fits into the framework proposed by fascism expert Roger Griffin.¹⁶⁸ Fascist ideas were an attracting element for NSB members.

¹⁶¹ NA, CABR-files; 327 files: 48 not, 49 unclear and 230 did believe.

¹⁶² See for example: Perry Willson, ‘Women in Mussolini’s Italy 1922-1945’ in: Bosworth, *Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, 203-221, here 211.

¹⁶³ E.g. NA, CABR, 97118 and 56593; 21723; 86395, 64311 and 4825; 86527; 23885; 24763 I; 61151; 18387; 19332; NA, CABR, 76441 and 8500; 54396.

¹⁶⁴ NA, CABR, 21419.

¹⁶⁵ NA, CABR, 17918.

¹⁶⁶ NA, CABR, 20139: “getroffen door de steeds toenemende werkloosheid in de groote steden, de weerloosheid van Nederlands Indie, de noodtoestand op ‘t platteland en de algemeene moreele verslapping van ons volk.”

¹⁶⁷ NA, CABR, 23816, 3014.

¹⁶⁸ Griffin, Loh and Umland, eds, *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, 29.

Not all NSB members were ideologically committed; some were motivated by financial motives or by the possibility of getting a job, keeping their radio (which nonmembers were forced to hand in) or other motives of personal gain. In some cases their belief in National Socialism was connected with discontent about their own financial situation.¹⁶⁹ Other reasons mentioned included peer pressure from friends or family members who were already party members. However, in general, the ideological aspect should not be underestimated. Among this group of Dutchmen, an ardent desire existed to create a completely new society through revolutionary means.

Ideology was an important instrument for socializing NSB members within the National Socialist party. Some members were ideologically more affected by their membership than others. Whether or not individuals decided to join the NSB for ideological considerations, they were influenced by its propaganda. One wood-merchant formulated his motives precisely that way: he stated that he became an NSB member because of idealism and then came under the influence of NSB propaganda.¹⁷⁰ For the majority of NSB members ideology affected their mindset during their membership.

Propaganda explored on a national, local, and individual level

“We are revolutionary!”¹⁷¹

After the German occupation the NSB jumped from a marginal position in the political spectrum to the position of an active political actor, which aimed at sharing power both in the national administration and at a local level. Here, the NSB could spread its ideas. However, the relationship between NSB members and the Nazi occupation administration also produced ideological dilemmas. Taking up local political responsibility meant making

¹⁶⁹ E.g. NA, CABR, 11864 and 19610; 40918; NA, CABR, 63220; NA, CABR, 97520.

¹⁷⁰ NA, CABR, 42336.

¹⁷¹ *De Daad*, November 29th 1940; and: “Wij willen revolutionair zijn, weg met het lakse en lauwe gedoe.” (“We want to be revolutionary, away with the lax and lukewarm stuff”) in: *De Werker*, January 8th 1943.

clear choices, and NSB members could rule only because of German support. Therefore they continually had to balance their own aims against the wishes of National Socialist Germany. The Dutch version of fascism was indeed inspired by the NSDAP but had its own considerations and context as well. What was the typical Dutch brew of National Socialism? What actually were the specific Dutch aspects of National Socialism in the fields where NSB members had to make up their own ideas because they had to deal with specifically Dutch situations?

The NSB adopted its major lines of thought from foreign examples. The NSB too was in theory revolutionary, had a paramilitary department, was in favor of a corporatist organization of the economy, was anti-Semitic and was focused on the Dutch empire.¹⁷² However, some parts are more problematic for a collaborating movement than others.

I have distinguished five problematic issues: the view of society and of nonmembers; anti-Semitism; the Church; foreign examples; and the Dutch empire. Many of these subjects are related. Anti-Semitism was, for example, present in the NSB's views of society, German policies and churches. Moreover, the different elements were not static but dynamic; the ideas within each field developed over time. The political opportunity structure depended on German favors and changed during the course of the occupation. Also, the international political scene altered dramatically. For these reasons, the opinions of NSB leadership and members changed from hopeful at the beginning of the occupation to fearful at the end.

To explore the developments of the ideas of the NSB, it is necessary to study both national and regional newspapers. The most important national newspaper was *Volk en Vaderland* (Nation and Homeland), in short *Vova*. This was a weekly paper in which the principles of National Socialism were extensively explained; in 1943 200,000 copies were distributed. From 1936 onwards, a daily newspaper appeared in addition to *Vova*: *Het Nationale Dagblad* (HND). Its circulation never reached the *Vova* level: approximately 20,000 were distributed daily.¹⁷³ Another relevant newspaper was the paper for the paramilitary department of the NSB, the WA: *De Zwarte Soldaat* (The Black Soldier). To include the local level, I studied *De Daad* (The Action), the newspaper for members in Amsterdam, Hilversum and Haarlem and their rural surroundings, and *De Werker*' (The Worker), the same sort of

¹⁷² "Revolutionary till the end" ("De revolutie gaat voort") *Volk en Vaderland*, September 29th 1944.

¹⁷³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* VI, 382.

paper for Utrecht and its rural areas.¹⁷⁴ Within historiography there is a consensus about the major disputes within the NSB; therefore differences between the national and regional propaganda newspapers, and cooperation or conflicts between the papers will be identified. A last source I use is the archive of the NSB itself, which includes letters of NSB members and leaders, and reports of party meetings. Thus, I include not only the external propaganda but the internal statements and discussions as well.

If most Dutch fascists were as ideologically dedicated as argued above, what did they believe? Did the national NSB propaganda reach the hearts and minds of individual members? In order to study the consciences of NSB members I have analyzed letters and diaries from the time of the occupation and testimonies in postwar files of former NSB members. In addition, I have explored the possible clashes with nonmembers. This National Socialist conscience of NSB members may have conflicted with their ideas and values and discussing such clashes may help us to understand even better what NSB members actually were up to.

View of society and outsiders

The NSB had far-reaching ideas about the future of Dutch society. One of the key aims of the Dutch National Socialists was to abolish the old divisions within society and to create one national, unified community.¹⁷⁵ So, in addition to their struggle against communism and democracy, they also strove for their ideal of a strong community of the Dutch people.

Striving towards national community was a common element in all fascist movements; the Netherlands case was particular as Dutch society in the 1930s was characterized by its so-called “pillarized” political and social structure, divided into roughly four groups: Catholics, Protestants, socialists, and liberals.¹⁷⁶ The NSB was an outsider and one of the main opponents of this structure, and it saw itself as the champion of unification in a divided society.

As a small minority within Dutch society, the NSB had to determine how to reach

¹⁷⁴ *De Werker*, published from December 1st, 1940.

¹⁷⁵ Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 101; Te Slaa and Klijn, *De NSB*, 792; Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederland, *Programma met toelichting* (1 and 2), (1932) 3, 11, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Lijphart, *Verzuiling*, 28-29.

out to the majority. Did NSB members see themselves as part of a mass movement or did they see themselves as a revolutionary vanguard that was ignored by a large part of the society? In other words: how did the movement try to persuade political outsiders or to condemn their opponents?

The NSB assumed it represented the true will of the people and of the Dutch nation. During the first public WA meeting in Amsterdam on November 9th 1940, Mussert stated that only the NSB members represented the true Dutchmen.¹⁷⁷ And in his eyes, the NSB, although a minority, was the right agent for reshaping Dutch society because throughout history “conscious minorities” had accomplished revolutions in society.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the NSB had to be a vanguard movement, in which NSB members belonged to the revolutionary elite of the National Socialist society. This idea was spread through both national and local propaganda. NSB members had to behave themselves as politically conscious “model citizens for the rest of society,” as the local leadership told the members in Naarden.¹⁷⁹

The NSB claimed to stand in the center of society not on its fringe. The National Socialist Women Organization stated in 1943 that they wanted to stand “in the community, not next to it.”¹⁸⁰ In spite of their marginal position, the NSB still hoped to be able to convince the rest of the society to join their struggle. Disappointing results, of course, had their effect on their propaganda strategies.

In the beginning, the NSB tried to reach out to nonmembers. On New Year’s Day in 1941, the NSB issued a letter wherein it asked everyone to work together with the NSB, and if everyone were to agree, then 1941 shall be a happy year for you, “full of freedom, prosperity and peace.”¹⁸¹ In Amsterdam, the NSB even launched a magazine geared toward nonmembers in 1941. In this paper the NSB tried to attract new members by using negative propaganda tools.¹⁸² The paper portrayed the anti-National Socialists as rich, fat, cowardly people, afraid of scornful glances from neighbors and colleagues, and lacking the courage to stand up.¹⁸³ In this way, the NSB tried to blemish the “real” opponents and, in that way,

¹⁷⁷ Diary November 10th 1940, De Wilde, RAL.

¹⁷⁸ August 8th, 1941, NIOD access number 298, file 29.

¹⁷⁹ NIOD, 1498, Naarden, October 10th 1943, report of the local NSB group meeting.

¹⁸⁰ (“*Wij willen in ons volk staan, niet er naast*”) NIOD, NSVO, 1194, 10 March 1943.

¹⁸¹ Letter Ernst Voorhoeve, January 1st 1941, Diary H. de Wilde, Regionaal Archief Leiden (RAL).

¹⁸² *Het Werkende volk*, October 1st 1941.

¹⁸³ *Het Werkende volk*, April 29th, 1942.

portray the NSB more positively.

Such continued efforts did not produce the expected results. There was a strong divergence between the ambition to mobilize the masses and the reality of rejection by many Dutch citizens. The NSB increasingly saw itself as a small minority fighting for a revolution, against all opposition.¹⁸⁴

From its start, the NSB cherished a culture of victimhood. The NSB members saw themselves as fighters for the good, who were unduly hampered by the opposition. Immediately after the German victory, the NSB papers had claimed this position of victimhood, when many leading National Socialists were interned in the Dutch East Indies, an enormous disgrace, according to the NSB. Almost every week, the NSB published articles about the terror they had to endure and the hate, the lies and imputations that NSB members had to deal with. The NSB propagandists complained about the undeserved opposition they confronted.¹⁸⁵ In NSB propaganda the assassinations and terror were presented as a leading force, strengthening the faith of NSB members.¹⁸⁶ The claim of an “underdog position” is clearly visible in the following passage, in which the Utrecht NSB paper quoted Mussert’s words of 1935 in July 1941, when he piled accusations on his pre-war political opponents:

Remember! It was not us who started to turn the Dutch from office because of their political beliefs, they did;

We did not allow street terror, they did;

We did not ban meetings, they did;

¹⁸⁴ NIOD, 220a, January 7th 1942, Amsterdam; “De beweging zal in den staat altijd een kleine minderheid zijn, een ‘keurtroep’.”

¹⁸⁵ For example, *Volk en Vaderland* May 24th 1940; NIOD access number 298, file 14, Feb 25th, 1943.

¹⁸⁶ Katherine Stroebe, *Is this about me? Responding to subtle discrimination. Beyond an individual versus group perspective* ([Leiden] 2009) 23-25. In theories about the impact of discrimination it is argued that it can threaten peoples’ worldview. Therefore the targets of discrimination have to reshape their worldview. The constantly negative attitude of the majority of the members of Dutch society could have posed a threat to the worldview of NSB members.

We did not set up a concentration camp, they did;
We did not deprive the press for a political opponent, they did¹⁸⁷

These lines reveal the feelings of maltreatment and of “they struck first.” These feelings were prominent within the NSB. The NSB saw a dichotomy within society between those who were in favor of the NSB and those who opposed National Socialist ideology. In that sense they polarized political opinion. In NSB rhetoric, nonmembers were referred to as “antis.” The latter rejected the ideology and organization of the NSB. Members of the NSB were urged not to visit their theaters or cinemas or patronize their shops.¹⁸⁸ “Antis” were accused of gossiping about NSB members. According to the NSB, being against the NSB had become “fashionable.”¹⁸⁹

In addition to the generally negative attitude towards the NSB, the NSB was confronted with outbursts on specific occasions. In 1941, on the birthday of Prince Bernhard (husband of Princess Juliana, heir to the throne of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) many opponents wore a white carnation to show their support for the royal family. The NSB denounced these actions as “brutality and stupidity without borders.”¹⁹⁰ NSB members tried to convince everyone of the uselessness and hopelessness of the anti-behavior and thoughts.¹⁹¹ This reaction also reveals the frustration among NSB propagandists about the constant stream of opposition.

Nonmembers were portrayed as “un-national” cowards, unjustified in looking forward to the Nazi defeat. Some nonmembers were supposedly too afraid to admit their preferences for the NSB.¹⁹² Along with mocking the fear of the antis, the NSB also complained about their hope. When in 1944 the Allied invasion became an increasing threat,

¹⁸⁷ *De Werker*; *Herrinert U!* “Niet wij zijn begonnen Nederlanders uit hun ambt te zetten wegens hun politieke overtuiging, maar zij;

niet wij hebben de straatteur toegelaten, maar zij;

niet wij hebben vergaderingen verboden, maar zij;

niet wij hebben een concentratie-kamp ingericht, maar zij;

niet wij hebben de drukpers aan een politieke tegenstander ontnomen, maar zij;

Dat iedereen dit onthouden en zich te zijner tijd herinneren.”

¹⁸⁸ *De Daad*, September 10th 1940, November 22nd, 1940.

¹⁸⁹ *De Werker*, January 4th 1941; *De Werker*, May 24th 1941;

¹⁹⁰ *Volk en Vaderland*, July 5th 1941.

¹⁹¹ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, November 12th, 1942.

¹⁹² *De Werker*, October 30th, 1942.

the NSB tried to ridicule the support for this invasion with the slogan: “How do antis see the invasion? As liberation of the nation.”¹⁹³ One group in particular was portrayed as specifically “un-national” cowards: the Jews. The Jews were by far the most extreme antis in the eyes of the NSB; the Jews were most heavily accused of propagating anti-fascist messages and of a lack of “real” national consciousness. These images were visible within different national and local propaganda papers.¹⁹⁴

To conclude, in the first year of the occupation the outsiders were seen as possible participants in the Nazi revolution; later on this hope was gone and the outsiders were increasingly seen as cowardly, unwilling people. Even though the NSB kept trying to reach out to opponents, their cult of victimhood and policy of polarization prevailed. This was a process that fits into patterns of other fascist movements.¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile in the Netherlands, the NSB and its “antis” drifted further apart.

The views of society held by individual NSB members corresponded with the ideas propagated in both regional and national National Socialist newspapers. In the CABR sample, one NSB member literally mentioned the ideal of the *volksgemeenschap* (unified community) in one of his letters during the occupation.¹⁹⁶ Five former NSB members declared in their postwar statements or contemporary letters their current or previously held belief in a unified national community.¹⁹⁷ In five percent of the files I found evidence of support for the unification of the Netherlands or for the Dutch people.¹⁹⁸ One engineer in Amsterdam explicitly expressed to his NSB superiors his wish to contribute to the building of a new community.¹⁹⁹

NSB members complained about the behavior of their opponents, the “antis,” such as the *Nederlandse Unie*. In the files of eight former NSB members, these members mentioned misunderstanding or opposition of nonmembers.²⁰⁰ In March 1945, one NSB member wrote

¹⁹³ Translation in Dutch: “Hoe ziet een anti de invasie? Bevrijding van de natie”, *De Werker*, June 23th, 1944.

¹⁹⁴ *De Werker*, May 15th, 1942; *Volke en Vaderland*, May 24th, 1940.

¹⁹⁵ Paxton, *The anatomy of Fascism*, 41.

¹⁹⁶ Letter of Hormann to the WA, NA, CABR, file 76881.

¹⁹⁷ NA, CABR, file 91860, 105244, 95025, 17780, 74405.

¹⁹⁸ NA, CABR, pro “unity of the Netherlands”: file 21723, 23816, 91860, 55673, 85351, 57408, 70873, 94377, 11089, 21419, 20294, 56601; pro “Nederlandse volk”: file 20083, 85827, 86527, 55380, 52518.

¹⁹⁹ Letter of Staargaard to the NSB, NA, CABR 91860..

²⁰⁰ NA, CABR, file 21723, 17833, 17828, 52561, 22952, 71127, 105244, 85351, 20022.

in a letter to his girlfriend that the “antis” were very cruel and that their God was cruel as well.²⁰¹ Here we can see criticism of opponents combined with criticism of religion.

The belief in a unified community was not only a fascist ideal; it was held by supporters of other political movements as well, for example the *Nederlandse Unie*. The latter was founded in July 1940 by three men: Hans Linthorst Homan, Jan de Quay and Louis Einthoven. They aimed at uniting the Dutch people as a patriotic platform to strengthen the Netherlands. They excluded the NSB and emphatically rejected any idea that the NSB would lead the unification process.²⁰² The NSB aimed at a unified Dutch community without the Jews, while the *Nederlandse Unie* aspired to a unified Dutch community with the Jews and without the NSB.

The nonmembers did not share the National Socialist ideas about them; they did not see themselves as cowardly outsiders but as insiders in Dutch society.²⁰³ Nonmembers compared the NSB to cancer: unlike the plague, it attacks the body from the inside. In a certain way, the German occupation had brought about an atmosphere of togetherness and even of “*gezelligheid*” (the cherished Dutch ideal of coziness); however, NSB members were not invited.²⁰⁴

Anti-Semitism

The NSB aimed at a national unified community. However, the unified community did not include all Dutch citizens; the National Socialist New Order had to be built without the Jews.

Discussing anti-Semitism within the NSB is even more important in the Dutch case because of the so-called “Dutch paradox.” The Dutch paradox stands for the high percentage of Dutch Jews who were killed during the Shoah, while the level of anti-Semitism was relatively low, compared with neighboring countries.²⁰⁵ This lower level of anti-Semitism might have caused a lower level of anti-Semitism in the NSB.

From the party’s founding onwards, anti-Semitism was a prominent factor in the ideology of the NSB. The NSB developed itself increasingly as an openly anti-Semitic party

²⁰¹ NA, CABR, file 105244.

²⁰² Ten Have, *De Nederlandse Unie*. 221-228.

²⁰³ Belinfante, *In plaats van bijtjesdag*, 464.

²⁰⁴ Van der Boom, *We leven nog*, 39-43, 81, 126, 133; Diary Johann Henrich Kasten, May 10th, 1941, RAL.

²⁰⁵ De Haan, ‘Imperialism, Colonialism and Genocide’, 301, 304-314. See for an overview of the historiography of comparative research; Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, ‘Vergelijking van Jodenvervolgving in Frankrijk, België en Nederland, 1940-1945. Overeenkomsten, verschillen, oorzaken’ (Amsterdam 2008) 38-72.

in the 1930s and even more during the occupation.²⁰⁶ On national as well as local levels the NSB expressed its anti-Semitic ideas, and its national and local newspapers were used to connect almost all troubles to the Jews.

In general, within National Socialist propaganda the exclusion of the Jews is highly related to the ideal of a unified community.²⁰⁷ The latter could be reached only by excluding the Jews from society. In February 1940, the NSB explained the intertwining of their struggle for a unified community and their anti-Semitism in an article in *VoVa*. Because the Jews were a danger to the national community, their departure had to be supported, the journal argued, out of “love for our community.”²⁰⁸

Anti-Semitism remained a central element in NSB propaganda during the war. From the beginning of the occupation onwards, the NSB published many anti-Jewish statements, in public speeches, posters and papers.²⁰⁹ In local newspapers, one can find many articles dealing with the “solutions” to the “Jewish problem” (*Jodenvraagstuk*).²¹⁰ Their anti-Jewish statements were not limited to propaganda alone. The internal reports were full of anti-Semitic quotes and actions as well, and thus the NSB ventilated an uncompromising anti-Semitic ideology.²¹¹

What were the central elements in their propaganda against the Jews? The main focus of NSB papers was on the supposedly “anti-Dutch” character of the Jews.²¹² For example, in the fall of 1940 an Amsterdam-based NSB paper printed that within Dutch national identity there was no place for a Jewish culture.²¹³ And in the WA paper, the National Socialists stressed the “enormous gap” between “the Jew” and “the Dutchman.”²¹⁴ According to the NSB, the Jews did not belong to Dutch society; they had to be excluded from the national community.

The propaganda went further than placing the Jews outside the national community;

²⁰⁶ Te Slaa and Klijn, *De NSB*; F.H. Landheer, *De stem van de NSB. Nationaalsocialistische berichtgeving over antisemitisme van de NSB bladen Het Nationale Dagblad en de Volk en Vaderland gedurende de oorlogsjaren. 1939-1945* (Amsterdam 2011), 76-78.

²⁰⁷ Koonz, *Nazi conscience*, 6-9, 13.

²⁰⁸ Volk en Vaderland, February 23rd, 1940; Landheer, *De Stem van de NSB*, 21-22.

²⁰⁹ E.g. *De Daad*, July 26, August 16th, 1940; Landheer, *De stem van de NSB*.

²¹⁰ E.g. *De Werker*, December 1st, 1940; March 1 1941; 26 April 1941.

²¹¹ NIOD, file 123, 2048 and 2049, 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943.

²¹² *De Zwarte Soldaat*, “de volksvreemde jood,” July 22th, 1943.

²¹³ And no place for a Negro culture as well; *De Daad*, September 6th, 1940, “in Nederlandsche Volkskarakter geen plaats voor joden en negercultuur.” See also: *De Zwarte Soldaat*, February 24th, 1944.

²¹⁴ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, September 9th, 1943, “gapende kloof.”

the NSB even proclaimed the danger of the Jews to Dutch society. The Jew was the “evil genius,” the enemy of all inhabitants of the Netherlands. In the local NSB paper of the Utrecht area, the “Jewish danger” was often discussed.²¹⁵ It was supposedly their own fault; the Jews themselves had caused the NSB’s “burning hate against the Jews.”²¹⁶ The anti-Semitic WA paper discussed the Jews’ eagerness to rule over “us,” even in a period when the deportation of the Jews was operating at full blast.²¹⁷ The Jews were portrayed as an “ally of the devil.”²¹⁸ They were also described as the most important danger for Christians: they were the “enemy of Death of the Christian.”²¹⁹ Even in April 1944 –when most of the Dutch Jews had already been deported- “the Jew” was still labeled as the main enemy of National Socialism and of the “white race” and was perceived a threat to national unity.²²⁰

One of the central arguments of the National Socialists was the connection of the Jews with the main enemies of National Socialism. As in German anti-Semitic propaganda, the Jews were seen as the protagonists of both unbridled capitalism and communism. According to the NSB propaganda, the Jews were allies of communist Soviet Union and of capitalist England and the United States of America. Many articles were written following this line of argument. And one of NSB’s most widely spread pamphlets stated this relationship: “Yankee Englishman-Bolshevik dancing to the tune of the Jewish clique.” In 1941 this poster was stuck to windows and put between the pages of the telephone book.²²¹ The NSB portrayed the Jews as belonging to a united international conspiracy, which was trying to conquer the world. The Jews were held responsible for the Second World War and thus for D-Day, and all the other mischief happening to Nazi-Germany and its allies. In other Nazi words: the Jews were guilty of everything.²²²

In addition to excluding the Jews from their national united utopia, the NSB papers also frequently supported German anti-Jewish policies.²²³ In national NSB newspapers the

²¹⁵ *De Werker*, December 15th, 1940, January 8th, 1941, April 12th, 1941.

²¹⁶ *De Daad*, September 27th, 1940; *De Daad* May 28th, 1943.

²¹⁷ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, April 1st, 1943.

²¹⁸ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, February 4th, 1943.

²¹⁹ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, April 13th, 1944.

²²⁰ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, April 6th, 1944.

²²¹ Illustration and Police Archive Heemstede, 31 August 1941.

²²² *Volk en Vaderland*, June 9th, 1944; Herf, *The Jewish enemy*, 183-230.

²²³ Wout Ultee and Ruud Luijkx, ‘De NSB als een massa agressief tuig? Artikelen over joden in het Nationale Dagblad 17-5-1940 tot 5-9-1944’ in: Henk Flap and Marnix Croes, eds, *Wat toeval leek te zijn, maar niet was. De organisatie van de jodenvervolging in Nederland* (Amsterdam 2001) 117-144, here 124-125.

deportation of the Jews was praised.²²⁴ The NSB encouraged German and Dutch National Socialist actions against the Jewish population. The NSB specifically supported the German liberation of “Jewish-capitalism” in the Netherlands.²²⁵ The NSB supported German measures to save the Dutch from the Jewish threat, which they saw as an important issue. The WA paper stated in the spring of 1941 that if the last Jew left the Netherlands, the nation would be a better place to live.²²⁶ And in March 1942, the Amsterdam NSB proudly announced that the Zandvoort community was “free of Jews.”²²⁷

In anti-Semitic propaganda, Amsterdam takes a special place. More than half of the population of Dutch Jews lived in Amsterdam. The NSB labeled it as a “Jewish city.”²²⁸ The anti-Jewish policies were most evident in the capital, and one can see how the local NSB newspaper continued to encourage those actions against the Jewish community. In September 1942 the Amsterdam NSB paper stated: “The Jewish problem is being solved gradually but radically by the German government by removing the Jews from our country.”²²⁹ The local NSB leaders in Amsterdam supported German anti-Jewish policies unconditionally. The Amsterdam-based NSB leadership did not only applaud passively; they also encouraged NSB members to actively post signs “prohibited for Jews” and discouraged them from buying from Jews.²³⁰ The Jews had not only to be “cleared” physically; their spirit had to be cleared as well.²³¹ NSB members disdained anyone opposing Nazi anti-Jewish policies.²³² The NSB even thought that the German policies could go further. The WA paper wrote disparagingly about how the German Nazis did not recognize those who were one-quarter Jewish as Jews.²³³ Such statements reveal the aggressive anti-Semitic tone of NSB propaganda in the city from which the largest number of Dutch Jews was deported.

In analyzing local and national newspapers, it becomes clear how deeply anti-Semitic—and thus a true representative of fascism in the Netherlands – the Dutch National

²²⁴ Landheer, *De stem van de NSB*, 57-58.

²²⁵ Vlekke in Amsterdam, NIOD, HSSPF, 033, August 26th, 1940.

²²⁶ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, April 29th, 1941.

²²⁷ *De Daad*, March 27th, September 4th, 1942.

²²⁸ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, January 21st, 1941.

²²⁹ *De Daad*, March 27th, September 4th, 1942.

²³⁰ *De Daad*, June 12nd, August 21st, 1941.

²³¹ *De Werker*, July 19th, 1941.

²³² *De Werker*, October 25th 1941; May 15th 1942.

²³³ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, May 25th, 1944.

Socialist movement was. In its anti-Semitic propaganda the NSB presented itself as a real fascist and National Socialist movement.²³⁴

With regards to the NSB members I have scrutinized, one should keep in mind that suspects often tried to downplay their anti-Semitism in trials.²³⁵ Still, not all members denied anti-Semitic feelings. In at least 35 cases out of the CABR sample there is evidence of anti-Semitic behavior and/or thinking.²³⁶ A former NSB member stated that after the German invasion she could finally “align herself with a party which was as anti-Semitic as she.”²³⁷ An NSB member from Noordwijk stated in her trial that her dislike of the Jews was still undiminished.²³⁸ During the war, another female NSB member from Noordwijk, a little village near the North Sea, wrote in a letter that she just had read a “really interesting” book about Jews. She suggested that all the Jews should be thrown into the sea or even be used to fill up the Zuiderzee (a big lake in the Netherlands).²³⁹ In 1943, one active but undisciplined member wrote from jail to his parents that he “hoped to be able to experience the final battle against Judaism.”²⁴⁰ A female member in Amsterdam reacted happily to the first steps to remove the Jews from the public life, so she finally could go somewhere “without ever having to look at those Jews’ mugs anymore.”²⁴¹ Some members unconditionally supported German policies against the Jews, such as an employee from Leiden University who adored Hitler and supported his “solution to the Jewish question.”²⁴² Despite one man who said he became an NSB member to save his Jewish wife, there is little evidence of pro-Jewish thoughts or behavior among NSB members.²⁴³

The level of anti-Semitism in Dutch society during the occupation is, perhaps surprisingly, an ill-explored subject. As historian Evelien Gans points out in her study of postwar anti-

²³⁴ Kallis, *Genocide and fascism*, 117, 121.

²³⁵ Browning, *Ordinary Men*.

²³⁶ NA, CABR, file 97118, 86456, 86527, 55380, 85351, 17658, 55750, 76881, 74278, 21723, 76441 (Guepin declared his opposition to the deportation of the Jews but wrote an article in the *Zwarte Soldaat* in which he called the Jews “a curse”), 20109, 17828, 52561, 19686, 22952, 62639, 40918, 57408, 63824, 64359, 56275, 106402, 97389, 86201, 74278, 42353, 70682, 106964, 95061, 63551, 37042, 14487, 21491, 85302.

²³⁷ NA, CABR, file 95061.

²³⁸ NA, CABR, file 95061.

²³⁹ NA, CABR, file 74278.

²⁴⁰ NA, CABR, file 20109.

²⁴¹ NA, CABR, file 106402: “zodat je nu eindelijk ergens rustig heen kunt gaan zonder eeuwig tegen die Jodentronies te moeten kijken.”

²⁴² NA, CABR, file 37042.

²⁴³ NA, CABR, file 13795.

Semitism in the Netherlands: we know almost nothing of the levels of anti-Semitism within the silent majority.²⁴⁴ Dutch prewar society is regarded as being less anti-Semitic than Germany or France. Combined with the high percentage of Jews who were killed, this phenomenon –as mentioned before- is labeled as the “Dutch paradox.” While anti-Semitism before the war was relatively low, those feelings probably increased in wartime. Various newspapers of the resistance noted that the level of anti-Semitism rose during the occupation. While thorough research is still lacking, several historians conclude that anti-Semitism had an upsurge after the liberation. This development was the result of the isolation of the Jews in society, anti-Semitic propaganda, and perhaps the feelings of shame and guilt about the Gentiles’ lack of courage to help the isolated and persecuted Jews.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, this did not mean that this level of anti-Semitism among the general public rose as high as that among NSB members. So, there was a gap between the ideas of NSB members and those of nonmembers.

Church

The next key element of National Socialist ideology relates to the relationship of the NSB with the church. More than fascism, Nazism is known for its anti-religious, anti-Christian views on society.²⁴⁶ However, in a religious society such as the Netherlands was at the time openly non-religious parties were not the most successful.

Religious institutions rejected the NSB from the 1930s onwards. The Reformed (Calvinist) and the Catholic Church both banned NSB members in the 1930s from sacraments.²⁴⁷ The relationship with different churches and religion in general remained difficult during the years of the Nazi occupation. According to the Catholic bishops, those

²⁴⁴ ‘1945-1951’, in: Conny Kristel, ed., *Met alle geweld. Botsingen en tegenstellingen in burgerlijk Nederland* (Amsterdam 2003) 195-213, here 197-199.

²⁴⁵ Gans, ‘Vandaag hebben ze niets, maar morgen bezitten ze weer tien gulden’, 317, 323, 344, 351, 353; Evelien Gans, *De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken. Een historische studie naar joodse sociaal-democraten en socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1999) 512-513. Gans also quotes Diennek Hondius: *Terugkeer. Antisemitisme rond bevrijding* (Den Haag 1998); De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk VII*, 434-441; J.C.H. Blom and J.J. Cahen, ‘Joodse Nederlanders, Nederlandse joden en joden in Nederland (1870-1940)’ in: J.C.H. Blom et al., eds, *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1995).

²⁴⁶ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, 235-240, 244-247.

²⁴⁷ *De Daad*, March 6th, 1942.

who became National Socialists placed themselves “outside the church.”²⁴⁸

The Catholic Church employed several methods to express its discontent with the NSB. In November 1940, the Church reinforced its statement from 1936, suggesting that Catholics should not belong to the NSB.²⁴⁹ Priests refused to offer their spaces to WA members or similar organizations.²⁵⁰ In January 1941, the Catholic Church refused the sacraments to all NSB members.²⁵¹ However, this ban on sacraments was aimed not only at the NSB group; sacraments were withheld from socialists and communists too, and the latter two groups were even mentioned first in the guidelines of the Catholic Church in January 1941.²⁵² In the same month, local church leaders received an instruction about NSB membership: Catholics were allowed to join the NSB only if they were forced to, and they were not permitted to wear a uniform, badge, or to attend NSB meetings or contribute to NSB propaganda.²⁵³ In 1942, the Catholic Church openly expressed the irreconcilability between Catholicism and National Socialism.²⁵⁴ In April 1942, the archbishop stated that “the National-Socialist worldview was diametrically opposed to Christianity and was a severe threat to our Christian faith and our Christian morals.”²⁵⁵ In June 1943, the Catholic Church issued guidelines for former NSB members who wanted to say farewell to the NSB and return to the Catholic Church. The former National Socialist and “born-again” Catholic had to abjure National Socialism by saying that he or she “abhors National Socialism and rejects it as incompatible with Christian principles.” From that moment onwards, NSB membership was prohibited and reading National Socialist papers was strongly prohibited. And children of NSB members could be baptized only if they were raised in the Catholic faith.²⁵⁶

Catholics had to refrain from participating in National Socialist sub-organizations as

²⁴⁸ NIOD, WA, file 1093.

²⁴⁹ Lieve Gevers, ‘Catholicism in the Low Countries During the Second World War Belgium and the Netherlands. A comparative Approach’ in: Gevers, Lieve and Jan Bank, eds, *Religion under Siege. I. The Roman Catholic Church in Occupied Europe (1939-1950)* (Leuven 2007)205-242, here 218.

²⁵⁰ PG(?) 13 February, 1942.

²⁵¹ Lieve Gevers, ‘Restauratie, vernieuwing en zuivering. Het katholicisme in de Lage Landen en de politieke nawerking van de Tweede Wereldoorlog’ in: Madelon de Keizer, ed., *Religie, godsdienst en geweld in de twintigste eeuw* (Zutphen 2006) 154-171, here 157; Gevers, ‘Catholicism in the Low Countries During the Second World War’, 218.

²⁵² January 27th 1941, Aartsbisschop en bisschoppen in Nederland 259a: 72f, RAL. Houwink ten Cate and In ’t Veld, *Font*, 96.

²⁵³ RAL, January 13th 1941, 259a: 72f. Opposition from the church in 1941; Kooy, *Echec*, 100; C.J. Rogier, *Katholieke Herleving* (Den Haag 1956) 593.

²⁵⁴ Gevers, ‘Restauratie, vernieuwing en zuivering’, 157.

²⁵⁵ April 1942, aartsbisschop en bisschoppen, 259a: 72f, RAL.

²⁵⁶ RAL, 259a: 72f Haarlem, June 7th, 1943; “Ondergeteekende verklaart bij dezen onder eede, dat hij het nationaal socialisme onder iedere vorm verwerpt en verfoeit als strijdig met de christelijke beginselen.”

well. From its establishment in 1940, the Catholic charity organizations were prohibited from aligning with the National Socialist charity organization Winterhulp; neither were they permitted to support this organization financially.²⁵⁷ In April 1942, this guideline was reinforced: even individual cooperation with Winterhulp or NVD was discouraged.²⁵⁸ However, the Church did not prohibit schools from accepting help from the NVD.²⁵⁹ In December 1941, the Diocese of Haarlem published a statement that Catholics should not join the Kultuurkamer; at that moment, they could still be passive members of the NSB.²⁶⁰ Participation in other National Socialist organizations was discouraged or forbidden too.²⁶¹ Wearing uniforms or badges from NSB or NJS was not tolerated at school.²⁶² It was forbidden for Catholic boys to join the *Landwacht*, SS, or sport camps of similar organizations.²⁶³

Many Dutch Reformed ministers ended up refusing to conduct National Socialist wedding ceremonies.²⁶⁴ The attitude of the Dutch Reformed Church was diverse, with some clergy harboring an implicit or explicit National Socialist inclination.²⁶⁵ In 1942, the Catholics, Reformed and Dutch Reformed churches established an interdenominational dialogue, in order to express their common dissatisfaction with the policies of the National Socialists.²⁶⁶ In this hostile environment, the NSB had to reconsider its standpoint regarding religion and the church.

²⁵⁷ December 23rd, 1940, RAL, **259b: 11**.

²⁵⁸ April 20th, 1942, letter to Catholic councils of the poor, 159 b: 11, RAL.

²⁵⁹ RAL, Bisdom Haarlem, November 9th 1942, 259a: 72f.

²⁶⁰ RAL, December 29th, 1942, Bisdom Haarlem: “not allowed to go to meetings, or read the NSB propaganda”; RAL, January 13nd, 1941, 259a: 72f; 259a: 72f, Haarlem, May 13th, 1944.

²⁶¹ RAL, Bisdom Haarlem, December 7th, 1942, NAF forbidden because umbrella organization NSB. 259a: 72f; Haarlem, 19 October 1942, 259a: 72f, artsenkamer; Haarlem, April 15th 1942, NAD discouraged.

²⁶² Haarlem, March 23nd 1942, 259a: 72f.

²⁶³ RAL, Bisdom Haarlem, Alfabetisch register publicaties, mededelingen etc: NSB: December 6th and 10th, 1940, March 23th, 1942, May 23th, 1940 and Juny 22th, 1942, Juny 22th, 1942 and March 29th, 1943, June 7th, 1943, June 22th, 1942; 259a: 72f. Sacraments not allowed to WA and SS members: De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk V*, 381.

²⁶⁴ Henk Tijssen, *De dominee van de NSB. Boissevain en zijn gang van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk naar het Nationaal Socialisme* (Kampen 2009) 153.

²⁶⁵ Jan Bank, ‘Protestantism in the Second World War. The Case of the Netherlands and France’ in: Gevers, Lieve and Jan Bank, eds, *Religion under Siege. II. Protestant, Orthodox and Muslim Communities in Occupied Europe (1939-1950)* (Leuven 2007) 223-264, here 242.

²⁶⁶ J.M. Snoek, *De Nederlandse kerken en de joden 1940-1945. De protesten bij Seys-Inquart. Hulp aan Joodse onderduikers. De motieven voor hulpverlening* (Kampen 1990) 78.

The intensified antireligious direction of the National Socialist regime posed a dilemma for the Dutch National Socialists.²⁶⁷ The NSB was confronted with antireligious German Nazism and opposition from Dutch churches. The NSB standpoint regarding the churches in the Netherlands was complicated and influenced by external dynamics. Given the bans on participation in National Socialist parties issued by the church, it became more and more difficult for the parties to reach out to religious communities. On the one hand, Dutch National Socialists tried to connect with religious people. On the other hand, the NSB opposed religious institutions, such as the Church. The NSB perceived religion more as an individual experience than an institutional affair. Therefore, the NSB beginning in the 1930s proclaimed that it disliked the Church as an institution but favored religion.

Mussert called himself and his party religious in the 1930s. The first point of the NSB 1937 party program was its faith in God (*Godsvertrouwen*).²⁶⁸ During the occupation, local meetings often ended with singing the sixth verse of the national anthem, the verse in which faith in God takes a central place.²⁶⁹

By analyzing NSB papers, it becomes clear that the NSB openly referred to Christianity during the occupation. “Trust in God” (*Godsvertrouwen*) remained one of the party’s leading principles. Although Christianity in itself was accepted and even proclaimed, the relationship with the churches was complicated. The NSB openly protested against the actions of different religious authorities, such as the ban on Catholic funerals for NSB members.²⁷⁰ The NSB propagandists proclaimed that it was not religion that the NSB opposed; they were in fact Christians themselves. However, they tried to explain that the Church should be denied political power in order to prevent the “bad” influences of capitalism. The Church had to be politically neutral and separated from politics; the NSB advocated a complete separation between the state and religious institutions.²⁷¹

The NSB ideologues connected the Christian religion clearly to “the Jewish question.” According to the NSB papers the Jews were anti-Christian and therefore seen as a danger to the national identity. The NSB introduced the term “Christian-anti-Semitism.” The NSB saw

²⁶⁷ But also religious Nazi officials, such as Seyss-Inquart.

²⁶⁸ *De bronnen van het Nederlands Nationaal Socialisme* (1937).

²⁶⁹ Reports about local meetings June 23rd, 1941, September 23rd, 1942, May 23rd, 1943, NIOD, file 1498; *De Daad*, May 1st, 1942, November 6th, 1942, April 28th, 1944. They sang this faith-oriented verse instead of the first verse, in which the “German blood” is mentioned.

²⁷⁰ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, February 18th, 1941; NIOD, ATL, file 2049, June 1942; NIOD, 123, file 1473-76, January 10th - December 17th, 1941.

²⁷¹ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, December 24th, 1940, January 7th, 1941, April 29th, 1941.

anti-Semitism in itself as a Christian vocation. In order to support this principle they quoted anti-Semitic texts by Martin Luther.²⁷² The Jews were portrayed as the cause of degeneration of Christian morality and the Church.²⁷³ Therefore, the NSB openly questioned the churches' protests against the deportation because, according to the NSB, the Christians were denying their own history, in which they always had opposed the Jews.²⁷⁴ The protests of the Church were presented as evidence of its ties with the Jews, Bolshevism and capitalism.²⁷⁵

One of the ways the NSB tried to convince religious nonmembers to support the party was by emphasizing their shared aim of fighting against the communist Soviet-Union. The NSB regularly pointed to Christians' rejection of communism to bolster their cause. NSB papers tried to persuade Christian non-NSB-members to unite with them in order to win the fight against the "Bolshevik danger."²⁷⁶ Such statements were frequently used by the NSB in the first period of Hitler's war against the Soviet Union.

In this respect, the region in which the NSB operated also mattered. In the local NSB paper from the Utrecht area –*de Werker*– more articles about churches were published than was the case in Amsterdam.²⁷⁷ One of the explanations could be that in the area surrounding Utrecht people—the so-called Dutch Bible Belt-- were more strongly attached to religious institutions.

The NSB had its own religious NSB organization (*Evangelie en Volk*).²⁷⁸ There were some NSB Reformed ministers with influence as well. Reverend Boissevain –based in Leiden– was one of the main religious thinkers of the NSB and Reverend Ekering –based in Amsterdam– was one of the most popular and active National Socialist ministers. He married and buried National Socialists and gave many sermons.²⁷⁹ In this context Ernst Zilver, the leader of the National Socialist youth organization, pleaded in a national paper that members should have the opportunity to fulfill their religious duties.²⁸⁰ However, the religious NSB

²⁷² *De Zwarte Soldaat*, November 29th, 1944.

²⁷³ *De Zwarte soldaat*, April 13th, 1944; *De Zwarte Soldaat*, April 20th, 1944. As mentioned above, the Jews were connected with communism.

²⁷⁴ *Volk en Vaderland*, January 31st, 1941; August 1st, 1941.

²⁷⁵ Landheer, *De stem van de NSB*, 72.

²⁷⁶ *De Zwarte soldaat*, July 7th, 1941 and July 11th, 1941.

²⁷⁷ E.g. *De Werker*, March 29th, 1941.

²⁷⁸ Tijssen, *De dominee van de NSB*(Kampen 2009).

²⁷⁹ Ekering, Boissevain et al.; Tijssen, *De dominee van de NSB*; NA, CABR, file 20294. Also in other communities, for example Reverend Reeser in Winterswijk: Kooy, *Echec*, 31-34.

²⁸⁰ June 11th, 1943, *Algemeen handelsblad*, NA, CABR, file 21419.

organization did not last. It disappeared in November 1941.²⁸¹ The NSB increasingly saw Christianity as a tool to reinforce their anti-Semitic agenda and less as a separate standpoint that had to be defended. This coincided with generally more German and radicalized propaganda on all fronts.

All in all, the NSB attitude towards the Church started off with benevolence and rapprochement and developed into a more distant and restrained approach. The NSB still valued the trust in God highly and even saw Hitler as sent by God. However, religion played a subordinate role in NSB propaganda. The religious NSB organization did not survive to the end of the war. Religious communities and National Socialism drifted apart, as the NSB opted for the German Nazi line of thought.

Thus, National Socialism and Christianity had a difficult relationship. In the Netherlands, Mussert tried to combine both. It is interesting to see if and how individual National Socialists reflected upon this issue. From the CABR sample, only six members expressed themselves negatively about the Church.²⁸² Nine members were active within one of the churches during the occupation and their membership.²⁸³ Four clearly struggled with the combination of faith in the Church and National Socialism.²⁸⁴ It seemed as if the Church did not play a major role in the lives of the majority of the NSB members. This idea corresponds with the high percentage of NSB members who did not belong to any church community. From this sample approximately 25 percent were not aligned with any Church, while nationally 17.1 percent were not religious.²⁸⁵

The Church was an important subject of conflict between NSB members and nonmembers. Those who belonged to a religious community were influenced by the standpoints of their church and saw the NSB as an antireligious movement. A teacher in Amsterdam, an opponent of the NSB, was bewildered that a Reformed minister had joined the NSB.²⁸⁶ Churches kept the NSB at a distance; religion and the NSB drifted apart, as did members of religious communities and members of the NSB

²⁸¹ Tijssen, *De dominee van de NSB*, 109.

²⁸² NA, CABR, file 86456, 75637, 61802, 11089, 21046, 104411, 107613, 94224.

²⁸³ NA, CABR, file 20294; STPD 41, 21723, 97118, 56593, 56104, 105208, 21419, 105014, 96973.

²⁸⁴ NA, CABR file 12499, 18303; 52561; 76881.

²⁸⁵ Kooy, *Echec*, 148. In this sample: 25 percent compared to 17.1 nationally; www.volkstellingen.nl.

²⁸⁶ NIOD 244, file 1179.

The Big Brothers

As a Dutch nationalistic movement, the NSB not only had to relate itself carefully to a foreign occupier; it also had to think about how Dutch National Socialism fit into Western European fascism. Until now, in historiography it was often assumed that the NSB was first pro-Mussolini and changed in the late 1930s towards aligning itself with Hitler. Of course, it would not surprise anybody that during the occupation the NSB looked increasingly in the direction of the German Nazis. Contacts between members of the NSB and German Nazis became institutionalized during the Nazi occupation. But the NSB could have perceived itself as a representative of a broader international fascist movement instead of a Nazi Germanic one. How did the NSB reflect on developments in Germany and Italy and which examples were quoted in NSB papers?

We had and have solidarity with the Blackshirts of Mussolini and the brownshirts of Hitler. But (...) this solidarity does not exclude solidarity with our own nation, which goes above all.²⁸⁷ (Anton Mussert, August 1941)

In the 1930s, Mussert had spoken with admiration about the achievements of Mussolini. Despite the image of Dutch fascists as semi-Germans, they felt also related to Italian fascists. This feeling of a shared mission and ideology did not stop with the German occupation. Mussolini was quoted several times during the period of the German occupation, as a companion in the struggle for fascism.²⁸⁸

The NSB saw itself as the Dutch representative of a broader international fascist movement. A speech by the National Socialist mayor in Hilversum is a fine example of the views of National Socialists on the connections between the NSB and foreign examples of fascism. In the summer of 1940, he points to the many good things accomplished by the

²⁸⁷ Speech by Mussert at a meeting with German NSB members; *De Zwarte Soldaat*, August 8th, 1941. See also *Volk en Vaderland*, April 22th, 1943.

²⁸⁸ *De Werker*): Mussolini December 1st, 1940; Mussolini and Hitler January 18th, 1941; Mussolini and Hitler March 1st, 1941, Mussolini September 27th, 1941 and Mussolini July 17th, 1942.

regimes in Italy, Spain and Germany. Every citizen had to respect these accomplishments by Nazi Germany. While pointing out the importance of the Dutch identity, he also expressed admiration for the “great” and “brilliant” man Hitler.²⁸⁹

References in NSB papers to Hitler greatly outnumbered those to Mussolini. Pictures of Hitler were put on the front pages of local newspapers, for example, on his birthday. They referred to German Nazis as “German comrades.”²⁹⁰ The NSB propagandists liked Mussolini but now worshipped Hitler. Mussert wrote in 1943 that it was God who had sent Hitler to Europe.²⁹¹ After the allied invasion on D-Day, *Vova* announced that Mussert had sent a telegram to Hitler assuring him that the NSB stood behind Hitler.²⁹² The attack on Hitler in July 1944 was described in the NSB newspaper as a “monstrous crime.”²⁹³ And even after the alleged Nazi defeat on Mad Tuesday, the WA paper stated: “we follow the Führer.”²⁹⁴ On May 4th 1945, *Vova* placed an obituary for the “heroic death” of Hitler. According to this NSB paper, Hitler was not only the greatest figure and Germany’s greatest son but above all the greatest European of all times.²⁹⁵

However, this adoration of Hitler did not mean that all NSB members saw themselves as servants of the German Nazis. The main dispute within the NSB was concerned the extent to which the Dutch nation had to be incorporated within the German Reich. One tendency, following the SS orientation of NSB deputy leader Meinoud Rost van Tonningen, saw itself as part of Germany, while Mussert’s group viewed itself mainly as working together with the Germans to establish National Socialism in the Netherlands and at the same time defending Dutch interests.²⁹⁶ Members of this group argued about the notion that only fighting for Dutch National Socialism could prevent a takeover by German

²⁸⁹ Utrechts Archief, June 24th, 1940

²⁹⁰ *De Werker*: Mussolini and Hitler January 18th, 1941; Mussolini and Hitler March 1st, 1941; Hitler April 12th, 1941, Hitler January 30th, 1942, Hitler April 17th, 1942, Hitler June 19th, 1942; Hitler January 29th, 1943; Hitler January 16th, 1943; Hitler June 25th, 1943; Hitler October 29th, 1943; Hitler June 16th, 1944; *De Daad*, October 11th 1940, Mussert visited Hitler; January 30th, 1942, with pictures of Hitler and about German comrades; July 28th, 1944 explanation about attack on Hitler.

²⁹¹ *Volk en Vaderland*, ‘God zond Europa den Führer’, April 22th, 1943.

²⁹² *Volk en Vaderland*, June 9th, 1944.

²⁹³ *Volk en Vaderland*, July 27th, 1944.

²⁹⁴ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, September 20th, 1944.

²⁹⁵ *Volk en Vaderland*, May 4th, 1945.

²⁹⁶ *Volk en Vaderland*, September 8th, 1944; and “met Duitsland voor een vrij Nederland”; Noord Hollands archief, het Gooi, meeting Hilversum December 1941; about disputes: July 15th, 1943, National Archives, London.

National Socialism.²⁹⁷ Even on the small, local level, such as a NSB meeting, members disagreed about Mussert's position regarding Hitler.²⁹⁸

In discussing the NSB attitude towards National Socialist Germany, the relationship with the NSDAP becomes relevant as well. In Dutch historiography the NSB is labeled as a semi-NSDAP, and NSB members as semi-Germans. It is true that these two organizations had many similarities, in ideological and political practices. As the NSDAP was older, bigger, and more successful than the NSB, the NSB looked to the NSDAP for inspiration. The construction of the NSB was very similar to that of the NSDAP: both emphasized the importance of lower-ranked officials and territorial and functional subdivision. Both parties tried to increase participation of their members. Hence, the NSB resembled the NSDAP in many ways.

NSB officials mentioned the NSDAP in propaganda and in internal reports. In internal NSB reports it becomes clear that the NSB and the NSDAP closely interacted with each other.²⁹⁹ The NSB promoted interaction with NSDAP members. In the summer of 1941, the NSB urged its members to comradesly greet members of the NSDAP, the German SA, the SS and the *Hitlerjugend*.³⁰⁰ Members went to co-organized meetings.³⁰¹ They could attend joint film screenings for members of the NSB and the NSDAP. From 1943 onwards, there were weekly joint Sunday morning screenings in Utrecht.³⁰² NSB leaders tried to enforce companionship between NSB and NSDAP members; therefore, in order to promote a joint "pan meal," they proclaimed in a local NSB paper that they would have dinner: "Together with our German comrades in close companionship!"³⁰³

This development of Germanization sometimes frustrated local party leaders.³⁰⁴ In January 1944, a local NSB leader complained about the overrepresentation of NSDAP members in a joint activity. He was disappointed about the minority of NSB members compared with NSDAP members. In addition, he thought that NSDAP officials occupied

²⁹⁷ NSVO-meeting, NIOD, file 1498, July 25th, 1940.

²⁹⁸ NIOD, file 1498, May 20th, 1943, Naarden and Bussum.

²⁹⁹ Regionaal Archief Haarlem, access number 223, file 19, in 1942.

³⁰⁰ *De Werker*, August 2nd, 1941.

³⁰¹ *De Werker*, March 15th, 1941, March 29th, 1941, January 9th, 1942, June 5th, 1942, October 8th, October 15th 1943.

³⁰² Regionaal Archief Haarlem, July 12th, 1942, 223, 1,? *De Werker*, September 24th, 1943.

³⁰³ "Tezamen met onze Duitse kameraden in hechte kameraadschap!"; *De Werker*, November 8th, 1941.

³⁰⁴ NIOD, file 123, 1498, 1944.

more privileged seats than the NSB officials.³⁰⁵ It was also during that same year, in July 1944, that an NSB propagandist distanced the NSB from the NSDAP. According to the writer, the NSB had always been more focused on quality than on quantity, whereas the NSDAP valued quantity over quality of members.³⁰⁶

Despite points of critique, the NSB depended greatly on the NSDAP as inspiration, as co-organizer of National Socialist activities in the Netherlands, and as a natural supporter. In analyzing the influence of foreign examples for the ideology of the NSB, it becomes clear that NSB ideology was internally disputed and therefore dynamic, with some fixed elements. Dutch National Socialists looked at the German and Italian conquests as empire building; they received inspiration from those examples. However, the national NSB standpoint regarding Germany was not unanimous and became more problematic over time.

In discussing the NSB in the period when NSB members collaborated actively with the German occupier, their views about German Nazism reveal their mindset. The files indicate that many individual NSB members did not deviate from the official national party line regarding Nazi Germany. In fact, most members were Germany oriented. Seventy-six members of the CABR sample, one out of four, mentioned Hitler or expressed pro-Hitler feelings by having Hitler paraphernalia, greeting people or closing letters with “Heil Hitler,” taking an oath on Hitler and/or displaying the flag on Hitler’s birthday.³⁰⁷

These NSB members saw National Socialist rule as the new order in politics and society, to be shaped in the near and distant future. They believed in the future of National Socialism and thus in a German victory.³⁰⁸ Some NSB members elaborated on this issue: they believed, for example, in a European Union under Germany’s leadership.³⁰⁹ An active female National Socialist said that the only opportunity for the survival of the Netherlands

³⁰⁵ Reports and agendas of meetings and NSB group and circle councils, NIOD file 123, 1498.

³⁰⁶ Instruction LRVV June 20th, 1944; NA, file 2.09.08, 588, 23 July 1944..

³⁰⁷ E.g., NA, CABR, files 86456, 20294, 21723, 23885, 22267, 20109, 18086, 18116, 55706, 17610, 17828, 17833, 19980, 17780, 14486, 55673, 55447, 52561, 19332, 22952, 57232, 56649, Hendrikus Johannes Kolsteeg, 97765, 63486, 54294, 74410, 76881, 69339, 110161, 26026, 56601, 707, 76436, 61106, 56275, 42336, 105377, 85816, 106402, 105208, 107176, 85465, 105398, 105244, 95025, 20625, 21419, 74278, 37267, 19346, 94196, 22718, 37445, 63220, 21839, 94289, 37223, 105486, 94247, 106964, 97466, 94817, 101669, 23823, 64411, 37042, 105489, 12230, 21105, 21491, 86142, 106731, 85302, 106092, 86639, 105976, 13374, 105454, 85878, 21042.

³⁰⁸ E.g. NA, CABR, files 97112, 55196, 61151, 56307, 56941, 40918, 22952.

³⁰⁹ NA, CABR, files 86456, 75637, 91860, 86182, 105667.

would be joining Germany.³¹⁰ For many members, a future filled with National Socialism and German National Socialists seemed a realistic and desirable prospect.

Many members looked up to the fascist foreign examples. A young student from Amsterdam was impressed by the achievements of Hitler and Mussolini, and how they made their nations “great and powerful.” He hoped that the NSB could do the same for the Netherlands.³¹¹ The belief of NSB members in Germany often included adoration of Hitler. An Amsterdam NSB member wrote a letter during the war, declaring his willingness to be guided by his loyalty to Mussert and by his “rock-solid faith in our Führer A. Hitler.”³¹² One elderly NSB member was very impressed after he had read *Mein Kampf*.³¹³ A teacher at the school for arts in Hilversum thought of himself as more pro-German than as pro-NSB. He wrote his mistress in August 1944 that he looked forward to Hitler’s victory and that this victory would be better for the majority of the European people. On the NSB-controlled national radio he gave many anti-Semitic talks, where he hoped that Hitler would keep out the “Jewish-Mongolian” storm from the East.³¹⁴ In the end NSB members increasingly leaned towards Germany and saw Hitler as the savior of their National Socialist future.

As in the national and local NSB propaganda, there were disputes about the extent to which Nazi Germany had to be followed. In addition to this explicitly pro-German faction within the party, there also was a more pro-“Dietsch” (greater Netherlands) group inside the NSB. They tried to maintain the independent position of the Netherlands and align themselves with Flanders and even with South Africa: all the Dutch –speaking regions in the world. This group was dedicated to Mussert, while the German-oriented people listened to Rost van Tonningen and to Hitler. The “Dietsche” group was especially well represented within the youth organization of the NSB. The leader of the youth orchestra Walter Janssens of the NSB expressed himself frequently along these lines.³¹⁵ Consequently, there were bitter divisions within the Dutch National Socialist movement. However, the disputes were carried out among the NSB officials, not the ordinary members. The latter

³¹⁰ NA, CABR, file 20083.

³¹¹ NA, CABR, file 18116.

³¹² NA, CABR, file 22267; NIOD 216c.

³¹³ NA, CABR, file 22718.

³¹⁴ “Ik hoop dat Hitler wint. Het is beter voor het meereendeel der menschen in Europa.”; NA, CABR, file 22952.

³¹⁵ NA, CABR, files 21648,85551; and NIOD diary.

seemed less interested or influenced by disputes between NSB officials; they chose unconditionally for Nazi Germany.

In their views of the German occupier the NSB members clashed with the nonmembers. Their adoration of Hitler and Mussolini was not shared by people who were not aligned with the NSB. Loyalty towards the German Nazi occupier was the main cause of disputes between NSB members and nonmembers. The Germans were awful, but the NSB members were supposed to be even worse than the Germans.³¹⁶

Dutch empire

A final central aspect within the wartime NSB is its conception of the colonial empire and the Dutch Indies. The NSB had always been a fervent supporter of a Dutch empire.³¹⁷ In the 1930s, the NSB leaders constantly proclaimed the importance of the Dutch Indies for the Netherlands. This became problematic with the German occupation. Dutch National Socialists could still glorify their country's past as an empire, but at the same time they had to deal with a colony that was occupied by the ally (Japan) of its own most important supporter (Germany). Here, the standpoint of the German Nazis clashed with the Dutch party's prewar ideas. The NSB had to determine their new position carefully.

The Dutch had possessed a large colonial empire, which served as a source for national pride and glory. The Netherlands had controlled the Dutch Indies for three centuries. In the 1930s, the NSB was one of the most prominent promoters of a powerful and above all *Dutch* East Indies. In addition, the National Socialist movement received a significant amount of money from its supporters overseas.³¹⁸ Therefore, the NSB had a hard time defining its own position regarding the Dutch Indies during the German occupation.

In the months following the German invasion, the Dutch colonial administration arrested German and German-oriented persons, among them members of the NSB. Hundreds of leading National Socialists were seen as possible traitors and were therefore

³¹⁶ Van der Boom, *We leven nog*; Diary Kasten, RAL.

³¹⁷ Tessel Pollmann, 'De Indische NSB'.

³¹⁸ Tessel Pollmann 'De Indische NSB'; *De Zwarte Soldaat*, August 8th, 1941.

interned.³¹⁹ The NSB expressed its concern about these NSB prisoners. The interned “comrades” were regularly mentioned in NSB papers.³²⁰ The NSB saw those internments as a true disgrace.³²¹ In addition to proclaiming the disgrace of the internments, the NSB wanted to maintain contacts with the NSB members overseas. The NSB informed its members about how to send their letters to those who were interned in the Indies.³²² Later, the NSB announced that the NSB members had been shipped to an internment camp in Suriname and therefore that would be the new destination to send letters to.³²³

The NSB also tried to influence the policies in the Dutch East Indies and wanted the German Nazis to help them. NSB leaders complained to the German administration about the lack of German support. They tried to persuade the Germans to ask the Japanese to liberate the interned members in October 1940. However, their efforts were without success.³²⁴

Local NSB leaders dealt with the “Indies-issue” at several NSB meetings during the first period of the occupation. Communication with its members was one of the main aims of the NSB on this issue. The Dutch Indies, the colonial past and the internment of NSB members were discussed at numerous party gatherings. At meetings of the National Socialist Women’s Organization the issue was particularly popular. One female member of the NSB often held presentations about the Dutch Indies, the NSB members who were interned there, and the hard life Western women faced in the colony. She touched on the race issue and proclaimed the superiority of the Western race compared to the Eastern race.³²⁵ The subject of the Dutch East Indies was on the agenda the first year of the occupation. Afterwards it became problematic because of Japan’s position as the conqueror of the Dutch East Indies.

External international factors put the NSB in a difficult position. In the autumn of 1940, after the Axis pact of Germany, Italy and Japan, the NSB did not anticipate an imminent Japanese conquest of the Dutch Indies.³²⁶ Nevertheless, Japan did invade the

³¹⁹ Jennifer Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*, 179.

³²⁰ Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*, 180-181; *Volk en Vaderland (Vova)* June 7th 1941.

³²¹ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, December 24th, 1940, May 30th, 1941, August 1st, 1941.

³²² *De Daad*, July 17th, 1942; *De Werker*, July 24th, 1942.

³²³ *De Werker*, July 16th, 1943. Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*, 182; *Vova*, February 12th and July 16th, 1943.

³²⁴ HSSPF, 077, October 15th, 1940.

³²⁵ NIOD, file 1498, January 20th, 1941, February 20th, 1941, February 24th, 1941.

³²⁶ *Volk en Vaderland*, September 27th and October 11th, 1940.

Dutch Indies successfully. The NSB had to choose between their own principles (pro-colonial, against Japan) and those of Nazi Germany. The national NSB papers kept silent when the Japanese invaded the Indies, which suggests the indecision among NSB leaders.³²⁷ The NSB clearly had problems with defining its position on this delicate subject. Local leaders were urged not to discuss this subject too often at party meetings.³²⁸

After a period of silence, the NSB finally gave up the idea of the Dutch East Indies because they did not see another option given Germany's alliance with Japan. Historian Jennifer Foray examined this struggle in her study of Dutch views on the Dutch Indies during the war. According to Foray, the NSB was more concerned with validating its own ideology than with the connection with the Dutch Indies itself.³²⁹

The fact that the Netherlands was now separated from the Indies did not mark the end of the Dutch National Socialist colonial ambition. Partly because of German pressure, they tried to relocate their colonial aspirations to Eastern Europe.³³⁰ From that moment onwards their view was towards the near East.³³¹ The NSB leaders wrote about the –in their eyes- unrealistic expectations of their opponents; it would be impossible to reconquer the Dutch Indies.³³² The NSB said they relied upon “realism”; the propaganda labeled the Queen's aspirations as unrealistic and its own as realistic and preferable. The NSB had resigned itself to the loss of the Netherlands' Asian empire and decided to support the Germans and the Japanese; they dropped the East Indies and wished to build up a European empire together with the German Nazis.

Once the NSB had decided to accept the loss of the Dutch Indies, the NSB leaders tried to alter the image of the Japanese occupation. They blamed the Americans, the Jews, the English and the weak prewar government for the defeat. They did not see Japan as the aggressor.³³³ The official party line in 1943 stated that the Dutch Indies would come under the influence of Japan, as the Asian living space (*levensruimte*). The European continent would

³²⁷ *Volke en Vaderland*, February 1942.

³²⁸ NIOD, Indische Zaken acces number 123, file 2056.

³²⁹ Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*, 193-194.

³³⁰ *De Werker*, November 22th, 1942; *De Zwarte Soldaat*, December 3rd, 1942; Kees Schmidt, *Om het behoud van Indië. De bewogen geschiedenis van een Amsterdamse koopmansfamilie* (Almere 2010) 86-89.

³³¹ *De Werker*, November 20th 1942, June 18th, 1943; Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*, 195; *Volke en Vaderland*, August 1942.

³³² *De Zwarte Soldaat*, October 28th, 1943 and March 23rd, 1944.

³³³ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, between August 1941 and September 1942 no articles about the Indies; *De Werker*, January 30th 1942, Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*, 193.

become a Germanic sphere.³³⁴ The prewar government was a “safer” (less controversial) subject for the NSB. It was the prewar democratic government, which was responsible for the loss of the Dutch colony.³³⁵ In June 1943, Utrecht NSB leaders stated that it was the prewar government who surrendered the Indies to the United States of America and England. The NSB could always complain about past shortages of military personnel or the general “weaknesses of the democratic system.”³³⁶ Another favorite subject in the national WA magazine was the weakness of the Indies as a result of the Jewish influences.³³⁷ The Jews were blamed for the military shortcomings that had weakened the Indies. The Jews were evil, and while the Indonesian population was portrayed as inferior and different, it was not, however, as dangerous as the Jews. The racial classification of the German Nazis required the Dutch National Socialists to think about the position of those with Indonesian blood. The NSB tried to explain why the East Indian race differed from the Jewish race. According to the NSB, the East Indians mingled better with the Dutch and did not oppose Dutch interests. Moreover, the lack of new influx of “Indian blood” would assure the final disappearance of the East Indian race.³³⁸

In analyzing NSB’s standpoint regarding the Dutch Indies, it becomes clear that there were points of dispute between Dutch and German National Socialists on this subject. In internal letters NSB members expressed the difference between the Dutch and German standpoints, as a result of the centuries-long colonial experience for the Netherlands and the lack of a similar record for Germany.³³⁹ According to an internal circular, the NSB leaders distanced themselves partly from the Germans. In their eyes the German worldview was different because of their lack of a long tradition of colonial empire.³⁴⁰ The German administration concluded the same: the NSB took a different stand on the race issue.³⁴¹ However, these disputes were internal; in its propaganda the NSB backed up the German views in the end.

All in all, an exploration of the NSB standpoint regarding the Dutch East Indies shows the flexibility of Dutch National Socialist ideology. It also demonstrates the initial

³³⁴ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, July 1st, 1943.

³³⁵ *De Werker*, January 30th, 1942; Foray, *The Kingdom Shall Rise Again*, 189-193.

³³⁶ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, June 27th, 1941.

³³⁷ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, May, 30th, 1941.

³³⁸ *De Zwarte Soldaat*, September 17th, 1942.

³³⁹ NIOD, 123, file 2056, March 9th, 1941.

³⁴⁰ NIOD, NSB ‘Indische Zaken’, access number 123, file 2056.

³⁴¹ NIOD, HSSPF, file 033, January 21st, 1941.

quarrels between Dutch and German National Socialists about this subject. However, it does not reveal major disputes between National Socialist newspapers. Some newspapers explained National Socialist ideology more extensively, but the core position did not differ much. This corresponds with the findings of historian Jeffrey Herf in his study of Nazi propaganda.³⁴² Moreover, the propaganda illustrates the focus on race, empire and the military, which fits into general fascist ideas.

The issue of the Dutch East Indies also distinguished the NSB from the rest of Dutch society. Fifteen members from my sample expressed their interest in this subject, or they had lived in the Dutch Indies before becoming an NSB member in the Netherlands.³⁴³ NSB members who had lived in the Dutch Indies before the occupation felt particularly nostalgic concerning strong colonial government.³⁴⁴ However, the issue of the Dutch Indies does not often come up in letters or other personal statements of NSB members. Thus, the issue was more debated within the NSB organization than experienced on an individual level.

In general, NSB opponents agreed with the NSB members that the Dutch colony was something to cherish and fight for. Many Dutchmen did not want to give up the colony.³⁴⁵ Unlike the NSB organs, the resistance papers pointed to Japan as the aggressor, not to the English and the Americans.³⁴⁶ Most of the Dutch did not exhibit any enthusiasm for the colonization of Eastern Europe; the NOC (Dutch East Division) was quite unpopular.³⁴⁷ All in all, the national NSB ideas about the Dutch Indies did not correspond with general public opinion in many ways: the party's concentration on NSB internees and their final support for the Japanese occupation were not reflected in the opinions of their Dutch opponents.³⁴⁸

³⁴² Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 272.

³⁴³ NA, CABR, 20139, 23816, 3014, 91860 en 86182 en 105667, 23885, Johannes Theodorus van Rossum, 17833, 17828, 55447, 13759, 17686, 70873, 97695, 70682, 23823, 86197, 105458.

³⁴⁴ NA, CABR, Johannes Theodorus van Rossum, 20139, 23816, 3014, 91860, 86182, 105667.

³⁴⁵ HSSPF, 077, October 8th, 1940.

³⁴⁶ *Vrij Nederland*, February 1942; Foray, *The Kingdom shall rise again*.

³⁴⁷ Unsuccessfully, the NSB tried to reach out to nonmembers; *Het werkende volk*, August 13th, 1943.

³⁴⁸ Arrests in Dutch Indies were comparable with those in the Netherlands before May 1940.

Increasing gap

After exploring the ideology of European fascism, Dutch National Socialism and the ideology of individual NSB members, one can draw the following conclusions: Dutch National Socialism was a revolutionary form of fascism, and individual members were increasingly influenced by a National Socialist mindset. The National Socialist ideas were spread by a coherent set of propaganda that emphasized the need for a purified national community, without Jews and non-National Socialist “cowards.” This National Socialist conscience is crucial in understanding the social position of National Socialists within Dutch society.

The NSB increasingly followed the German Nazi ideas in its propaganda. The NSB newspapers supported German measures against the Jews. Anti-Semitism is virulent in NSB propaganda. While anti-Semitism was a common foundational view in both Dutch and German Nazism, the NSB changed its views on other subjects, due to its alliance with the Nazi regime. The NSB moved away from its originally pro-religious standpoints; religion became decreasingly important in its organization. While the NSB was one of the most outspoken advocates of the Dutch empire built around the Dutch Indies, it decided to settle for colonization of Eastern Europe instead of maintaining support for the lost colony. Both the national NSB organization and individual NSB members chose unconditionally to support Hitler and his Nazi Germany. NSB officials did quarrel about the Dutch East Indies and to what extent they had to follow Nazi Germany. However, individual members seemed to be less interested in these disputes. For them, support of the NSB meant support of Adolf Hitler.

National Socialist ideology did play a role in the lives of individual NSB members. It was not always ideology that attracted them to the party, but National Socialist propaganda influenced the majority of NSB members to adopt National Socialist ideology. A majority of Dutch National Socialists believed in the rightness of a revolution in order to create a National Socialist New Order, putting distance between NSB members and nonmembers, especially concerning who were the “right” advocates of the Dutch people.

Differences of conscience between NSB members and the rest of society did exist and increased over time. The groups differed in their views about society and who belonged to the nation and about their relationship with the occupier. The National Socialist mindset

and worldview of NSB members differed from those of their compatriots. They increasingly looked differently at the world and at Dutch society, especially in terms of who did or did not belong to the Dutch nation and citizenship.

The political convictions of individual NSB members differed significantly from nonmembers on several fronts, and the gap increased during the occupation. The latter shift is connected with the dynamic instead of static ideology of fascist groups. Members of fascist collaborating groups developed ideologically during the period of the occupation. As a result of their support for the Germans and the general rejection by their non-fascist environment, they became more radical in their ideas. Many fascist groups (collaborators and occupiers) were “self-obsessed.” During the Nazi occupation they became more radicalized and inward looking. They became more out of touch with reality and with the non-fascist members of society.³⁴⁹ The process of nazification coincided with a process of radicalization and general rejection. This led to an increasing gap between the fascist worldviews and perception of reality and that of nonmembers. NSB members were indoctrinated by a revolutionary ideology, which radicalized during the years of occupation. Failing in their efforts to reach out to the general public, the NSB increasingly decided to consider itself as a revolutionary vanguard. Thus, they distanced themselves even more strongly from the non-NSB-Dutchmen.

³⁴⁹ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 282.

2. Political organization and participation

Introduction

“Come, crawl out of the NSB armchair and turn to work, be a National Socialist-warrior.”³⁵⁰ (April 14th, 1943, letter from an NSB group leader to local members)

Political participation was a central element in every fascist movement. It was the adoration of “action” that distinguished fascist organizations from other political organizations, at least in their members’ eyes. Thus, studying the actions and political participation of NSB members should be included in this book as an instrument to grasp the essence of Dutch National Socialism in wartime. The NSB enabled participation by maintaining an extensive organization, so an examination of the organization of the NSB is essential in an analysis of participation.

Focusing on political participation will bring the analysis of the NSB as a political movement into line with the international perspective on fascist movements. In this respect, I will follow Robert Paxton, who proposes concentrating on members’ activities rather than their ideology alone.³⁵¹ In addition, historian Michael Spurr emphasizes the relevance of individual activities in his analysis of British fascism by interpreting fascism as a subculture and a social movement with a lifestyle of its own. According to Spurr, a fascist lifestyle extended beyond simple political ideology and included networks, socialization, friends and an identity.³⁵²

Political participation in fascist organizations was characterized by a set of high demands both on the individuals and on the group. In general, high demands are more likely to be imposed by extremist rather than moderate organizations. These higher demands are a consequence of the fact that extremism requires mobilization, whereas compromise does not.³⁵³ We may assume that successful mobilization leads to higher participation, which also

³⁵⁰ “Kom, kruipt uit de NSB-leunstoel en zet u aan het werk, wordt een Nationaal-Socialistisch Strijder”; NIOD, 123, file 220 e.

³⁵¹ Paxton, *The Anatomy of fascism*; Paxton, ‘The Five Stages of Fascism’.

³⁵² Spurr, ‘Playing for fascism’, 362; Spurr, ‘Living the Blackshirt Life’, 305, 313-315, 318, 321-322.

³⁵³ Breton et al., eds, *Political Extremism and Rationality*, XVI.

may lead to an increase in solidarity within the group. According to the economist Ron Wintrobe, social solidarity is essential in extremist organizations.³⁵⁴ People who participate actively feel more attached to the organization and also heavily invest in participating. Therefore, the fact that NSB leaders demanded a high degree of members' participation corresponds with findings in the international literature on the sociology of extremist political organizations in general.

Moreover, during the era of National Socialism, mass mobilization by political organizations was more common than it is in the current political and social arena. For members of all sorts of political and religious organizations the mobilization of the masses was a widespread phenomenon, marked by mass attendance at meetings, the existence of special organizations for women, children and professional classes, and the public display of political or religious convictions. All this suggests that the high demands made by NSB leaders fit into Western European political culture and into the Dutch one as well.

The impact of individual membership (participation at the grassroots level) is still an underexplored area in the study of Dutch National Socialism. Within Dutch historiography the focus has been on the developments within the political top-studies of NSB leadership, both as regards to ideology and political infighting, rather than on the political practices of its followers. There are some comments on the level of organization of the NSB. According to Dutch historians, the image of the organizational structure of the NSB is ambiguous. In Dutch historiography, the NSB organization is portrayed as an extensive and well-structured organization in theory, whereas in practice it remained rather chaotic. Loe de Jong characterized the NSB as an organization with a "conspicuous desire to organize on paper."³⁵⁵ As a result, the perception of the NSB organization is that of an overly structured organization that could not hide the fact that NSB members remained inactive and docile.³⁵⁶ However, from my point of view, this image of well-organized, but inactive NSB members is largely based on quotes from NSB propagandists who complained about the lack of participation of NSB members. I should stress that these sources are not fully credible. The complaints of NSB organizers may just as easily have been a strategy to increase members' activity rather than a reflection of actual political behavior.

³⁵⁴ Ronald Wintrobe, 'Extremism, suicide terror, and authoritarianism', *Public Choice* 128 (2006) 169-195, here 190.

³⁵⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* I, 316, 319; Idem, *Het Koninkrijk* VI 378-379.

³⁵⁶ Van der Heijden, *Grijs Verleden*, 187.

In this chapter I will discuss political organization and individual participation in the NSB in order to explore a connection with international theories of fascist and National Socialist organizations. In order to examine the fundamental elements of the NSB as a political organization, I will focus first on efforts by local NSB leaders to mobilize party members. This issue is related to the structure of the NSB. The hierarchical structure was designed to be an organizational framework for the individual activities of party members. I will also examine sub-organizations of the NSB because the NSB tried to include both the political and social spheres. Therefore these sub-organizations created more platforms in which members could participate. Finally, I will analyze the political participation of individual NSB members based on new archival research. Judicial records of former NSB members reveal new information on the individual participation of local members.

Members, organization and mobilizing methods

Leaders of European National Socialist movements urged their members to participate fully in their organizations, expressing themselves as National Socialists at any time and at any place.³⁵⁷ The Dutch National Socialist movement was a highly demanding organization, as all foreign fascist movements were.

After the German Nazis had occupied the Netherlands, the NSB leaders and members optimistically believed that their finest hour was at hand. They hoped to shed their position as political outsiders and become political and cultural insiders. In order to fulfill that goal, all members needed to be mobilized. And for that reason, an extensive organization was needed. The NSB divided its organization into ever-increasing territorial and functional entities.³⁵⁸ Because of all these entities, a broad network of political and social National Socialist organizations emerged, in which NSB members were supposed to participate. National and local NSB leaders pushed members to be full-time National Socialists. As explained in the introduction, NSB members needed to be revolutionary, hardworking “action men.”³⁵⁹ The members were expected to be disciplined parts of the

³⁵⁷ Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 142, 219.

³⁵⁸ NA, DGBR, file 2.09.08, 587.

³⁵⁹ *De Daad*, May 31st, 1940. Members were also encouraged to buy at shops of other NSB members instead of nonmembers; NIOD, access number 123, file 221b.

machine, respecting their political hierarchy. To facilitate such activation of full-time participation, the organization set up a well-oiled, internal propaganda machine.

Local NSB leaders constantly pointed to the integrating properties of activism and discipline. In October 1940, members in Amsterdam were urged to sell more NSB newspapers with the warning: “If you do not come voluntarily, then you will in one way or another not be respected by your comrades who work hard because a National Socialist is a man of action.”³⁶⁰ Members and lower-ranking NSB officials were incited to act by their superiors. In April 1943, an NSB group leader called for greater attendance at meetings by spreading the following message: “Come, crawl out of the NSB armchair and turn to work, be a National Socialist-warrior.”³⁶¹

In discussing the organization, it is important to know its actual size and how the NSB membership developed during the war. Because the NSB was a diligent collector of data, including analyzing the numbers of old, new and former members, precise data are available about the development of membership during the occupation.

We can establish that NSB membership peaked in 1943. In order to increase the comparability between areas, the numbers for that specific year are presented. According to NSB reports, the NSB had approximately 100,000 members nationwide in June 1943.³⁶² Of these approximately 85,000 resided in the Netherlands; over 12,000 in Germany; nearly 700 in Belgium; in addition, nearly 167 “secret” members and 1400 unlabeled were counted. In fact, 100,000 NSB members out of a population of approximately nine million inhabitants leads to a ratio of 1 NSB member per 90 Dutchmen, roughly a little over one percent. Considering the size of the electorate at that time (those aged 25 and older), the proportion rises above two percent. Compared with the largest political party, the Roman Catholic Party which had 350,000 members in 1935, the number was low. But when compared to another radical movement, the communist party, the number of NSB members was in fact quite high. The communists had approximately 10,000 members in 1937. And in 1945 the highest

³⁶⁰ “Komt U niet vrijwillig, dan zult U op de een of andere manier door uw kameraden, die hard werken, niet voor vol worden aangezien, want een Nationaal-Socialist is een man van de Daad.”; *De Daad*, October 25th, 1940.

³⁶¹ “Kom, kruipt uit de NSB-leunstoel en zet u aan het werk, wordt een Nationaal-Socialistisch Strijder”; NIOD, access number, file, 220 e.

³⁶² Several figures are given: for example 102,467 and 99,614; NIOD, access number, file, 1948.

number of members was 114,559 members of the Social Democratic party, only slightly higher than the NSB in its heyday.³⁶³

The members, of course, were not spread proportionally over the nation. In December 1943, the city of Leiden counted 300 female NSB members and over 800 male. These figures also included sympathizing members. Thus, as presented in Table 1, approximately 1.3 percent of Leiden's inhabitants aligned themselves with the NSB. The wealthy region 't Gooi had approximately 2100 members, which also is 1.3 percent of the total inhabitants. In the nearby town of Utrecht, approximately 5500 NSB members resided, 3 percent of the population. This is a larger proportion of its inhabitants compared with the other major towns and is perhaps due to the fact that the NSB headquarters was established here. Utrecht was labeled by its leadership as "the city of the Movement" and housed many party officials. In January 1943, Amsterdam had nearly 4000 female (sympathizing and full) members and over 8000 male members, making a total of approximately 12000, 1.5 percent of its population. The NSB listed statistics of individual members and NSB families. NSB statistics show that 6500 Amsterdam households had at least one NSB member among them in 1943. This leads to the conclusion that, on average, every NSB household in Amsterdam contained approximately two members. In Leiden, 798 families were reported in 1943, thus leading to 1.5 NSB members per family. The percentage of female members is lower in Leiden, which may explain the lower average of NSB members per family because only the man was a member. An analysis of the NSB reports of the different age groups in Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Leiden, leads to the conclusion that approximately 50 percent of the NSB members were between 18 and 40 years old.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Communists in 1939; G. Voerman and J. Wormer, 'De CPN in cijfers, 1909-1991' in: Schrevel and Voermaned., *De communistische erfenis. Bibliografie en bronnen betreffende de CPN* (Amsterdam 1997) 164-165; In 1945: CPN 50,000, PvdA 114,559, ARP 89,000, CHU 30,000. SGP 10,000; R.A Koole and G. Voerman, 'Het lidmaatschap van politieke partijen na 1945' in: *Jaarboek 1985 Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen* (Groningen 1986) 115-176. Nowadays 2.6 percent of the Dutch are aligned with a political party: *Ledentallen Nederlandse politieke partijen per 1 januari 2009, 2010, 2011*, from: <http://dnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/Persberichtenledenta/ledentallen2010.pdf>, consulted on December 27th 2012.

³⁶⁴ NIOD, access number, files 1957, 1941, 1948.

	Number of Members	Percentage of population
Leiden	1100	1.3
't Gooi	2100	1.3
Utrecht	5500	3
Amsterdam	12000	1.5

Table 1. Number of NSB Members and percentage of population, by city, 1943.³⁶⁵

In order to elaborate on the composition of the group of NSB members, I will focus on the city of Utrecht, where the NSB collected much data about its members. Table 2 presents an overview of the ratio of men and women and of different age groups of NSB members in Utrecht. The high percentage of young people could be explained because a large part of this particular age group lived in these places. However, this is not the case: only one third of the inhabitants belonged to that age group. Approximately two thirds of the NSB members were male, whereas more than half of the population of Utrecht was female. The overrepresentation of male NSB members corresponds with political participation rates in non-fascist organizations because men were always more likely to participate in politics than women. In addition, men were more likely to become party officials.³⁶⁶

However, the NSB was not only a male movement; women also participated. Many of the NSB women were married to NSB men. In 1971, a student of De Jong concluded that almost half of the women (43 %) followed their husbands in joining or quitting the NSB, which corresponds with literature on Dutch and general political participation.³⁶⁷ In the research sample, most of the women were the wives of NSB men. However, some women became National Socialists independently from their husbands.³⁶⁸

A new and unexpected fact is the high level of divorces within the NSB population. The level of divorces among NSB members was significantly higher than that of the rest of the population. In the sample of over 300 members, 7 percent were divorced, and in 14 percent of the cases divorce was present within the family (for example, divorced parents), while nationally approximately 1.5 percent of the Dutch were divorced, thus a remarkable

³⁶⁵ www.volkstellingen.nl, consulted on December 27th, 2012, 1947 en 1930; NIOD, file 123, 1957; file 123, 1941 and file 123, 1948. Mean of these numbers and J.F. Vos, *Het ledenverloop van de Nationaal Socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (Masters' thesis University of Rotterdam 1971).

³⁶⁶ Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (1965) 54.

³⁶⁷ Vos, *Ledenverloop*, 52; Milbrath, *Political Participation*, 136.

³⁶⁸ NA, CABR-files, 44 out of 322.

difference. Most of the divorces occurred before May 1940.³⁶⁹ Perhaps this is due to the fact that some NSB members were people who challenged prevailing norms and values or who were ostracized anyway and did not need to keep up appearances. Thus, NSB members were generally less conformist than was common.

District Utrecht	men %			women %		
Age	1942	1943	1944	1942	1943	1944
18-24	16.9	12.2	12.2	16.7	13.6	15.2
25-29	11.1	12.2	10.4	11.1	12.9	11.3
< 30	28	24.4	22.6	27.8	26.5	26.5
30-34	12.2	13.6	12.8	13.4	10.6	11.8
35-39	12.8	12.6	12.9	13.8	12.5	14
30 – 40	25	26.2	25.7	17.2	23.1	25.8
40-44	14.5	9.8	12.1	13.9	11	11.6
45-49	8.7	9.5	10.3	8.6	10.8	11.4
40 – 50	23.2	19.3	22.4	22.5	21.8	23
50-54	7.7	10.4	9.2	6.9	10.5	9
55-59	6.6	7.6	7.8	6.2	8	6.8
50- 60	14.3	18	17	13.1	18.5	15.8
60-64	4	5.4	6	4	4.3	4.4
65 +	5.5	6.7	6.3	5.4	5.8	5.5
> 60	9.5	12.1	12.3	9.4	10.1	9.9

Table 2. Male/female and age distribution of NSB members in the Utrecht area.³⁷⁰

The fluctuating membership rates are a better-known aspect of the NSB.³⁷¹ The NSB-membership rates were far from stable. During the occupation, the NSB was able to attract many new members but lost a fair number of its members at the same time. I assume that in the first years of the occupation the NSB was able to attract more members than it lost. But after the first two prosperous years, the NSB lost much of its appeal. In the period 1942-

³⁶⁹ CABR-files; at least 24 out of 327: amply 7 percent compared with approximately 1.5 percent nationally; www.volkstellingen.nl.

³⁷⁰ NIOD, file 123, 1957, file 123, 1941 and file 123, 1948.

³⁷¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk VI*, 383-384.

1943, overall membership decreased by 756, from 100,370 to 99,614. However, the headquarters of the NSB was eager to explain that this decrease was not caused by changes in the political and/or military situation but by the death of 993 of its members.³⁷²

After 1943 regional variances within the movement became more visible. From the summer of 1943 onwards, the number of NSB members continued to increase in the north-eastern part of the Netherlands, whereas it declined in the western part.³⁷³ This divergence might be explained by the evacuation of coastal areas in the western part of the Netherlands as a result of the German military construction in the coastal areas in the building of the Atlantic wall.

Throughout the final period of the occupation, membership rates kept fluctuating. Even in 1944, the NSB still welcomed new members: 10 in Utrecht; 77 in Amsterdam; 5 in Leiden and 17 in het Gooi.³⁷⁴ In February 1944, in the southern quarters of Amsterdam 41 members joined the NSB (and 37 resigned their membership).³⁷⁵ However, it is important to analyze these numbers critically. Since the NSB decided to abolish the category of “sympathizing membership” in that same month, the increase was in all probability due to sympathizing members who were automatically promoted to the status of full members.³⁷⁶

Resignation rates were closely monitored by the NSB headquarters, which kept a list of its resigned members and the reasons why they resigned. Figure 1 demonstrates the monthly resignation rates of NSB members. Approximately 1000 people per month resigned their NSB membership, a number that decreased during the war. There were peaks in resignation in February 1942 and in August and September 1943. This latter peak may be explained by the Italian capitulation, which created a general sense that the German Reich might soon lose the war. It is unclear whether the overall decreasing number of resignations was due to the fact that fewer people wanted to resign or were able to resign. From November 1942 until May 1944, in total at least 29,491 members left the NSB, nearly one third of all NSB members according to the NSB administration.

The NSB recorded and catalogued the reasons for withdrawal. One of the reasons for resignation was the July 1941 Roman Catholic Episcopal letter, denouncing the NSB.

³⁷² ‘Ledenstatistiek 1943’; NIOD, file 123, 1498..

³⁷³ ‘Ledenstatistiek 1943’; NIOD, file 123, 1498.

³⁷⁴ ‘Ledenstatistiek 1943’; NIOD, file 123, 1498.

³⁷⁵ NIOD, file 123, 1953.

³⁷⁶ Abolition of symp. membership; NIOD file 123, 1954.

Until 1943, within the movement this was assessed as a legitimate reason; after this year it was criticized. Another motivation was having a foreign nationality. Throughout the entire occupation foreigners were not allowed to become NSB members. The recorded reasons given for resignation included personal, financial, religious reasons, “losing interest,” situation at home, sympathy for the opposing organization the *Nederlandse Unie*, and just simply “change of mind.” After 1943, new categories were added to include the members who feared a German defeat. The tone of the form became increasingly irritated from 1943 onwards. It was obvious that the future of National Socialism did not look as hopeful as it once had.

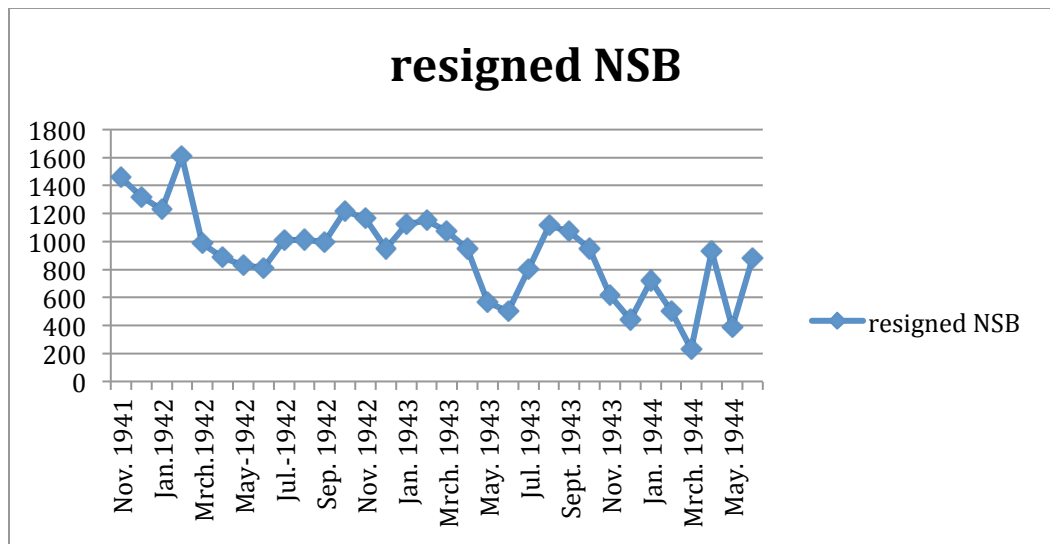


Figure 1. National numbers of monthly resignations of NSB membership.³⁷⁷

The next question is how all the new and long-term members were organized. The NSB did not have to start from scratch. NSB leaders had many examples to learn from in building up their organization. Of course, they had the German Nazi party and the Italian fascist party as examples. The NSB, like other fascist movements, could also borrow practices from

³⁷⁷ NIOD, file 123, 1945-1958.

religious organizations. Michael Mann argues that fascist movements used techniques of religious and social movements.³⁷⁸

As in other fascist organizations, a characteristic element of National Socialist organization was hierarchy; the notion of leadership as a principle was widespread, in ideas regarding race and nations as well as in the organization of social and political life. The NSB was subdivided into districts, which were divided into “kringen” (circles); the latter were divided into “groepen” (groups), which were subdivided into “blokken” (blocs); thus the bloc formed the grassroots organization in which “ordinary” NSB members were organized.³⁷⁹ This structure is presented in Figure 2. Every division was led by an NSB member, as a “leader” in the fascist perspective.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Mann, *Fascists*, 87.

³⁷⁹ NIOD, file 123, 220a.

³⁸⁰ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 77-79.

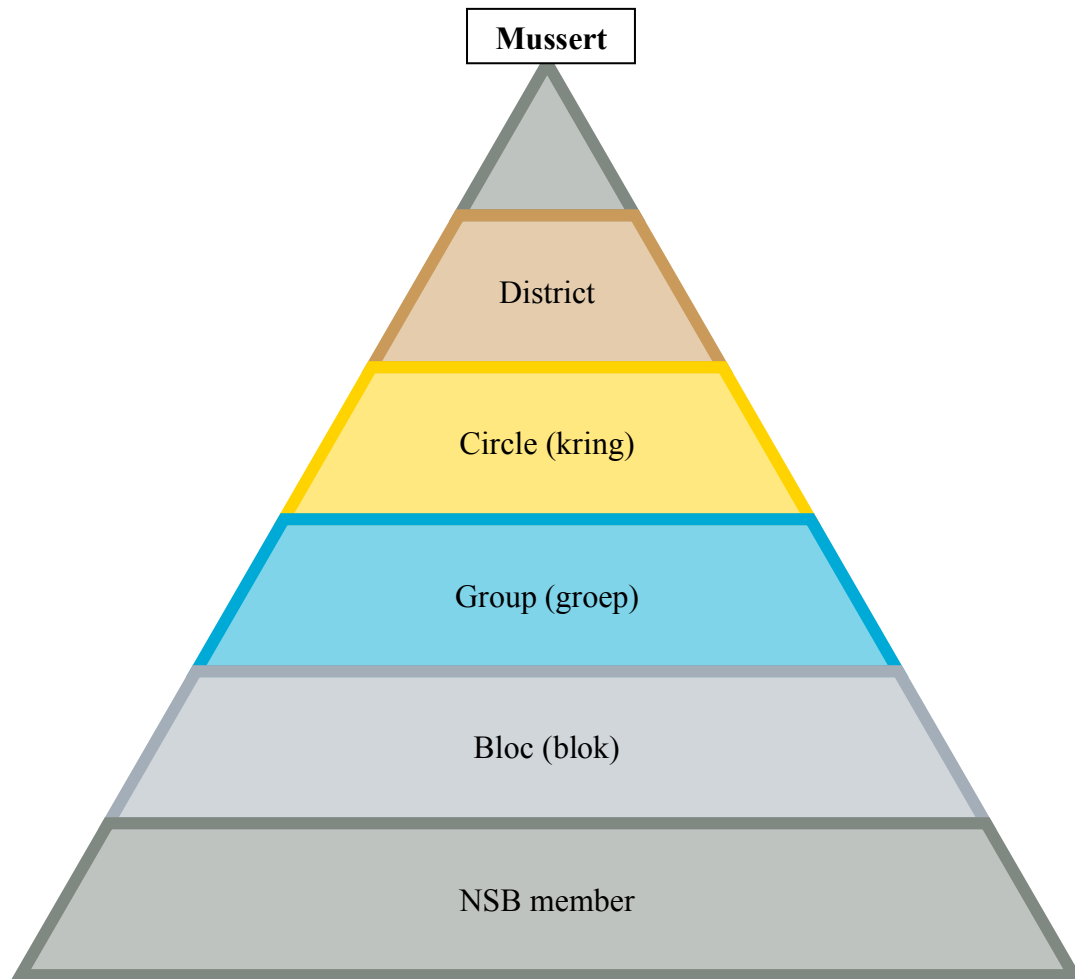


Figure 2. NSB Organization. The number of *kringen*, groups and blocs fluctuated.

Blocs played a significant role within the NSB organization. The lower-ranked NSB officials of these blocs were encouraged to work hard. In NSB propaganda their function was proclaimed as a “pillar” of the National Socialist organization.³⁸¹ Pointing out the importance of the bloc-leader function was meant to increase the self-esteem of these lower-ranked NSB officials. In an extensive instruction the NSB explained the tasks that NSB “bloc leaders” were expected to fulfill, such as recruiting possible NSB officials, maintaining contacts with other bloc leaders, attending a monthly mandatory meeting, and keeping in touch with the leader of the youth organization. Besides these duties, the bloc leader had to gather

³⁸¹ NSVO, March 10th, 1943; NIOD, file 123, 1194.

intelligence about new members and any potential spies, collect contributions, supervise the distribution of newspapers and tactfully visit every member of his bloc once every two months.³⁸² These instructions were designed to increase the activities of every bloc leader and through his activities, the active participation of every NSB member.

The NSB organization looked extensive and all-encompassing on paper, as is evident from the extensive description of the duties of bloc leaders. However, analysis of the NSB organization raises the question of how to distinguish between formal structures and actual structures. In other words: does De Jong's suggestion about a paperwork organization hold true? A statistic from Leiden's party districts may be illustrative: of the 20 groups that had been foreseen only 13 were actually working.³⁸³ This pattern coincided with the generally overly optimistic expectations of the NSB leadership about the activities of members. Actually, members could always participate more and therefore failed to live up to the leaders' ideals.

NSB officials faced problems maintaining discipline among their members; the latter in some cases felt the urge to act independently, in particular now that the New Order seemed to be within reach. As a strict NSB official stated in July 1940: "we must ensure that impulsive members do not spoil our cause."³⁸⁴ This warning suggests problems with the discipline of NSB members. Many more examples of undisciplined behavior are found in the literature and in the archives of the NSB and the police.³⁸⁵

The discipline issue applied to fascist behavior regarding the Jews as well. A local NSB official warned people in small towns that "it is of utmost importance that the NSB be as well-behaved as possible and not take revenge or commit terror against Jews without cause." According to this notice, members were allowed to attack only if a Jew struck first.

³⁸² Organization Amsterdam; NIOD, file 123, 220a.

³⁸³ NIOD, file 123, 1957; NIOD, file 123, 1941 and NIOD, file 123, 1948.

³⁸⁴ "Het is van het allerhoogste belang dat NSB'ers zich zoo correct mogelijk gedragen en geen wraaknemingen uitoefenen of terreurplegen op Joden zonder directe aanleiding, enz. Wij behoeven ons natuurlijk niet te laten slaan en beleedigen. Dan is het noodig terug te slaan en hard ook! Maar het ingooien van ruiten en de afpersing en andere terreurdaden der NSNAP lieden hier hebben een zeer slechten indruk gemaakt bij de Deutsche overheid. Onze discipline en orde moeten daar tegenoverstaan. Dit is voor ons van het hoogste belang!! Ofschoon het uiteraard onnodig is onze functionarissen hierop te wijzen, is het toch wel goed dat men in de kleinere plaatsen op de hoogte blijft van de richtlijnen die de overheid aangeeft. Dat is het doel van dezen brief. Wij moeten erop toezien, dat impulsieve leden niet onze zaak bederven door uit den band te springen. Met Nederlandschen groet Houzee"; 'Correspondentie van de onder de afdeling Propaganda ressorterende Film- en Fotodienst! 17 July 1940; NIOD, file 123, file 453.

³⁸⁵ Dagrapport November 13nd 1942, Politie Haarlem, file 848; and Heemstede gemeentepolitie April 22nd 1942. NIOD, acces number 123, file 1473-1476, 10-8-1941, letter of Group leader in Utrecht.

The latter provision is connected with the pattern, mentioned in the previous chapter, of blaming the Jews for starting fights and claiming the “underdog” position.

The issue was not limited to the public sphere; internal party meetings had to be disciplined as well. Early discussions about the character of meetings can be exemplified by the discussion about playing cards at NSB meetings in Zeist in 1935. The NSB officials complained that the group meetings had “degraded to card-playing evenings” and that the “short meeting” was almost a “side issue.” Members, after the meeting, would “then quickly play cards.” As a defense, one NSB member stated the importance of camaraderie. Besides, according to him, only four to eight members out of fifty played cards.³⁸⁶ This prewar tension between the social and political character of NSB meetings persisted throughout the occupation period, as we will see in the discussion of mobilization methods.

The NSB established an organization to control the caliber of its members, a sort of internal Secret Service: “General Supervision of Members” (*Algemeen Toezicht Leden, ATL*).³⁸⁷ The archives of the ATL contain the records of many complaints, betrayals and gossip.³⁸⁸ The ATL collected these complaints of local members; in addition, it had paid employees to collect intelligence. They even had spies in non-National Socialist organizations. For example, one ATL member infiltrated the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The ATL reports provide insight into the feelings and daily annoyances of NSB members. The large number of complaints about Jews from the start of the German occupation onwards is remarkable. In addition to the clear anti-Semitic character of many reports, these reports are full of impatience about an NSB takeover. In the 1940 and 1941 reports, ATL officials complained about the low number of NSB members at important institutions, such as schools, and the high level of anti-NSB feelings. Some ATL officials were worried about the infiltration of the party by anti-National Socialists. Finally, compatible with general NSB reports, the ATL reports are full of complaints about the lack of activities.³⁸⁹

Within the NSB there were problems with alcohol and festivities. One incident in Baarn in 1942 is described in detail. A few members of the NSB in Baarn threw parties till 6:30 a.m. to the annoyance of a female informant. She complained extensively in several

³⁸⁶ NIOD, access number 123, file 1484, kring Zeist, 1935.

³⁸⁷ NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.

³⁸⁸ NIOD, access number, 123, files 2048, 2049.

³⁸⁹ NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.

letters about the so-called reprehensible behavior of her fellow members, who were drunk, sang and danced till the following morning; according to the woman it was a “Bacchanalia.” She was afraid of the negative effects such behavior would have on the image of the NSB. It is unclear whether the NSB took measures against these undisciplined members. One of the partying NSB members, a butcher, had already been reprimanded before but continued to deliver his meat to an NSB institution.³⁹⁰

The NSB leadership commented not entirely positively on the results of the ATL, which failed to meet the, as always high, expectations.³⁹¹ Because of a lack of personnel and equipment, the ATL could not function optimally. However, the report did comment positively about the low number of sexual offences and traders on the black market. The dissatisfaction increased in the summer of 1944. According to a report in July 1944, the ATL was overly organized and filled with incompetent people. In particular, the existence of secret ATL spies led to distrust and discomfort within the movement.³⁹²

Internal NSB reports indicate that NSB officials were very active in keeping track of everything that was organized by all branches of the movement. The reports are full of complaints. According to the NSB leaders, National Socialists should constantly work harder, be more efficient, and participate more frequently in the movement. The image of the disappointing level of local participation is directly related to NSB propaganda. In their own internal propaganda, the NSB leaders complained about the lack of activity by their members. Reading party reports might leave one with the impression that NSB members were the laziest people on earth. However, one should interpret these complaints in their context rather than as an objective measure of activity.

The NSB leadership had different views on mobilizing support. The first tenet of policy was to reach out to the masses. Members were encouraged to gain the attention of nonmembers. NSB members also were pushed to bring many newcomers to meetings.³⁹³ However, the attempts to reach out to the masses were not very successful. As a matter of fact, their policies failed to overcome the widespread opposition to National Socialism in society. Party membership peaked at approximately 2 percent of the Dutch electorate.”

³⁹⁰ NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.

³⁹¹ NIOD, Utrecht, 1484, April 29th 1942.

³⁹² NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.

³⁹³ *De Daad*, June 7th, 1940.

Confronted with the malfunctioning of the NSB as a mass party, local leaders opted for a different approach by trying to cast the NSB as a vanguard movement. This shift toward working towards a vanguard party was the main mobilizing modification. From 1941 onwards, NSB propaganda focused on increasing the activity of members instead of reaching out to the masses. The NSB presented this position in a positive manner. The *De Werker* (The Worker), the NSB paper from the Utrecht area, stated that “in world history it always has been a small minority, who has accomplished great things and never the masses. The mass always opposes.”³⁹⁴ An internal NSB report stated: “the movement will always be a small minority in the state, an ‘elite troop’.”³⁹⁵ The local NSB leaders increasingly proclaimed the image of a movement filled with brave warriors, who strove, as vanguards, towards a revolutionary new society and were met with harsh opposition. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this culture of sacrifice is consistent with the self-image of other fascist movements.³⁹⁶ The NSB officials came to see that portraying the NSB as a vanguard movement was, in fact, the only option that matched reality.

The change from a catch-all party to an elitist party was visible both in NSB’s propaganda and in its organization. NSB leaders decided to change the formal structure of NSB membership. From July 19th 1941, new members had to undergo a period of being a “sympathizing member” before they could become a full member.³⁹⁷ As described in the Utrecht newspaper, the purpose of the measure was to “prevent the degeneration of the movement by a mass influx, as the NSB should above all be a ‘corps of combatants’.”³⁹⁸ Hereby the NSB portrayed itself clearly as a movement of revolutionary combatants and no longer as a mass party. The NSB was transformed into a movement that perceived and portrayed itself as being at the forefront in establishing a National Socialist revolution. One might say that this meant a return to its trusted pre-occupation image of “combatants who swam against the tide.”

³⁹⁴ “[...]dat het in de wereldgeschiedenis steeds een kleine minderheid geweest is, die de groote dingen tot stand gebracht heeft en nooit de massa. Van de massa komt steeds de tegenwerking.”; *De Werker*, March 1st, 1941.

³⁹⁵ “De beweging zal in den staat altijd een kleine minderheid zijn, een ‘keurtroep’”; NIOD, file 123, 220e, 1942.

³⁹⁶ Paxton, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (2009) 549.

³⁹⁷ *Het Nationale Dagblad*, June 21st, 1941.

³⁹⁸ “Het doel van deze maatregel is, om te voorkomen, dat de beweging door een massa-toeloop zou ontaarden, daar de N.S.B. vóór alles een corps van strijders dient te zijn”; *Utrechts dagblad*, June 26th 1941.

Regardless of the shifting strategy towards a vanguard party, NSB leaders pushed members to participate in increasingly structured activities. NSB leaders possessed several methods to enhance the activity of NSB members. One way of increasing the participation of members in National Socialist activities was by stimulating local and individual competition. In *De Daad* (The Action) different Amsterdam district organizations were encouraged to sell more NSB newspapers by presenting the reports of sales like a sporting competition. As in a sports game or marketing meeting, there were “runners up,” “winning” and “tail-ender” neighborhoods. The competition between neighborhoods in Amsterdam was thus closely followed by local NSB leaders. The local NSB paper described the competition in Amsterdam East as follows: “Bali is still on top, but needs to continue its efforts to increase its sales, because Makasar is coming up.”³⁹⁹ In this competitive manner, groups and individuals were incessantly pushed to improve their participation. In Utrecht the NSB used the competitive element as well.⁴⁰⁰

An additional method used by NSB leaders to maintain discipline and activity was to threaten their members with expulsion.⁴⁰¹ Before the occupation, both in 1934 and 1938 there had been purges to maintain the discipline within the party.⁴⁰² Members could be expelled if they failed to express themselves actively as NSB members, if they missed payments or party meetings or if they kept their membership secret.

Such harsh rules were not always enforced. Simultaneously with strict discipline and hierarchy, many local NSB leaders were actually forgiving and tolerant towards members who made mistakes. Expelled members were allowed to return to the NSB. Remarkably enough, there seemed to be a development towards a kind of discipline that was less strictly controlled by local leaders. This tendency coincided with an overall more forgiving and positive approach towards “failing” members. One member in Amsterdam was expelled as many as nine times, thus rejoining the NSB at least eight times.⁴⁰³ Apparently, the NSB as an organization was unable to decide what to do with this “highly undisciplined” person.

³⁹⁹ “Bali staat nog steeds bovenaan, maar moet zich blijven inspannen om den verkoop op te voeren, daar ook Makassar steeds stijgt.” “Andreas Bonn voert nog steeds het gemiddelde op en heeft bijna het kringgemiddelde te pakken.”; *De Daad*, February 18th, 1944.

⁴⁰⁰ *De Werker*, February 13th, 1942, April 17th, 1942, September 3rd, 1943, March 10th, 1944, April 14th, 1944, June 23th, 1944.

⁴⁰¹ *De Daad*, June 7th, 1940, July 31st, 1942.

⁴⁰² J.D. Gerritsen, *Groote deelneming is gewenscht en noodzakelijk. De NSB op lokaal niveau. 1932-1940* (Leiden 2004) 64.

⁴⁰³ NIOD, access number 123, file 316c; NA, CABR, file 20109.

NSB members and leaders did debate the policy of expulsions and raised the issue of whether these policies were harsh enough. As early as June 1940, a local NSB leader in Utrecht complained about the general permissiveness. He wondered why the NSB was tolerant of its unworthy members. According to him, all lazy members should be immediately expelled. Utterly unhappy with this situation, he resigned his office.⁴⁰⁴

After 1942, NSB leaders tried to soften their approach towards members in different ways. NSB leaders believed that they should not push and threaten members too strongly. In a party meeting in the autumn of 1942, an NSB official stressed this by proclaiming that one should not scare away NSB members by constant threats; otherwise they would shy away from the party. Moreover, he said, one could not work all the time, some relaxation was necessary as well. A more “popular” meeting could be planned in between serious gatherings: a speech with a “lighter” subject or a movie or a show with light effects.⁴⁰⁵ Local NSB leaders noted the failure of their complaining strategy and tried a more positive approach from 1943 onwards. This development is correlated with the general geopolitical constellation as the chances of a National Socialist victory became increasingly unlikely. Anyway, the leaders, both national and local, did not want to end up as generals without troops.

Discussing the hierarchical structure and discipline leaves the impression that NSB leadership faced many problems maintaining hierarchy and discipline in the local organizations. Local NSB leaders failed to live up to the expectations of their leaders. They in fact failed to conform to the fascist ideals of hierarchy and discipline. They acted autonomously and on the basis of the individual instead of the hierarchy and the collective. In this particular way, they were perhaps more Dutch than fascists.

Sub-organizations

Securing the commitment of members to the NSB demanded the creation of all sorts of sub-organizations. In these organizations, members were further socialized in the National Socialist ideology. During the first year of the occupation, the NSB expanded its network of

⁴⁰⁴ Letter to leader of the Zeist circle, June 1st, 1940, NIOD, access number 123, file 1472.

⁴⁰⁵ NIOD, access number 123, file 1498, Hilversum, September 23rd 1942.

organizations.⁴⁰⁶ For almost every social group specific organizations were established: for men, women, children, and professional groups. There were also associations for culture and genealogy. Students, actors, teachers, and technicians: they all could join specific separate National Socialist organizations.⁴⁰⁷ All this was part of the general effort supported by the German rulers to nazify social life in the Netherlands; this nazification required the active commitment of Dutch National Socialists and had the impact of pushing them politically and strengthening the bonds between them.

Here, I will elaborate briefly on the paramilitary organization of the NSB, the WA, and will explore the violent elements of the NSB more extensively in the next chapter. For two reasons the WA is very significant for the overall character of the NSB. First, it reveals the inherently violent character of the NSB. The image of the NSB was determined by the violent street activities of the WA. Second, the WA demonstrates the discipline problems of the NSB.

The paramilitary organization of the NSB, the WA, was founded in 1932. In order to overcome a ban on its activities in 1935 the WA disguised itself as a physical fitness group. It was revived on the first day of the German occupation, May 15th, 1940, and it returned to the political scene more actively and aggressively than before. From the autumn of 1940 onwards, the WA terrorized the streets, in many larger and smaller towns.⁴⁰⁸

On August 8th 1941, it was decided by the NSB leadership that all male NSB members between the age of 18 and 40 should join the WA. There were no official rules in this respect, but several local NSB leaders threatened punishments when NSB men refused to join the WA.⁴⁰⁹ However, these efforts failed to lead to a massive recruitment for the WA. Nationally, 8,000 men were part of the WA in 1943, of these 767 WA men resided in Amsterdam and 1750 in Utrecht.⁴¹⁰ In Leiden approximately 162 (out of 1222) NSB members were WA members in July 1944. In the same period, in Amsterdam WA membership decreased to 522 (out of a total of 12,790 NSB members).⁴¹¹ These numbers

⁴⁰⁶ Kooy, *Echec*, 125.

⁴⁰⁷ NA, CABR, file 104155.

⁴⁰⁸ De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 172-173; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 30-45; Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 223-224.

⁴⁰⁹ 'Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946', NA, file 104155.

⁴¹⁰ Vos, *Ledenverloop*, 35, 64.

⁴¹¹ NIOD, access number 123, 1957, 1941, 1948.

suggest that a minority of the eligible NSB men joined the WA. This low number is also due to the fact that many NSB members could claim exemption from joining the WA. For example, all NSB officials were exempted from WA duty. Because of the high number of NSB officials this rule caused a significant decrease in the number of potential WA members.

As a genuine National Socialist organization the WA established several sub-organizations: for example a motor WA, a horseback-riding WA, a police WA and an aviation WA.⁴¹² Hence the WA was able to mobilize and satisfy NSB members with a broad range of interests, also preparing men for other functions including military ones.

The WA essentially was a paramilitary organization called to life to conquer the streets. As such, it was backed up by German troops. However, the relationship between the WA and the occupation regime varied over time. In the first period the German occupation regime had not yet approved the WA. Not earlier than November 3rd 1940, Seyss Inquart acknowledged its existence, but he prohibited the use of weapons. Later on, the German administration, on the one hand, encouraged violent actions by WA men, whereas at other moments it demonstrated its disapproval of illegal, violent actions, especially when WA men used banned weapons. However, during the occupation the Germans increasingly permitted the use of weapons by higher-ranking WA men.⁴¹³

One of the disagreements between the WA and the Germans involved the increasing importance of the Dutch SS organization as a more useful partner for the German administration. Where the WA officially maintained its orientation towards the NSB and the “Dietsche” mindset, the SS turned completely to Germany and supported the annexation of the Netherlands into a German empire. Within the WA a strong undercurrent of SS feelings developed.⁴¹⁴ However, with the changed military situation, this turn was of lesser significance.

In 1942, internal WA reports mentioned the less disciplined character of the WA marches.⁴¹⁵ The WA officials dealt harshly with “the undisciplined elements.” At an assembly of the WA in Utrecht in March 1942, only 575 of the 1165 WA members attended. All

⁴¹² ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155; NIOD access number 123, files 1082-1100.

⁴¹³ ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.

⁴¹⁴ For example noticeable in the high number of WA men who signed up for the SS; see chapter 3.

⁴¹⁵ NIOD, WA, file 1088, Utrecht, January 16th, 1942.

members who were absent were immediately expelled and given eight days to appeal. Many did appeal, but the hundreds who did not lost their membership.⁴¹⁶

From 1941 onwards there was a constant flow of complaints about WA-men's alcohol abuse and misbehavior in bars.⁴¹⁷ WA members became drunk in public and had contact with under-age girls. Violent confrontations broke out in bars. This misbehavior further tarnished the image of the WA.⁴¹⁸ The WA's internal disciplinary board, which oversaw the "general decency" of NSB members, would summon those WA men who were conducting an extramarital relationship and threaten them with suspension if they did not end the relationship. One WA member in Leiden started an affair with the spouse of an NSKK soldier and was expelled from the WA. A similar incident happened in Amsterdam.⁴¹⁹

WA officials complained about the crossover from WA members to German institutions and the general decline of prestige of the WA in German eyes.⁴²⁰ On October 3rd 1942, WA members were urged to show their willingness to serve at the front with the Dutch SS members.⁴²¹ Many members joined the *Landwacht*, a new organization that was established in the spring of 1943. It was meant to be an internal police force, but in the end it was posted to the Eastern front.⁴²² The WA men who were left joined the newly established *Landwacht* and *Landstorm* in 1944, which finally lived up to its original aims. I will elaborate on the functioning of the WA and the *Landwacht* in the public sphere in the next chapter.

Whereas National Socialist men had to conquer the world outside, the National Socialist women had to take care of the world inside the house. The National Socialist Women's Organization (NSVO) was founded in 1938 in order to organize National Socialist women and to provide them with a proper education for femininity and motherhood. In 1941, the NSVO relocated its headquarters from The Hague to Amsterdam. From 1941 onwards, the NSVO was also led by NSB women from Amsterdam, first by Olga van Lanckeren Matthes,

⁴¹⁶ NIOD, WA, Utrecht, April 8th -13nd, 1942.

⁴¹⁷ NIOD, WA, file 1089, Utrecht, April 1942; file 1083, Leiden, February 1941; Haarlem politie archief, file 849, March 1941; file 626, July 1941; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* VI, 388.

⁴¹⁸ NIOD, WA, file 1089, Utrecht, April 1942.

⁴¹⁹ NIOD, WA, file 1092, Leiden, May 1944.

⁴²⁰ NIOD, WA, file 1089, Utrecht, April 21st, 1942.

⁴²¹ Idem.

⁴²² NA, October 28th, 1943 and April 4th, 1944; De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*, 180.

whose husband was leader of the district Noord-Holland, and subsequently by Louise Mary Couzy.⁴²³ Membership in the NSVO was also very strong in het Gooi, the region around Hilversum, which was inhabited by more upper-class families.

Approximately 20,000 women became members of the NSVO.⁴²⁴ In Leiden, approximately half of all female NSB members aligned themselves with the NSVO.⁴²⁵ However, in other places, for example, Amsterdam, those numbers were lower: 2,507 female citizens of Amsterdam were member of the NSVO in 1943 and 1,027 in Utrecht.⁴²⁶ Not all NSVO members were NSB members as well. For example, it is interesting to note that in Zeist, a part of 't Gooi, of the 175 NSVO members, 53 were not aligned with the NSB.⁴²⁷

NSVO's main task was to organize courses and activities for its members.⁴²⁸ Most of these courses were intended to improve the skills of a woman to be a proper housewife and mother. There were knitting clubs and courses called "Cut and sew."⁴²⁹ Women had to provide social care for their families and comrades. In addition, they were also asked to contribute to propaganda, for example, by sewing flags.⁴³⁰ Women had to participate actively in the creation of a political community and a National Socialist order. Therefore, they organized many activities for National Socialist youth and for men who went to the Eastern Front (*Frontzorg*). In addition, NSVO women had to arrange activities for nonmembers in order to mobilize new supporters. To that end, NSVO women were encouraged to visit the sick and the elderly.⁴³¹

The emphasis on the role of a housewife follows from the National Socialist ideology, where a clear division between men and women is encouraged. National Socialists held conservative ideas about women's rights and tasks. Their slogan was "Sacred fire in the heart. Safety for the hearth." (*Het hartvuur heilig. Het haardvuur veilig*)⁴³² At an NSVO meeting in the summer of 1940, NSVO leaders spoke extensively about female duties: their main task was safeguarding peace and unity within their family in order to create a comfortable home for the husband and children. Economic progress was necessary to diminish the financial

⁴²³ NA, CABR, files 20083, 20139.

⁴²⁴ E. Marrenga, 'De Nationaal-Socialistische Vrouwen Organisatie', in: J. Zwaan, ed., *De zwarte kameraden*, 209.

⁴²⁵ NIOD, file 123, 1957, file 123, 1941, file 123, 1948.

⁴²⁶ Vos, *Ledenverloop*, 64.

⁴²⁷ NIOD, NSVO 1192-1198, 29 Nov 1942.

⁴²⁸ NA, DGBR, file 2.09.08, 581.

⁴²⁹ *De Daad*, August 2nd, September 13th, 1940 and January 9th, 1942.

⁴³⁰ NA, DGBR, file 2.09.08, 581.

⁴³¹ "Wij willen in ons volk staan, en niet er naast", March 10th 1943 NSVO, NIOD, file 123, 1194.

⁴³² Notes of the NSVO meeting, 25 July 1940, NIOD, file 123, 1498,; Matthée, *Voor volk en vaderland*, 128.

worries of housewives, so they could stay home and enjoy their family lives.⁴³³ Women should not have to work outside the home. As was stated in a meeting in March 1941, “the time of over emancipation is over”; now “the married woman will take back her place at the hearth and as educator of the youth”.⁴³⁴ The NSB views of women correspond with National Socialist ideas in general. The National Socialist vision of women and family is, as Mosse puts it “amazingly conservative.”⁴³⁵

One consequence of the emphasis on female virtues was the rejection of fornication. Rumors in Utrecht about a National Socialist prostitute led to a firm warning that such behavior did not fit into a National Socialist female lifestyle.⁴³⁶ As mother of the family and of the nation, a woman’s duty was also to maintain “racial purity.” Moreover, National Socialist women were encouraged to produce more children but always within the family.⁴³⁷ Such procreation would lead to growth of the Aryan race. Not surprisingly, the policies of the NSVO were anti-Semitic as well. Women were forbidden from wearing clothes obtained from Jewish and/or capitalist department stores.⁴³⁸

Even more than in other National Socialist organizations, the NSVO produced extensive reports on its meetings. These reports about NSVO meetings often mention the “cozy atmosphere.” NSVO women sang National Socialist songs together and warmed themselves around the fireplace. There were speakers about specific subjects, films were shown and dancers would even come to enliven the evening.⁴³⁹ The NSVO department in Hilversum had a particularly successful meeting in January 1940. The NSVO official wrote a lengthy report about that meeting, describing how comrade Klijs’s “peasant dance” was “very nicely displayed. The cheerful end of his action, which was also noticed by the *Kring* leader, induced hilarity among the spectators.” The success was due to the great cooperation and camaraderie of the NSVO members.⁴⁴⁰ Moreover, local departments were encouraged to

⁴³³ Notes of the NSVO meeting, 25 July 1940, NIOD, file 123, 1498.

⁴³⁴ “De getrouwde vrouw zal haar plaats weer innemen aan den huiselijken haard als opvoedster van de jeugd.”, Notes of the NSVO meeting, March 24th 1941, NIOD, file 123, 1498.

⁴³⁵ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, XXV, 39-47; Claudia Koonz, *Moeder in het vaderland. De vrouw en het gezin in Nazi-Duitsland* (Amsterdam 1989).

⁴³⁶ NIOD, file 123, 1192, May 31th, 1943, Utrecht.

⁴³⁷ Notulen van de vergadering der NSVO, June 23th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1498.

⁴³⁸ NIOD, file 123, 1188.

⁴³⁹ Notes of the NSVO meeting, July 25th, 1940, October 28th, 1940, November 1940, January 20th, 1941, April 28th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1498.

⁴⁴⁰ “Zijn dans ‘het Weefgetouw’ was zeer fijn weergegeven. Het vroolijke slot van zijn optreden, waaraan zelfs de Kringleider niet ontkwam, verwekte groote hilariteit onder de toeschouwers.”; NIOD, file 123, 1498.

assemble in “cozy environments.”⁴⁴¹ An NSVO woman stated in her trial, that she experienced the NSVO as something one would nowadays describe as a Tupperware party.⁴⁴²

No doubt was expressed, however, about the necessity for discipline, as follows from the emphasis on an extensive organization and the system for controlling members. Furthermore, latecomers were urged to take a seat in the back of the meeting room. In other words: all members had to arrive precisely on time.⁴⁴³ NSVO women had to be well mannered and disciplined. When a quick-tempered NSVO woman, who had been a member from the beginning, started a fight at a meeting in the late spring of 1940, she was expelled from the organization.⁴⁴⁴ NSVO membership was by no means a loose or free association. NSVO women had to actively express the propagated National Socialist female virtues. Therefore, denunciations of members by others were seriously evaluated. On the other hand, women should not be cut loose too easily. Whenever a woman discontinued her membership, she had to be approached and tried to be convinced of the value of NSVO membership.⁴⁴⁵

Although NSVO members were urged to participate actively in establishing a new National Socialist order, it was not intended that they should join German National Socialist organizations as well. In 1941 Mrs Monsees, one of the leading NSVO members, explained to attending NSVO members that “no NSVO member is allowed to be a member of a German organization.” She expressed her discontent about the low attendance at an NSVO meeting. She said that this was perhaps due to a party of the German Wehrmacht the same night, which the women wanted to attend.⁴⁴⁶

The main task of National Socialist Women was considered taking care of children. In July 1942, the sub-organization “Family and Youth Care” (*Gezins- en Jeugdzorg*) was established which was led by the same woman who was director of “Comrades’ care” (*Kameraadschapszorg*). The first organization had to take care of vacation homes where women and children could rest and recover. This organization also supported families in need.⁴⁴⁷ In

⁴⁴¹ NIOD, file 123, 1194, March 10th, 1943.

⁴⁴² “soort naaikransje”; NA, CABR, file 95061, Noordwijk.

⁴⁴³ NIOD, file 123, 1194, March 10th, 1943.

⁴⁴⁴ NA, CABR, 94817, Noordwijk aan Zee.

⁴⁴⁵ NIOD, file 123, 1194, March 10th, 1943.

⁴⁴⁶ Notes of the NSVO meeting, June 23th 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1498.

⁴⁴⁷ ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’; NA, file 104155.

the final stage of the occupation, during the period of evacuation of NSB women and children in September 1944, NSVO women took the lead in providing care for NSB children. The leading lady of the NSVO, Louise Mary Couzy, personally nurtured NSB members who had found refuge in the former Jewish internment camp Westerbork.⁴⁴⁸

Children occupied a central place in National Socialist ideology and practice. They were the future; they had the power and energy to build the country. For that reason, deputy party leader Cees van Geelkerken established the National Socialist Youth Stormer Organization (NJS) in 1935, but internal contradictions caused its disintegration in February 1940. The German occupation gave a new impulse to the NJS. The NJS was reestablished as a political youth organization in the summer of 1940. Approximately 12,000 young boys and girls joined the NJS, with a peak of 18,000 young members in 1942.⁴⁴⁹ Given NSB membership of nearly 100,000, the NSB leaders were disappointed by the low youth membership numbers.⁴⁵⁰ By far not all children of NSB members became NJS boys and girls. The NJS itself was subdivided by sex and age classifications. There were many sub-organizations as well: the Naval NJS, the Water NJS, and the Aviation NJS.⁴⁵¹ In addition, the NJS had its own orchestra. In addition to the youth organization, the NSB included a National Socialist student organization, *Studentenfront*, which was established on November 16th 1940.

Recruiting of NJS officials was crucial in order to organize disciplined activities. This necessity was problematic for the NJS because the NJS was constantly struggling with a lack of personnel during the occupation.⁴⁵² Amsterdam had 140 NJS officials, Utrecht 50. This deficiency was especially problematic in the rural areas, where the party was already confronted with less housing and equipment than in the larger cities.

With the broad network of organizations the NSB could offer a social network and many material and immaterial benefits, like hope and solidarity.⁴⁵³ The NJS provided activities, new contacts and even new romances for its young members. Intensive contacts

⁴⁴⁸ NIOD, file 123, 1192, September 5th 1944; NA, CABR, file 20083.

⁴⁴⁹ Margriet Kat and Lisbeth van Hoek, *Op marsch met de NSB. Een onderzoek van de tijdschriften De Stormmeeuw en De Stormvlag van de Nationale Jeugdstorm* (Amsterdam 1982 and 1984) 33.

⁴⁵⁰ NIOD, Knipselarchief II 1611, 4-8-1941.

⁴⁵¹ 'Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946'; NA, file 104155.

⁴⁵² Kat en Hoek, *Op marsch met de NSB*, 32; Renée Kwak, *De Nationale Jeugdstorm. De noodlottige belangenstrijd om de jeugd 1934-1945* (Master's thesis Rotterdam 1988) 135.

⁴⁵³ Laurence R. Iannaccone and Eli Berman, 'Religious extremism: The good, the bad, and the deadly', *Public Choice* 128 (2006) 109-129, here 118-119.

were encouraged, although the discipline had to prevail. A leader of the national-socialist youth orchestra created a closely connected group of young boys. His leaders warned him about a lack of discipline; in their eyes their companionship had become a little bit too cozy and led to a complaint of sexual harassment.

As in all other NSB organizations participation, discipline and hierarchy were crucial elements within the NJS. The lower-ranked NJS officials were praised for being the backbone of the organization. These men and women stood in the center of the organization and of the National Socialist youth.⁴⁵⁴ For all its members, discipline was essential. And discipline could not be arranged from above; it had to come from below as well.⁴⁵⁵ As in the other NSB organizations, undisciplined behavior was punished with degradation or expulsion. The NJS circulated an eleven-page document describing the punishments to be meted out for various offenses.⁴⁵⁶

In addition, there were directives about the precise form of the National Socialist greeting: “The salute is performed by outstretching the right arm, brief and diagonally. The fingers are stretched and joined and brought together, the thumb alongside the index finger in the inside of the hand, the fingertips are at eye level. The head is lifted, one looks the other in the eyes, the left arm alongside the body, and the hands are pressed.” Only after the command of greeting is given, is the diagonal arm raised “horizontally across the chest at shoulder level” with the elbow facing forward.⁴⁵⁷ Furthermore, young NJS members were taught how to behave towards every different rank of the organization. Smoking was prohibited. These commands were aimed at both boys and girls in the NJS. Every child had to feel “one with the whole.”⁴⁵⁸

The National Socialist youth had to be disciplined and act properly. However, girls and boys, like men and women, were treated far from equally. National Socialist boys and

⁴⁵⁴ Stafraad, June 10th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1160.

⁴⁵⁵ NIOD, file 1484, kring Zeist, 1935.

⁴⁵⁶ NIOD, file 123, 1134.

⁴⁵⁷ “De groet wordt uitgevoerd door het kort en krachtig schuin rechts naar voren brengen van den gestrekten rechterarm. De vingers zijn gestrekt en aaneengesloten, de duim langs de wijsvinger aan de binnenkant van de hand, de vingertoppen zijn op oogshoogte. Het hoofd is opgericht, men ziet den ander in de oogen; de linkerarm ligt langs het lichaam, hand aangedrukt. Op commando wordt de groet in twee bewegingen gebracht. Als eerste beweging op het waarschuwingcommando ‘brengt’- wordt de rechteronderarm horizontaal voor de borst gebracht op schouderhoogte, de toppen van de gestrekte vingers in de linkerschouderholte, de elleboog naar voren gericht. Op het uitvoeringscommando ‘groet’- wordt de arm schuin rechts naar voren gebracht als beschreven.”; NIOD, file 123, 1134.

⁴⁵⁸ “een met het geheel”; NIOD, file 123, 1134.

girls were separated from each other. Boys in NJS uniform were not allowed to walk next to an NJS girl in uniform.⁴⁵⁹ The main task of girls was to “create beauty and atmosphere.”⁴⁶⁰

Discipline and female morality were key concepts within National Socialist ideology and to be practiced by both older and younger members of the National Socialist movement. However, the discrepancy between theory and practice was also visible within the NJS. Despite the command of properness and discipline, romances flourished within the organization. Whereas discipline and hierarchy were central elements according to NSB officials, local members were more interested in companionship and coziness.

In the beginning the NJS was, as were the WA and the NSB headquarters, mainly politically “Dietsch” oriented. Similarly, the influence of politics was rather low in the first period; sports and music were more important than preparing little boys and girls for war. Nevertheless, there were discussions about the relationship with the *Hitlerjugend* and the NSDAP.⁴⁶¹ A group within the NJS, represented by Rost van Tonningen and his wife-to-be Florrie Heubel, tried to steer the NJS in a more pro-German direction as early as 1940. That attempt failed.

However, NJS’s aims changed when the situation on the military fronts shifted. The focus fell increasingly on military preparation for the boys. The older ones were encouraged to join the *Landwacht* or the *Landstorm*. The Amsterdam division of the NJS, which was evacuated to the eastern part of the Netherlands, was in late 1944 even pushed into the German army.⁴⁶²

The National Socialist women, men, and youth organizations were by far not the only National Socialist organizations in the Netherlands. I will highlight a few of those other organizations to provide an impression of the web of National Socialist organizations.

In the character of a National Socialist organization exalted by a glorification of history, the NSB attempted to magnify its own history as well. For that reason, the NSB facilitated funding of a National Socialist Museum, which travelled though the country. An NSB member, Schuilenburg from Rotterdam, initiated this museum as early as 1931. In his

⁴⁵⁹ NIOD, file 123, 1134.

⁴⁶⁰ Kat and van Hoek, *Op marsch met de NSB*, 74.

⁴⁶¹ Stafraad, June 10th 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1160.

⁴⁶² ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’; NA, file 104155; NIOD, file, WAJ.

own words, he was a “born collector.” Initially the museum’s collection coincided with Schuilenburg’s own collection. From 1939 small exhibitions were held in local NSB offices.⁴⁶³ Later on, these exhibitions were extended with material from the NSB headquarters, and in October 1942 the National Socialist Museum got its own separate organization led by Schuilenburg. The collection contained early NSB propaganda and material from Dutch and foreign National Socialist precursors. This included propaganda from all over Europe as well as outside Europe. Schuilenburg traveled with the museum through the Netherlands in order to spread National Socialist history and propaganda. The National Socialist Museum was clearly linked with the image of National Socialism that NSB propagandists wanted to spread.

The NSB had its own publishing house as well. This had two advantages: first, the NSB could publish its own propaganda and books. Second, Mussert and his deputy received a significant percentage of the profits, which provided their salaries.⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, the National Socialist headquarters could monitor all NSB papers and books carefully. By that method the NSB leaders were able to control several sources of information.

The NSB had many organizations for professions, including the National Socialist organization Medical Front (*Medisch Front*), which was established on October 12th 1940.⁴⁶⁵ From an internal report, it becomes clear that not all members of this organization were NSB members. As shown in Table 3, a majority, but not everyone, belonged to both organizations. Therefore, this professional sub-organization was not completely a *sub*-organization but rather a partly broader and overlapping organization.

	Member Medisch Front	NSB as well	Unknown NSB
Total (doctors, dentists, nurses, students of medicine)	517	303	53

Table 3. Members of Medical Front and NSB.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ NA, CABR, file 64233.

⁴⁶⁴ ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.

⁴⁶⁵ ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.

⁴⁶⁶ Utrechts Archief, Archief aartsbisdom, access number 449, file 150, October 27th, 1941.

The NSB organized many cultural activities as well. It used theater and radio as means to educate NSB members and enhance community spirit and as a source of entertainment.⁴⁶⁷ Actors performed both at local NSB meetings and in theatres.⁴⁶⁸ More than half of the plays were politicized; others were performed just for amusement.⁴⁶⁹ As was the case for other propaganda and NSB organizations, theatre was meant to promote the mobilization of members and to attract new members.⁴⁷⁰

Two organizations that had strong connections with the NSB were the Winterhulp (Winter Charity) and Nederlandse Volksdienst (Dutch Peoples' Service, NVD). In October 1940, Seyss-Inquart had chartered Winterhulp, which had been active in the 1930s as well.⁴⁷¹ After 1941, it was highly influenced by the German example, Winterhilfe, which organized all charity in order to rearrange it as a method of National Socialist propaganda. In the summer of 1941, the NVD was established as an overarching organization of all charity and social welfare. From that moment on Winterhulp became a part of the NVD, an organization according the German model.⁴⁷² This meant that the Germans banned all old social organizations and appointed the NSB to organize civil society. The German occupation regime tried to avoid the association with the unpopular NSB. Although the German and Dutch National Socialists propagated the independence of these charity organizations, in fact, they were closely connected. Members of the NSB had to promote cooperation between the NSB and these organizations.⁴⁷³ NSB members did collaborate actively within Winterhulp. The public image, after a year or so, was that WHN/NVD were 100 percent National Socialist organizations.

In the Winterhulp and NVD, women played an important role as the substance of the caring job was seen as characteristically female. Initially, in 1940, Winterhulp attempted to diminish the role of NSVO women within its organization. However, after a while, it

⁴⁶⁷ Ad van der Logt, *Theater van de Nieuwe Orde* (Amsterdam 2008) 440.

⁴⁶⁸ Van der Logt, *Theater van de Nieuwe Orde*, 296

⁴⁶⁹ Van der Logt, *Theater van de Nieuwe Orde*, 342, 361.

⁴⁷⁰ Van der Logt, *Theater van de Nieuwe Orde*, 440.

⁴⁷¹ Gerritsen, *Groote deelneming is gewenscht en noodzakelijk*, 43-44.

⁴⁷² Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 203, 210.

⁴⁷³ NIOD, 123, 1511; letter J.W. de Ruyter, February 3rd, 1942; NIOD, file 123, 220a.

noticed that Winterhulp could not work without the help of NSVO women.⁴⁷⁴ The NSVO women were also the most important organizers of the lotteries of the Winterhulp.

The NSB registered the incomes of the Winterhulp lotteries per section. An analysis of those numbers in het Gooi leads to the following conclusion: in most places the yields of the lotteries increased between 1941 and 1943. In the coastal village Bloemendaal the income increased from 184 to 1117 guilders. In the larger town Haarlem it doubled in the same period, and in Hilversum it increased from nearly 600 to nearly 2200 guilders. The yields of the lotteries were higher in smaller villages than in larger towns, compared with the general income of the inhabitants. In Bloemendaal the yields were higher than in Haarlem, and Haarlem surpassed Amsterdam.⁴⁷⁵ The women were thus able to mobilize more support in smaller villages or in small villages social pressure to buy tickets was higher.

A final aspect of the broad range of National Socialist organizations is the competition between different organizations. Organizations had to compete with each other for manpower and money. The former was especially heavily debated. There were often shortages in personnel. For example, the Utrecht district reported in April 1942 a deficiency of 43 officials per National Socialist organization.⁴⁷⁶ Officials were even lured away from competing organization with the promise of higher salaries.⁴⁷⁷ The rising expectations of NSB officials led to higher demands on equipment and personnel for each sub-organization. Even when organizations were reviewed positively, officials could find reasons to complain.⁴⁷⁸ In every National Socialist (sub-) organization the mantra was: never enough, everyone could work harder.

In a way, the NSB tried to function as a closed institution, integrating all members within the National Socialist community. Its aim was to dominate and infiltrate both the public and private spheres of National Socialist life. Although the local NSB leaders managed to mobilize party members to participate in the National Socialist public sphere, it is still unclear what the effects were on the private sphere. On the other hand, the movement

⁴⁷⁴ NA, CABR, file 11089.

⁴⁷⁵ NH Archief, file 223, 12-19.

⁴⁷⁶ NIOD, Utrecht, file 1484, April 29th, 1942.

⁴⁷⁷ NIOD, file 123, 2048 and 2049.

⁴⁷⁸ NIOD, Utrecht, file 1484, April 29th, 1942.

was supposed to win the support of large parts of the population for the new order. There was an eternal tension between mass movement and avant-garde organization.

Numbers of newspapers

By now, it is clear that NSB leaders and leaders of a broad range of sub-organizations urged their members to be full-time National Socialists. How did members respond to all these demands? Did they fulfill the requirements of their NSB membership, or did they ignore the orders? In Dutch historiography it is argued that members of the NSB were rather inactive or activities are not mentioned at all.⁴⁷⁹ De Jong has argued that NSB members became inactive in the final period of the occupation, due to the changed military situation after the Battle of Stalingrad.⁴⁸⁰

However, Dutch historians did not study the level of individual participation; they based their conclusions mainly on NSB propaganda. Therefore, in order to answer this question I will use two approaches: first I will analyze sales figures of the national NSB paper *Volk en Vaderland*, from which are several reports saved in the archives. The NSB leadership had a predilection for numbers and graphics. Consequently they counted the number of papers that were ordered and those that were sent to local sections. The number of sold papers led to statements about the participation of individual members. Papers could be spread only through the participation of individual NSB members, who were responsible for selling the papers on the street.

Because of the high resignation rates mentioned above, one might think that the activity of NSB members decreased as well during the occupation. However, this is not the case. Generally, the conclusion could be drawn that participation rates did not drop dramatically in 1943. As Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate, the number of sold papers increased gradually in Haarlem, Zandvoort, and Bloemendaal. This corresponds with the national statistics: 75,000 papers in February 1941, 175,000 in January 1943 and 200,000 in December 1943.

⁴⁷⁹ Van der Heijden, *Grijs Verleden*, 187; De Jonge, *Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland*.

⁴⁸⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* VI, 393.

The increase in street vending does not automatically represent an increased interest in the NSB. Many outsiders may have bought an NSB paper to inform themselves about the news “of the enemy.” However, whereas nonmembers purchased those newspapers as well, NSB members were important because they sold these National Socialist newspapers. Besides these papers, some prewar newspapers were still published if they followed the line of the German Nazi regime.⁴⁸¹ Thus, *Vova* was the newspaper of the NSB, and NSB members were the sellers of these papers. Without the activities of NSB members, the paper would not be sold. So, these numbers provide an indication of the level of participation.

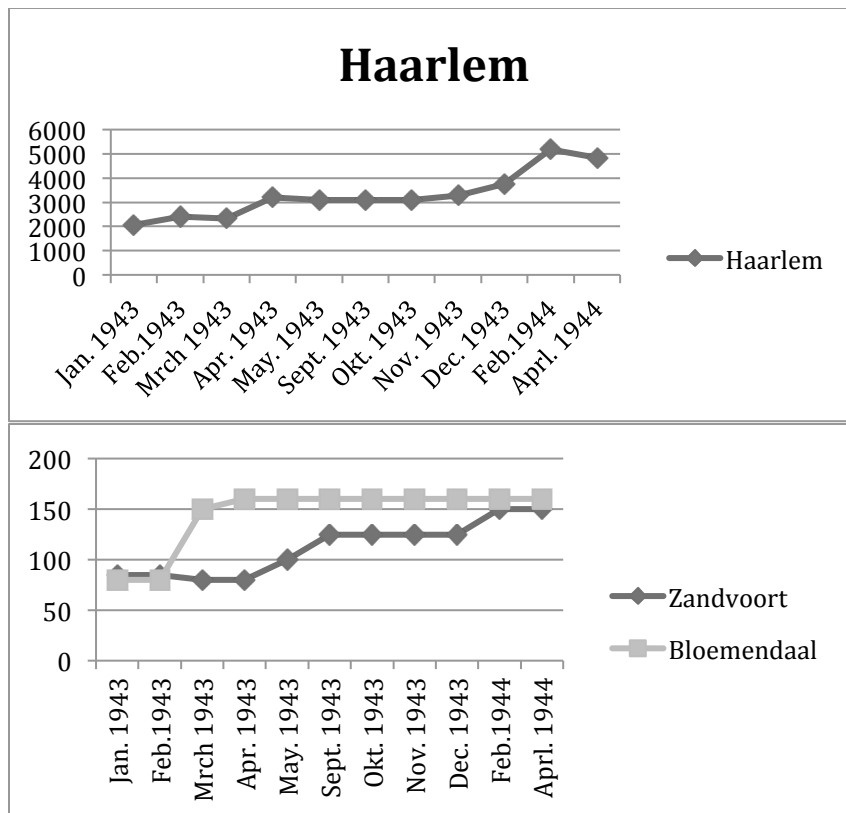


Figure 3. (above) Number of papers ordered by the local NSB leaders in Haarlem (above) and in Zandvoort and Bloemendaal (belowe).⁴⁸²

Figure 4. (Below) Number of papers ordered by the local NSB leaders in Zandvoort (dark grey) and Bloemendaal (light grey).⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ Still publishing in wartime were: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, *De Tijd*, *De Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, *De Gelderlander* and *De Telegraaf*.

⁴⁸² NIOD, file 123, 145-158.

In Figure 5, the differences in the average number of sold NSB papers are shown per member in Utrecht and Amsterdam. In both cities the average number of sold papers increased during the war. While in January 1943 an average of 0.8 papers per member were sold; by June 1944 the number had doubled in Amsterdam and almost tripled in Utrecht.

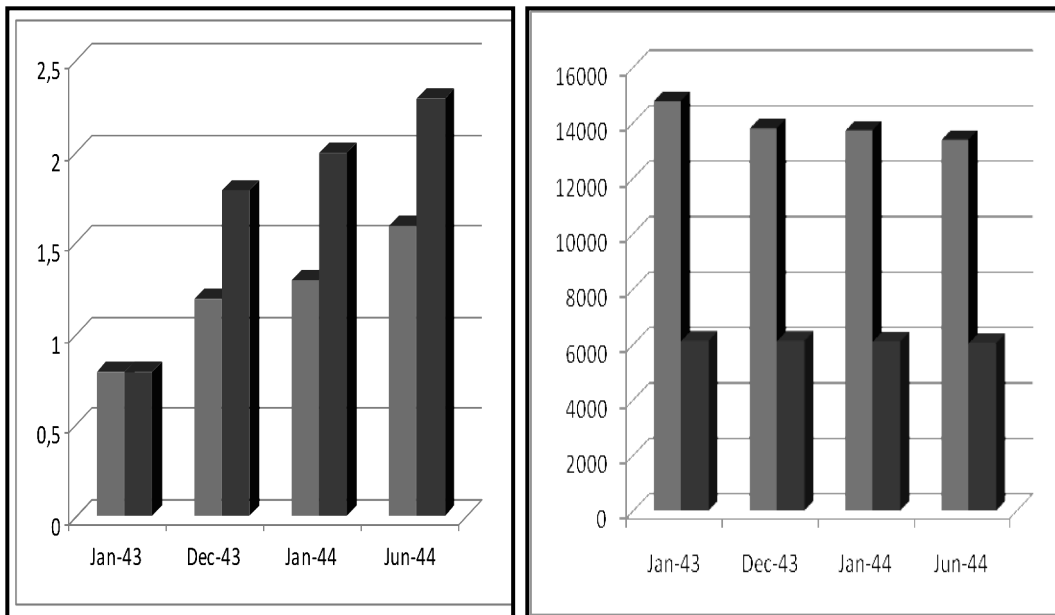


Figure 5. (left): Average number of sold NSB papers per member, Amsterdam (light grey) and Utrecht (dark grey).⁴⁸⁴

Figure 6. (right): Number of NSB members in Amsterdam (light grey) and Utrecht (dark grey).⁴⁸⁵

Compared with the results presented in Figure 6, it becomes evident that while the number of members in Amsterdam is higher, the participation rate of selling newspapers in Utrecht surpasses that of Amsterdam. The members in Amsterdam were surrounded by far more nonmembers than in Utrecht. As suggested by the higher level of resistance in Amsterdam, members there faced more political opponents. Lastly, the difference could be explained by

⁴⁸³ NIOD, file 123, 145-158.

⁴⁸⁴ NIOD, file 123, 145-158.

⁴⁸⁵ NIOD, file 123, 145-158.

the higher number of NSB officials living in Utrecht than in Amsterdam. Of the NSB population in Utrecht, a high percentage held office within the movement.⁴⁸⁶

Participating actively within the NSB entailed more than selling newspapers on the streets. Members could express their affiliation with the NSB in numerous ways; the most active manner was by having a job within the NSB itself. The extensive organization required many NSB officials. Within the NSB organization, 3000 members worked actively on the national level. At the same time, non-officials were active as well in spreading National Socialist propaganda.

Participation rates differed per region. Generally, the NSB was more active on the streets in larger cities than in small villages.⁴⁸⁷ This corresponds with theories of political participation that argue that people in cities are more likely to participate in political organizations than people in smaller communities.⁴⁸⁸ Sometimes joint activities like biking tours and marches allowed members from cities to reach out to the rural areas.

Members of the NSB were active in selling National Socialist newspapers on the street. Overall, the number of sold papers was significant during the occupation and increased during this period. Many members went on the streets, in summer and winter, to sell the National Socialist message.

Individual participation

In addition to reading through the ledgers of *Vova*, I have analyzed the CAPR sample. This makes it possible to shift from the national and local level to that of the individual. I will study the ways individuals participated in the party: did they wear a party badge and a uniform, sell newspapers, display an NSB flag, collect dues and attend party gatherings? One of the most important activities for NSB members was showing their alignment with the movement, and this was one of the matters postwar investigators were looking for in bringing collaborators to trial. In court former NSB members often tried to downplay their

⁴⁸⁶ The NSB members in Leiden sold in June 1944 approximately 9000 papers, which is per member significantly higher than in Utrecht; NIOD, file 123, 1957, 1941, 1948.

⁴⁸⁷ NIOD, file 123, 2048,2049, June 1942.

⁴⁸⁸ Milbrath, *Political Participation*, 130; Samuel L. Long, ed., *The Handbook of Political Behavior*4 (New York 1981) 225.

activity within the NSB, hoping to mitigate their punishment. They made their statements during a trial where the punishment depended on the level of active NSB involvement. Therefore, they would have had reason to lie about wearing a badge or taking part in other party activities. Taking this into account, the actual levels of participation may have been even higher than the numbers that are stated below.

Wearing a party badge was one way of identifying oneself as a National Socialist. Local leaders tried to promote this practice; the district leader of Northern Holland Joost Wieger de Ruyter stated just after the German invasion: “Each of us has the duty to wear our badge anytime and everywhere.”⁴⁸⁹ How did members fulfill this duty? As in other modes of participation, many NSB members and leaders complained about the lack of enthusiasm of some members: too few badges were worn. This could give the impression that NSB badges were kept safely in a closet at home. However, out of the CABR sample, approximately half of the members wore their badge at some moment.⁴⁹⁰ Neighbors, colleagues and friends noticed their badges, and in many cases the members themselves admitted to have worn their NSB badge. Many NSB members may not have worn their badges every day but just on certain occasions. Sometimes, they attached the badge on the inside lapel of their jacket, to hide it in the street but to be able to show their badge when they entered a meeting.

To wear a badge was only a small, tangible sign of belonging to the NSB; wearing a uniform went a step further. Whereas one assumes the level of wearing a uniform would be significantly lower than wearing a badge, still approximately 40 percent wore a uniform at least once during the occupation.⁴⁹¹ An active member in Bussum enjoyed wearing his uniform to his work at the municipal distribution office.⁴⁹² Another very active NSB member wore his uniform rarely in order not to offend the customers of his business.⁴⁹³ This corresponds with the general image that most of the NSB members did not wear their uniform every day. On the other hand, it seems clear that many NSB members actually did spend their money on an expensive uniform and that the uniform was not hidden in their closet.

⁴⁸⁹ De Daad, May 31st, 1940: “Ieder heeft de plicht ons insigne altijd en overal te dragen.”

⁴⁹⁰ NA, CABR, 158 for sure out of 327.

⁴⁹¹ NA, CABR, 125 out of 327 and even more than 40 percent of all the male members.

⁴⁹² NA, CABR, file 94134.

⁴⁹³ NA, CABR, file 89035.

The final public manifestation of belonging to National Socialism is celebrating National Socialist special days by hanging an NSB flag outside one's home or putting an NSB poster in the window. More than one out of three members demonstrated their affiliation with the NSB by doing so.⁴⁹⁴ Consequently, the neighbors could notice his or her political choice. Not all members were able to express their membership openly. Some NSB members had non-NSB family members and were therefore reluctant to display an NSB flag or poster. A female doctor still lived at her mother's place and was therefore not able to express her NSB affiliation by hanging a flag.⁴⁹⁵ And in other cases, anti-National Socialist wives prohibited their husbands from displaying an NSB flag or poster.⁴⁹⁶ However, it seems that in most households political agreement prevailed.

NSB leaders pushed its members beyond expressing themselves as National Socialists. They had to attend meetings and hold positions within the party too. In NSB reports one can find many complaints about the lack of enthusiasm for attending meetings.⁴⁹⁷ NSB leaders aimed at 100 percent participation but were constantly disappointed. However, still more than half of the members went to party meetings.⁴⁹⁸ This coincides with the numbers in NSB reports.⁴⁹⁹ The meetings may have been meaningful events. A young female NSB member wrote a letter to her parents in 1941, expressing how much she had enjoyed a party gathering and bragged that local NSB people had called her a fantastic propagandist. She even asked for a day off, to be able to attend another NSB meeting.⁵⁰⁰

The National Socialist newspapers needed sellers, and the NSB succeeded in mobilizing its members. Forty percent of members collected dues or sold newspapers in the street.⁵⁰¹ Even more members, almost 70 percent, regularly received these NSB newspapers at home.⁵⁰² Most members distributed the newspapers diligently. Sometimes the wives of NSB officials carried out their husband's duties when they were unable to fulfill them. An NSB archivist was so enthusiastic about the NSB that he always carried NSB propaganda

⁴⁹⁴ NA, CABR, 116 out of 327.

⁴⁹⁵ NA, CABR, file 18731.

⁴⁹⁶ NA, CABR, file 55380.

⁴⁹⁷ Notes of the NSVO and the 't Gooi circle meetings, 1940-1942; NIOD, NSB Archive, file 1498.

⁴⁹⁸ 167 out of 327.

⁴⁹⁹ Note of the NSVO and 't Gooi circle meetings, 1940-1942; NIOD, NSB Archive, 1498.

⁵⁰⁰ NA, CABR, file 106402.

⁵⁰¹ NA, CABR, 132 out of 327.

⁵⁰² NA, CABR, 225 out of 327.

with him in his briefcase.⁵⁰³ Not all members were as helpful; one member in Amsterdam secretly stoked his stove with the NSB-newspapers.⁵⁰⁴

The percentage of people who held a position within the party was approximately fifty percent.⁵⁰⁵ They came from all sorts of different backgrounds. Many members saw their function in the NSB as a duty. One member became bloc leader in Woerden in order to show his gratitude for a job he received through his NSB membership.⁵⁰⁶ An NSB official in the same town enjoyed his activities for the NSB so much that he described a week of National Socialist courses in 1943 as a “holiday.”⁵⁰⁷ Many members had not one but several different functions simultaneously. An NSB member in Haarlem was a bloc leader, a leader of the neighborhood, a group representative for Social Affairs, and responsible for spreading NSB and WA newspapers.⁵⁰⁸

The participation rates of local members were high: almost everyone participated in one way or another, showing their connection with National Socialism. While membership rates dropped, political participation remained high.

Having drawn the conclusion that NSB members indeed were active participants, it leaves us with the question why it was that members participated actively. As argued in the previous chapter, many National Socialists actually believed in National Socialism, which may have motivated them. Among other reasons for participation are the above-mentioned constant demands of NSB leaders. It also might have been that political participation in a collective project is a satisfying experience in itself.⁵⁰⁹ And when a member participates, he or she wants to continue this activity. Ronald Wintrobe describes a “solidarity multiplier”: once people join a group they tend to go further in the direction of giving up their autonomy in order to find solidarity within that group.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰³ NA, CABR, file 18037.

⁵⁰⁴ NA, CABR, file 105075.

⁵⁰⁵ NA, CABR, 155 out of 327.

⁵⁰⁶ NA, CABR, file 89300.

⁵⁰⁷ NA, CABR, file 11089.

⁵⁰⁸ NA, CABR, file 95935.

⁵⁰⁹ J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, eds, *Participation in Politics* (New York 1975).

⁵¹⁰ Ronald Wintrobe, *Rational Extremism. The Political Economy of Radicalism* (Cambridge 2006) 14.

The Dutch historian Henk te Velde points to the general pleasant feeling that Dutch participants experienced when they attended political meetings in the 1930s.⁵¹¹ This aspect of political participation is consistent with arguments used in political science theories.⁵¹² Therefore, NSB meetings were probably attractive for its members, as the meetings of the NSB were filled with speeches, entertainment and communal singing. That feeling of entertainment and joy of participation was expressed by some NSB members and in several internal NSB-reports.

Thus, regardless the losses of the German army and the changing atmosphere at home, Dutch National Socialists remained active. In 1944, the organization still functioned, despite the intensification of complaints. Reports about meetings grew shorter; however, reports were still being made. In Amsterdam, NSB members reported, for example, the results of a newly launched propaganda action, “The struggle for Amsterdam” (*Strijd om Amsterdam*) in 1944. On March 4th, 1944, the action started in the Concert Hall in Amsterdam. In this final stage, the NSB leaders stopped complaining: they complimented the NSB members on their successful showing of the liveliness of the NSB. While these statements were far from neutral, the sales of the National Socialist newspapers, as presented above, do show an active NSB.⁵¹³

In conclusion, I assume that the level of participation increased for two main reasons. On the one hand, pressure from local leaders to participate actively could enhance political activities. On the other hand, participation may have been a satisfying experience in itself and thus attractive for rank-and-file NSB members.

Active Dutch National Socialists

The aim of this chapter was to examine the organization of the NSB within the Dutch political landscape during the occupation. In particular, I have examined the mobilizing and activating demands of local NSB leaders and participation rates of individual members. The

⁵¹¹ Gerritsen, *Groote deelneming is gewenst en noodzakelijk*; Henk te Velde, *De natiestaat. Politiek in Nederland sinds 1815. Stijlen van leiderschap* (Amsterdam 2002) 133.

⁵¹² Long, *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, 213-220.; Pennock and Chapman, eds, *Participation in Politics*, XV.

⁵¹³ NIOD, file 22a, kring Oost and West, May and June 1944; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 129-134.

findings correspond with literature on the NSB in presenting the high level of organization on every level, whereas it refutes the established image of NSB members as generally inactive opportunists.

The NSB organization constantly urged its members to be full-time National Socialists. Local NSB leaders employed various mobilizing techniques to get the members to participate in the required activities. These techniques changed in keeping with changed opportunities and circumstances. The shifting opportunities forced the NSB to shift from being a party that tried to reach out to the masses to an increasingly inward-looking, elitist movement. This shift to a vanguard party was also reflected in the local NSB organizations. It became more difficult to become an NSB member. As a result, the conclusion could be drawn that the NSB was a demanding and dynamic instead of a static party.

The NSB was an outsider and an “anti-system party.” In the party’s struggle against pillarization, only those outside the pillars were available to respond to their appeal.⁵¹⁴ In the end the NSB came increasingly to resemble pre-war religious and social organizations. Paradoxically, while the NSB organization increasingly resembled the pillarized organizations they had fought against in the 1930s, those organizations disappeared as a result of the harsh German policies.

The self-directed behavior of NSB members conflicted with the fascist ideals of hierarchy and discipline. Dutch National Socialists did not submit to the party hierarchy. Even the WA, which should have been the most disciplined unit of the NSB, acted autonomously. The NSB members set up local actions and had their own ideas about how the NSB organization should function. Perhaps this behavior is less a reflection of the querulous nature of all these members than of the fact that NSB members were both fascist and Dutch.

Another interesting phenomenon is the high participation rate of NSB members, even when membership rates dropped. NSB members did in fact participate actively in the building up of the New Order. Moreover, they remained active throughout the occupation period. In contrast to the findings of earlier research, NSB members were quite active. They were active in all sorts of sub-organizations of the NSB. Local NSB leaders did in fact succeed in the political mobilization of the masses.

⁵¹⁴ Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 101.

Thus, NSB members were both committed to National Socialist ideology and to action, perhaps not surprisingly, because ideology and action were closely connected with each other in National Socialism.⁵¹⁵

National Socialists manifested themselves very clearly within Dutch society. They were active in many NSB- and NSB-related organizations where they were further socialized in National Socialist ideology and political culture. Within the NSB, the inability to reach out to the masses encouraged a process of internal integration within the party. The focus was increasingly on internal mobilization of NSB members rather than on mobilization of outsiders. Therefore, their organizational structure and activities led to a rising gap between National Socialists and their environment.

A small minority of the Dutch belonged to the National Socialist movement. While politically losing touch with the non-NSB majority they became a “fringe” culture within Dutch society. More than a political group and opposing many mainstream thoughts (a “counterculture”), they developed into a subculture on the border of society holding political power through illegitimate means. Whereas the political mobilization of NSB members was a success, the communication with outsiders was a failure. The NSB had become political insiders as a result of their political orientation and their leaning towards the occupier. At the same time, they were cultural and social outsiders. Their peripheral position was exacerbated by the central place of violence in their ideology and practice, a phenomenon which will be addressed in the next chapter.

⁵¹⁵ Mosse, *Nazi culture*, xxxvii.

Chapter 3. Phases of violence and public confrontations

Introduction

While several studies of Western European National Socialist collaborating organizations have explained very well the ideological development of leaders of the movements, research on the violence committed by members of National Socialist movements remains limited.⁵¹⁶ This study hopes to add a new angle to the history of Dutch National Socialism with its focus on the day-to-day violent practices of NSB members. Its aim is to analyze the dynamics of confrontations in the streets between NSB members and their opponents.

In recent international historiography of fascism, scholars such as Michael Mann and Aristotle Kallis placed violence at the center of fascist ideology and practices. Kallis even labels the collaborating fascists as the “unique, crucial building blocs of the architecture of genocide in the NS ‘new order.’”⁵¹⁷ He acknowledges the crucial role that collaborating fascists played in the violent history of the National Socialist occupation during the Second World War. In all occupied territories, indigenous National Socialists infiltrated the local administration and police. According to Kallis, collaborating National Socialists were often even more radical and violent towards their neighbors and compatriots than the Nazi occupier. As Stathis Kalyvas argues, the local dynamics of political violence should be analyzed in order to understand political developments.⁵¹⁸ I will use their approach on the Dutch case.

Violence was not limited to fascist parties. As Pamela Swett argues: in Germany many young men may have perceived violence as a way to improve their own status.⁵¹⁹ One important difference though is that fascists saw struggle as an aim in itself, not only as an instrument to reach a specific goal. In the fascist paradigm, violence was crucial ideologically and instrumentally. The use of violence was encouraged as a desirable aim in itself. In other words, violence was seen as inherently positive. In addition to this “intellectual” argument, the fascists did not neglect the “instrumental” side of violence. Fascists accepted violence as an inevitable instrument to accomplish a New Order in which their internal enemies would

⁵¹⁶ De Wever, *Greep naar de macht*; Martin Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium*; Paul Hayes, ‘Quisling’s Political Ideas’; Fritz Petrick, ‘Die norwegischen Kollaboration’.

⁵¹⁷ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*. 210, 261-264, 277-278, 282-283.

⁵¹⁸ Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil wars*, 390; Swett., *Neighbors and enemies*.

⁵¹⁹ Swett, *Neighbors and enemies*, 295-298.

be defeated and “inferior” racial groups would be eliminated. Violence also served as a method to gain power.⁵²⁰ Therefore, I will analyze the different methods used by the NSB members and their opponents to express their feelings towards each other. Of course, not all expressions were violent, and non-violent expressions on the street will be included as well.

National Socialist violence is a form of political violence. According to Ton Zwaan, political violence is defined as violence focused on the acquisition of political power or on influencing existing power relations.⁵²¹ In the case of fascists, their violent acts were performed in the public sphere. Fascists used political violence to promote violence in the public sphere, with the aim of overthrowing the political system.⁵²² Thus political violence was most important at times of regime change, when different political actors tried to win political power. However, when the German National Socialists took power, violence did not disappear because of the inherently violent character of fascist movements.⁵²³ This chapter will deal with violence in the public sphere, on the Dutch streets. In power, fascists had the opportunity to express their violence on the streets. When in power, fascists also used violence in prisons and concentration camps; these violent places are out of the scope of this research. This study focuses on the confrontations in the public sphere, where they were visible to bystanders.

Throughout the occupation, violence brought NSB members into conflict with their fellow citizens. Thus, violence was not just an ideological matter but a very realistic life experience shaped daily life. Violence also shaped the image of National Socialists. The threat of violence existed from both sides, widening the gap between National Socialists and Dutch society, and therefore it should to be analyzed from the perspective of interaction and polarization. As David Apter formulated: **“Political violence not only divides people, it polarizes them around affiliations of race, ethnicity, religion, language, class.”**⁵²⁴

Following the ideas of international scholars of fascism and political violence, I will study the role of violence in the public confrontations of the NSB. During the occupation, violence played a significant role in the Netherlands. Political violence – an important phenomenon in the years of occupation – does not exist without actors on the local level

⁵²⁰ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 106-108, 112.

⁵²¹ Ton Zwaan, ‘Politiek geweld, staten en naties. Een theoretische inleiding’ in Ton Zwaan, ed., *Politiek geweld. Etnisch conflict, oorlog en genocide in de twintigste eeuw* (Zutphen 2005) 9-24, here 12.

⁵²² Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 4-5, 64; Mosse, *Nazi culture*, XXV

⁵²³ These are also forms of violence: Zwaan, ‘Politiek geweld, staten en naties. Een theoretische inleiding’, 10.

⁵²⁴ Apter, *The legitimization of violence*, 1.

and members of the NSB were among the most active local actors during the Nazi occupation.⁵²⁵ The NSB was an all-encompassing fascist party collaborating with the German Nazi occupier who was fighting a war against internal and external enemies. As the Dutch historian Peter Romijn points out in his study of local government during the German occupation, the German authorities encouraged Dutch National Socialists to act violently in the first period of the occupation.⁵²⁶ This study will not be a quantitative analysis of violence but a study of the dynamics of confrontations in public. On the basis of existing international studies on fascism, my hypothesis is that violence shaped the internal characteristics and external image of National Socialists in Dutch society.

This chapter is chronologically structured. I distinguish four phases: from May 1940 till mid-1941; mid-1941 till early 1943; early 1943 till September 1944 and the final phase after September 1944. The latter period will be discussed in the next chapter. The first phase was characterized by eager National Socialists expressing themselves in the public sphere. The paramilitary organization of the NSB (the WA) was the most visible actor on the streets, encouraged by Nazi Germany. WA members were active in the first year of the occupation in a concerted effort to conquer the streets. The second phase formed, as Romijn characterized it, the golden years of the NSB.⁵²⁷ In this period, individual members of the NSB took part in the process of physical exclusion of the Jews by assisting the police in rounding them up. From 1943 onwards the role of violent National Socialists changed. They became increasingly militarized; many were recruited for the German military. In 1943, the efforts of the NSB and Nazi Germany to nazify the Netherlands became subordinate to the German war effort. Violence became tangible for the Dutch National Socialists themselves after the first year when NSB members were expected to integrate into the *Waffen SS* to fight on the German side during the invasion of Russia. During this third phase, National Socialists in the Netherlands had to cope with disappointing results at the front and at home. From 1943 onwards, Dutch National Socialists had to fear the violence of the resistance

⁵²⁵ Stathis N. Kalyvas “The Ontology of ‘Political Violence’. Action and Identity in Civil Wars”, *Perspectives on Politics* 1:3 (2003) 475-494, here 479-480, 487. Individuals tend to be seen as objects rather than as subjects of violence; Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil wars*, 390. They were not the only indigenous fascist violent actors; the NSB members had to compete with, for example, members of the Dutch SS and other smaller extreme-right groups. However, the NSB members formed the largest group of all Dutch National Socialists.

⁵²⁶ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 143-144.

⁵²⁷ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 143-144.

movement on Dutch territory. In some cases, the resistance tried to eliminate important Dutch collaborators and National Socialists. In this period of the occupation and partly due to the increasing attacks from the resistance fighters, the NSB was allowed to create its own police force for self-protection: the *Landwacht*. The members of the *Landwacht* roamed the streets and countryside. Its members were employed to arrest people and confiscate food bought on the black market.

Confrontations are visible in different sources, including the police reports of different cities: Amsterdam, Haarlem, Heemstede, Leiden, and Utrecht. The reports of the German Höhere SA- und Polizeiführer (HSSPF) are useful for their description of the general atmosphere in the Netherlands. One has to consider the bias in these reports because the HSSPF was an institution of the German occupation. However, read with a critical approach these reports offer insights into the development of the attitudes of and towards the NSB on the streets. Other sources include the reports of the *Afweerdienst*, the judicial department of the NSB. The organization assisted NSB members in legal matters; many complaints of NSB members about so-called antis were reported to the *Afweerdienst*, which was located in Utrecht. Insults of NSB members were also reported to the ATL, the internal intelligence service of the NSB.⁵²⁸

The information from local party archives and police documents is not structured but scattered; it cannot offer a detailed quantitative analysis of the confrontations. What it can offer is an insight into the dynamics of confrontations between NSB members, civilians and the police.

The first phase of confrontations, May 1940-mid 1941: conquering the streets

The first phase started immediately after the German takeover. Nazi officials encouraged (violent) expressions from the NSB. Seyss-Inquart aimed first at self-nazification; therefore all National Socialists had to express themselves openly in the public sphere.⁵²⁹ Nazi

⁵²⁸ See chapter 2.

⁵²⁹ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 144.

Germany returned to NSB members their right to wear uniforms and hold parades, in order to enable the NSB to demonstrate its fascist spirit and to conquer the streets.

At this stage, members of the NSB expressed themselves violently on the streets. NSB members ignored the laws issued by the prewar Dutch government. According to these national laws, NSB members were forbidden to wear their uniforms in the streets. But in the first months of the occupation NSB members marched through the streets in their black uniforms. During these months, the main spark of violent confrontations lay in propaganda, marches and selling newspapers.⁵³⁰ Many riots broke out, often involving hundreds of participants and sometimes even gunfire.⁵³¹

The activities of the NSB members, who supported the German occupation regime, provoked hostile reactions, violent and nonviolent, in the surrounding society. The NSB, formerly a movement of political and social outsiders, now suddenly had a power base. A shift in the balance of power can lead to an explosion of violence, according to Roger D. Petersen. In his analysis of the relationship between emotions and ethnic violence, Petersen argues, “Status reversal creates the highest intensity of resentment and produces the highest likelihood of violent conflict.” When a powerful group is dislodged from its position, as was the case with the former democratic Dutch elite, and is placed below a (previously) less powerful group like the NSB, the level of resentment among the new underdog increases.⁵³² Following Petersen’s argument, violent responses are to be expected from anti-NSB groups.

The first demonstration of resistance occurred on June 29th 1940, the birthday of the Prince Consort of the future Queen. People showed their support for the Prince and their rejection of the German regime by placing flowers on the streets. People wore a carnation—the prince’s favorite flower—to express their support for the royal family.⁵³³ National Socialists saw these expressions as provocations and as occasions to start riots. They put on their uniforms and roamed the streets, looking for people wearing carnations. When they encountered someone, they tore off the carnation. But, some NSB opponents were prepared: they had hidden a razorblade within the carnation so that the NSB member would

⁵³⁰ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 222.

⁵³¹ NIOD, WA, June-September 1940; Heemstede, gemeentepolitie, July-September 1940, 25-27.

⁵³² Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence, fear, hatred, and resentment in twentieth-century eastern Europe* (Cambridge 2002) 256.

⁵³³ HSSPF, July 6th, 1940.

hurt himself tearing out the flower.⁵³⁴ The police in Amsterdam reported over 30 major fights, with 23 people injured.⁵³⁵

In the autumn of 1940, the HSSPF reported a general anti-NSB political climate.⁵³⁶ Many acts of opposition were small and were targeted at NSB propaganda, local NSB members, and their houses. Propaganda posters of the NSB were damaged during the night.⁵³⁷ NSB members were spit upon.⁵³⁸ NSB members were insulted because they were selling newspapers on the street or simply because they were members of the NSB.⁵³⁹ Houses of NSB members were the object of insults as well. Opponents painted swastikas on the German sympathizers' houses with tar or orange paint.⁵⁴⁰ Some citizens broke the windows of NSB houses, shops, and party buildings.⁵⁴¹

In October 1940, one NSB member was pelted with stones.⁵⁴² In November 1940, a WA man was harassed when he exited a cinema.⁵⁴³ However, these were exceptions; in the early period of the occupation, minor acts against the NSB prevailed. Bullying was a way to show their aversion to the NSB. These acts were numerous, though. The discontent of opponents was very visible on the streets during this period. Small, everyday acts of opposition, like chanting anti-NSB slogans and yelling at NSB members and throwing snowballs at them, came mainly from young people.⁵⁴⁴ Perhaps, because young people are more eager to present themselves on the street united in groups against an opponent.

In the beginning, the anti-NSB expressions came from different actors, who had in common that they felt threatened or had been attacked by the Dutch National Socialists: the NU, Jews and other opponents of the NSB, such as communists. The NU started off as a nonviolent political organization that perceived itself as an alternative to the NSB in sharing power with

⁵³⁴ Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 33-34; Gertjan Broek *Weerkerpsen*, 'hergroepering'.

⁵³⁵ De Jong, *Het KoninkrijkIV*, 284.

⁵³⁶ HSSPF, October 22th, 1940.

⁵³⁷ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, November 1940, 31.

⁵³⁸ NSB members complained, for example, that people from inside the streetcar spit on them; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, April 1941, 42-43.

⁵³⁹ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, June 6th, 1941, 46; July 10th, 1941, 47; August 5th, 1942, 62; October 30th, 1944, 105; NIOD, ATL, December 1940.

⁵⁴⁰ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, October 1941, 50-51.

⁵⁴¹ NIOD, Afweerdienst, November 1940 Bussum; NIOD, WA, file 1093, March 1941; NH Archive, Hilversum, December 6th, 1940.

⁵⁴² NIOD, Afweerdienst, October 1940.

⁵⁴³ NIOD, Afweerdienst, November 1940, Bussum.

⁵⁴⁴ In October 1940 a fight started at a school in Utrecht between the son of an NSB member and his classmates; NIOD, file 1279, Afweerdienst, October 1940; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, June 1st, 1941, 45.

the Germans in the Netherlands. Whereas its leaders pleaded for deliberation and peaceful opposition, many of its followers thought and acted otherwise.⁵⁴⁵ The NU became one of the most important opponents of the NSB on the streets in the first period of the occupation. However, this does not mean that the NU established a paramilitary organization, like the WA. Thus, the “battle on the streets” was fought by very disparate groups.

In the summer of 1940, one of the most frequent, immediate causes of conflict was canvassing on the streets. Both NSB- and NU members tried to sell their newspapers on street corners. The street corner became a meeting point for troublemakers. The marches through the streets and the existence of two opposing groups selling newspapers on the streets led to regular riots in several cities.⁵⁴⁶ For example in October 1940, a confrontation between members of the NU and the NSB took place in the center of Amsterdam. A few NSB members were selling National Socialist newspapers on the streets, until NU members shouted: “long live the Queen! [...] Long live England!”⁵⁴⁷ Bystanders joined in. Someone slapped an NSB newspaper out of the hands of an NSB member, whereupon WA members responded violently. Finally, the police intervened.⁵⁴⁸

In the autumn of 1940, the NU and NSB men were two groups who often engaged in violent confrontations. The German HSSPF held the NU responsible for disturbing the peace and accused the police of mistakenly choosing the side of the NU.⁵⁴⁹ However, the same report mentions the violent actions of NSB members towards NU members. On October 12th, 1940 for example, 25 WA men attacked an NU building and trashed the place. According to the HSPPF, this incident reinforced the negative attitude towards the NSB and even elicited disapproval within the NSB organization.⁵⁵⁰

Local governments tried to keep the confrontations under control by designating different places for the WA and the NU to sell their papers, thus eliminating the confrontational meetings on street corners. However, this approach did not succeed because

⁵⁴⁵ Ten Have, *Nederlandse Unie*, 393.

⁵⁴⁶ NIOD, WA, July-August 1940, Utrecht; Haarlem gemeentepolitie, file 847, dagrapport June 20th, 1940; PG, June 26th, 1941, Hilversum.

⁵⁴⁷ “Leve de Koningin! Oranje boven! Leve Engeland!”; NIOD, WA (123), October 23th, 1940, file 1082 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*.

⁵⁴⁸ NIOD, WA, October 23th, 1940, file 1082.

⁵⁴⁹ NIOD, HSSPF, October 22th, 1940, file 353, box 44.

⁵⁵⁰ NIOD, HSSPF, October 22th, 1940, file 353, box 44.

of the overconfidence of the WA men, who felt they could count on German support. They constantly tried to take over the NU posts and increase their territory.

The relationship between the NSB and the Dutch police was ambiguous in the first period of the occupation. The Dutch historian Guus Meershoek analyzed the Dutch police during German occupation. According to Meershoek, the police continued their prewar policies in the early months and refused to give the NSB a special position. Only gradually did the NSB gain greater leeway.⁵⁵¹ The interaction between the NSB and the police was chaotic. The borders between their so-called neutering beginning and late support were vague.

Sometimes, the NSB successfully asked the police for assistance for public activities.⁵⁵² In Haarlem, the police often stood by or gently removed the public.⁵⁵³ In other cases, the police corrected and reprimanded NSB members. On many occasions, it was a combination of both. For example, in July 1940 the NSB had permission to march in groups of five through the streets of Haarlem. The NSB ignored this order and marched instead in groups of six. This resulted in a reprimand from the police, after which the NSB limited its groups to the permitted five.⁵⁵⁴ From the perspective of the National Socialists, the interaction between WA members and the police did not proceed smoothly enough. In August 1940, a policeman accidentally hit an NSB member with his saber. Afterwards, this incident was discussed between the local NSB leader and the police, and the NSB agreed that it was an accident.⁵⁵⁵ However, the NSB complained to the police whenever they were confronted with obstruction from the public.⁵⁵⁶ In Haarlem, the police assisted the NSB members in many cases. The relationship with the police force differed regionally. The above-mentioned examples were reported in Haarlem, where the police were more favorable to the NSB than in Hilversum, according to the HSSPF.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵¹ Guus Meershoek, *Dienaren van het gezag. De Amsterdamse politie tijdens de bezetting* (Amsterdam 1999) 100, 108.

⁵⁵² Haarlem gemeentepolitie, file 847, nachtrapport June 28/29th, 1940.

⁵⁵³ Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 847, dagrapport July 4th, 1940.

⁵⁵⁴ The major source of unrest was actually elsewhere in the city, where a demonstration by young male supporters of the Dutch royals was violently suppressed by German soldiers; Haarlem gemeentepolitie, dagrapport, July 4th, 1940.

⁵⁵⁵ Haarlem gemeentepolitie, file 847, dagrapport ,August 15th, 1940.

⁵⁵⁶ Besides assisting NSB members, the police also helped people who were attacked by NSB members; Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 847, dagrapport, August 15th, 1940.

⁵⁵⁷ HSSPF, July 6th, 1940.

In the fall of 1940, NSB members became more impatient in public. They had hoped to be allowed to take over power, in the streets at least, but were controlled by the police and kept strictly under German supervision.⁵⁵⁸ By conquering the street, National Socialists hoped to be able to show the German rulers that they were the only worthy candidates for power-sharing in the Netherlands. The Germans did nothing to prevent these actions; they even encouraged them. According to Seyss Inquart, the prewar laws against the marching through the streets were unlawful.⁵⁵⁹ NSB members in different places expressed their impatience and frustration. In October 1940, the NSB in Bussum expressed its disappointment about lack of assistance from the police and the German occupation regime.⁵⁶⁰ After a policeman in Haarlem requested a group of marching NSB men not to sing near churches, he received a snarl. When a group of NSB members saw a man on a bicycle with an NU flag, they knocked him off his bike and beat him in the face. The flag and his NU badge were violently removed.⁵⁶¹ And after a group of schoolboys threw a few snowballs at a group of NSB men, the latter reacted furiously and hit the boys with their belts.⁵⁶²

In addition to participating in street fights, WA members marched through the cities to show their power. The first grand march of the WA was organized on November 9th 1940, in Amsterdam. Thousands of WA members marched through the capital; they deliberately marched through a Jewish neighborhood.⁵⁶³ Mussert greeted the WA troops at Dam Square. Cameras filmed the occasion to use as footage for a propaganda movie. The WA reported about its own march and closely looked at anti-NSB actions during the parade. With self-confidence, they stated to all NSB members that all the “antis” should be confronted with WA actions.⁵⁶⁴ Marching around was an important way to express the Dutch National Socialist presence in the public sphere.

By the end of 1940, the WA increasingly acted violently in Jewish neighborhoods in Amsterdam. They had provoked and harassed the Jewish population by the placement of signs announcing “no Jews allowed” –often with German stamps- in bars, restaurants and theaters. The policy conformed to the guidelines issued by the German administration but

⁵⁵⁸ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 222.

⁵⁵⁹ Meershoek, *Dienaren van het gezag*, 106-107.

⁵⁶⁰ NIOD, Afveerdienst, file 1279, October 22nd, 1940.

⁵⁶¹ Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 847, dagrapport, November 3rd, 1940.

⁵⁶² Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 848, dagrapport, January 20th, 1941.

⁵⁶³ Gertjan Broek, *Weerkopser*; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk IV*, 656; B.A. Sijes, *De Februaristaking. 25-26 februari 1941* (Den Haag 1954).

⁵⁶⁴ NIOD, WA, file 1093, against radio station AVRO, 1940.

was supported and enforced by WA men. The German policy was to protect the image of the SS, an aim of Seyss-Inquart and Rauter. They knew that WA members were unpopular among the Dutch. Thus, the German authorities tolerated or even encouraged WA attacks on Jewish groups in the streets, bars and restaurants in the end of 1940 and beginning of 1941.⁵⁶⁵

On October 31st of 1940, the occupation regime in The Hague issued guidelines to the police regarding their behavior towards the WA men. These rules stated that the *Reichskommissariat* approved the WA and therefore allowed the WA members to march without permission. Only in cases where they gathered with over hundred men did they need to ask permission. The WA could ask for police assistance, but the assistance should not be too overwhelming because that would create the image of policemen capturing the WA. WA members were prohibited from acting too independently without orders- something the WA men had too frequently done. The WA men were not allowed to carry weapons; however, they could not be arrested if they violated this rule. The WA members were protected in another way as well. If bystanders threw objects at the WA men or insulted them by calling them “traitors,” these people had to be arrested immediately by the police. Moreover, if WA members happened to respond independently to insults, the police were not allowed to intervene. And if no police were present, WA members could take measures against protesters themselves. Thus, the Nazi regime hoped, on the one hand, to control and, on the other, to appease local WA members.⁵⁶⁶

These were the guidelines on paper, but what happened on the street? How the policemen reacted to the autonomous WA men depended on the location. Whenever citizens in Haarlem daubed NSB clubhouses or residences of NSB members with anti-NSB slogans, the police took care of the cleaning.⁵⁶⁷ The police offered assistance when communists attacked NSB men. The police still did not permit the NSB total freedom to act, as the following incident reveals.

On a late Sunday afternoon, February 2nd 1941, a WA member left his house in civilian clothes. He heard people’s exclamations: “There stands another dirty fascist; we will

⁵⁶⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk IV*, 877-879?.

⁵⁶⁶ Richtlijnen HSSPF, Den Haag, January 27th, 1941; Archief Leiden, Slats; Utrechts archive, toegangsnummer 10007-3, file 19821, November 2nd, 1940, instructions of inspecteur-generaal, and January 27th, 1941; Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 174.

⁵⁶⁷ Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 848 and 850, February, April 1941.

chop him into pieces.”⁵⁶⁸ According to the testimonies of this WA member, a crowd of over 100 people was standing behind him and slowly surrounded him. His brother tried to get assistance. First, he went to other WA members and thereafter to the police. While his fellow WA members delivered the support he had asked for, the man was less positive about the activities of the police. According to this WA man, the police tried to arrest him several times and helped the menacing crowd instead of him. During the violent confrontation the man himself was hit on the head and a bystander was wounded as well. After the WA man was wounded, he grabbed his pistol and threatened to shoot. At that moment a police officer arrested the WA man because WA members were not authorized to carry weapons. The WA man was not punished; however, the incident came to naught.⁵⁶⁹ This incident shows the police, on the one hand, trying to control the WA and, on the other, failing to sanction the WA for illegal actions.

The same soft approach is evident from the police actions against NU-NSB confrontations. In June of 1941, NU members were banned from selling their newspapers. NSB members took advantage of this measure and occupied the NU places without permission. The police remarked on their behavior, and the NSB retreated. However, the NSB audaciously added the remark that the NSB simply needed shadowy places to sell their papers. The NSB apparently wanted to have the last word.⁵⁷⁰ The police in Utrecht also complained about independent actions of the WA. In reaction to this complaint, the WA leader Zondervan reprimanded his rank and file about their independent and disobedient behavior.⁵⁷¹

In Amsterdam the violent actions of the WA got out of hand on February 11th, 1941. WA men marched through the streets of Amsterdam into the Jewish neighborhood. The local Jewish fighting group was prepared and reacted violently against the marching WA men. This fight ended with a fatally injured WA man, Hendrik Koot, who died a few days later. The situation escalated on February 19th, 1941. First, there was an incident in a Jewish ice cream shop called Koco. The Jewish owners of the place were tired of the constant

⁵⁶⁸ “Daar staat nog zoo’n vuile fascist, we zullen hem in stukken hakken”; NIOD, WA, February 2nd, 1941, Leiden.

⁵⁶⁹ NIOD, WA, February 2nd, 1941, Leiden.

⁵⁷⁰ Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 850, June 23rd, 1941.

⁵⁷¹ Letter of Zondervan, April 1941, Utrecht, RAL, Archief Slats. Sometimes there still were confrontations between the NSB and police, Utrechts Archief, archive 1007-3, file 19821, February 1941 and incidents of mistreatment reported by NSB members, February 1941.

attacks of the WA men. Therefore they decided to prepare a counterattack. They arranged some liquid acid in a bucket. Hence, when a group of uniformed men stepped into the shop the owners threw this bucket into the intruders' faces. Unfortunately for the shop owners, these men were not WA men but German policemen. The Germans were not amused by this violent act and arrested a group of young Jewish men. Different groups of opponents showed their discontent with the arrests by staging a large strike in Amsterdam and in several surrounding places: the *Februaristaking* (February Strike). Historians still debate about the exact role of the communists in the organization of the 1941 *Februaristaking*.⁵⁷²

In the first year of the occupation, WA members openly expressed their support for the German military. While the NSB propaganda was evidently pro-German and pro-Hitler, NSB members showed their support also on the streets. Individual German soldiers returned the WA support. German officials supported the WA members when they faced troubles, for instance on February 17th 1941, when someone stabbed a WA man with a knife in front of the Central Station in Amsterdam. A German officer quickly brought a bandage to the wounded WA man.⁵⁷³ In bars, WA members sat next to German soldiers.⁵⁷⁴ WA members called NSDAP members “comrades.”⁵⁷⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that the WA celebrated the birthday of Hitler in April 1941.⁵⁷⁶ By this act, the WA expressed its support for Hitler and Nazi Germany openly.

Whereas the German occupation administration tolerated most of the violent street activities of the WA, they sometimes restrained the WA's independent performances. The Germans preferred to set the agenda instead of following local radicalism. One can see this mechanism at work in the reactions to violent WA activities. In the coastal village Noordwijk aan Zee, WA members independently started the Aryanization of hotels. This act represented insubordination to orders of both the German occupation regime and the WA itself; the headquarters of the WA had explicitly ordered its members not to initiate

⁵⁷² Sijes, *De Februaristaking*; Annet Mooij, *De Strijd om de Februaristaking* (Amsterdam 2006); Harm Kaal, *Het hoofd van de stad. Amsterdam en zijn burgemeester tijdens het interbellum*, 239-240; Guus Meershoek, 'Onder nationaalsocialistisch bewind' in: P. de Rooy, G. Meershoek and D. Bosscher, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam. Tweestrijd om de hoofdstad 1900-2000* (Amsterdam 2007) 234-321, here 250-251.

⁵⁷³ NIOD, file 1083, WA, February 17th, 1941, Amsterdam.

⁵⁷⁴ WA members complained about the lack of support of the German *Wehrmacht* by the NU in February 1941; NIOD, WA, file 1085, February 8th, 1941.

⁵⁷⁵ NIOD, WA, file 1085, June 1941.

⁵⁷⁶ NIOD, WA, file 1094, April 1941.

independent acts against the Jews.⁵⁷⁷ And in the summer of 1941, the situation got out of hand in Zandvoort, another coastal village. This village had a high level of National Socialist inhabitants.⁵⁷⁸ Members of the WA and the NJS suspected the mayor of opposition and violently entered his residence; they smashed his windows and abused the mayor. The Germans disapproved of this headstrong action and arrested 21 WA men and NJS boys.⁵⁷⁹ Thus, the WA members were not allowed to act too independently when in conflict with German policy.

The first phase was a phase in which NSB members as well as their opponents battled on the streets. While the WA openly used violent methods and roamed through the streets, their opponents also showed their discontent publically and often, however, not as violently as the WA men.

Second phase, mid-'41 till early '43: heyday of National Socialism

Unrest in the Netherlands increased in the course of 1941.⁵⁸⁰ In 1941 and 1942 violent incidents frequently occurred, reported from both NSB and anti-NSB sides to the police.⁵⁸¹ There are many reports of NSB members mistreating people on the streets and smashing windows.⁵⁸² When a civilian in Haarlem openly showed his support for the royal family by placing an orange flower in front of his window, he received hostile reactions from NSB members. And when people in the same city dared to turn their backs to an NSB procession, they could be violently turned around again by NSB members.⁵⁸³

Members of the WA were the most prominent, violent NSB men. From August 8th 1941, all male NSB members between the ages of 18 and 40 were supposed to join the WA.

⁵⁷⁷ NIOD, WA, file 1085, May 1941, Noordwijk aan Zee.

⁵⁷⁸ Due to the fact that many villagers were not strongly attached to any of the Dutch socio-political and religious groups and therefore more likely to support a political outsider party like the NSB.

⁵⁷⁹ PG, July 31st, 1941, Zandvoort; Aby Grupstra, *Strand, zee en NSB* (unpublished MA-thesis University of Amsterdam, 2012).

⁵⁸⁰ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 221-223.

⁵⁸¹ Roest and Scheren, *Oorlog in de stad. Amsterdam 1939-1941* (Amsterdam 1998); Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 625, June-November 1941; 626, January- August 1942.

⁵⁸² Utrecht NSB members behaved provocatively in the first days of February; Utrecht Archief, 1007-3, file? 19821, February 1941.

⁵⁸³ Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 569, June 29/30th, 1941.; Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 626, March 29th, 1941. On other occasions, the NSB summoned bystanders to move along and not to watch the parade; Haarlem gemeentepolitie, 626, April 27th, 1941.

There were no official measures but locally some NSB leaders threatened NSB men who refused to join the WA with punishment.⁵⁸⁴ However, these efforts failed to lead to massive support among NSB members for the WA. They did not want to be personally active in the WA. Thus, members did not widely support the most violent organization of the NSB; they even evaded the compulsory membership.

In July 1941 4,000 NSB men were aligned with the WA.⁵⁸⁵ In 1941, in the small town of Leiden, 56 men were members of the WA, a number that grew to 118 in March 1942. And in March 1942, the WA in Amsterdam and its surrounding area consisted of 1670 members.⁵⁸⁶

The reasons for joining the WA may have depended on local leaders. Comments in WA reports also suggest that membership rates were dependent on the local leaders: a better leader was supposed to produce a higher level of WA members.⁵⁸⁷ This corresponds to previous research on the NSB as an organization on the local level.⁵⁸⁸

In the meantime, the WA increased its privileged position. WA men in villages near The Hague were deployed to protect NSB members spreading propaganda on the streets. When these active WA or NSB members encountered problems, the WA men attacked bystanders and opponents.⁵⁸⁹

The WA was especially active in larger cities. In the beginning of 1941, the WA men in Utrecht, for example, did not shy away from provocative and violent actions. At a Saturday WA march through the city, WA men hit bystanders with truncheons.⁵⁹⁰ Because the violent actions were often not mentioned in newspapers, people knew about the violent behavior of WA members mainly through rumors or by witnessing the actions. Thus, people in the larger cities were more likely to be confronted with the violence than inhabitants of small villages.⁵⁹¹ However, WA men were also – to a lesser extent – active in creating disturbances in villages and smaller cities. Occasionally, WA men went with special “bike-

⁵⁸⁴ ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’; NA, file 104155.

⁵⁸⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV, 585.

⁵⁸⁶ Leiden: NIOD, file 123, 1097 and 1099, March 1942; Amsterdam: NIOD, file 123, 1095, March 1942.

⁵⁸⁷ A decrease in membership in Haarlem was explained by the departure of a popular WA leader; NIOD, WA, file 1098, February 1942.

⁵⁸⁸ Kooy, *Echec*.

⁵⁸⁹ NIOD, file 1085, WA, Voorschoten/Wassenaar, June 1941.

⁵⁹⁰ Stadsarchief Utrecht, 1007-3, file 19821, February 1941.

⁵⁹¹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, IV, 841.

tours” to the countryside.⁵⁹² The aims of these tours were mainly to show everyone the presence of the WA in the public sphere.

The WA clashed with the political organization of the NSB, partly due to a more general competition over manpower and resources among different National Socialist organizations.⁵⁹³ The NSB leadership expressed its discontent with the openly violent actions of the WA. In a small Catholic place in ‘t Gooi, the NSB complained about the performances of the WA in May 1942 because, according to the NSB, it already was difficult to establish a decent image in this place. According to the NSB, the WA destroyed the image of the NSB here. Perhaps this was also the case in earlier years.⁵⁹⁴

Despite its criticism of the violent activities of WA men, NSB members acted provocatively towards any possibly anti-NSB behavior too. Apparently, local members acted independently of orders from their leaders; we have seen this undisciplined behavior in the previous chapter as well. On the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina in 1941, NSB members preemptively decorated the NU house with anti-Semitic propaganda.⁵⁹⁵ There were also many smaller incidents, “pinpricks,” of NSB members responding hostilely towards people who expressed anti-NSB feelings.⁵⁹⁶

In the course of 1941 and 1942 the situation for the anti-NSB groups changed. In July 1941, NU members were banned from selling their paper.⁵⁹⁷ And in December 1941, the German occupation administration forbade all political organizations except National Socialist ones; so the NSB became the only legal party organization. The latter ban was mainly a political decision, to utilize solely the NSB, and less a result of disorder in the streets.⁵⁹⁸ So, the NU was banned by the German administration. The resistance became more and more a

⁵⁹² PG, September 11th, 1941, WA-men of Arnhem to Utrecht; *De Zwarte Soldaat*, July 4th, 1941.

⁵⁹³ NSB, WA, file 1087, Utrecht, October 24th, 1941; Amsterdam, December 5th, 1941; NSB, WA, file 1089, Amsterdam, June 1st, 1942.

⁵⁹⁴ NH Archive, Laren, May 16th, 1942.

⁵⁹⁵ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, August 31st, 1941, 49.

⁵⁹⁶ On December 14th 1942 – on the day of the celebration of the eleven-year existence of the NSB- an NSB member reported that a woman had insulted him because of the NSB flag decorating his house. The NSB man demanded an apology, which he received after mediation of the police; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, December 14th, 1942, 66. In Utrecht, a 13-year-old boy whistled an anti-NSB song, whereupon a uniformed NSB member pushed him off his bicycle; Utrecht Archief, 1007-3, file 19821, February 1941. And a 23-year-old teacher was thrown into the canal when he whistled an anti-NSB song. Afterwards, the NSB complained to the police office about being insulted; Utrecht Archief, 1007-3, file 19821, February 1941.

⁵⁹⁷ Ten Have, *De Nederlandse Unie*; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, July 3rd, 1941, 47.

⁵⁹⁸ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in Oorlogstijd*.

collection of various underground groups, who had to decide to use violent or nonviolent means of resistance.

Thus, during this period of National Socialist dominance, opponents of National Socialism expressed their feelings less openly than in the period before. While they had smashed windows of ten to twenty NSB houses every week in early 1941, their expressions of discontent now remained indoors. When the NSB celebrated its eleven-year jubilee, the opponents stayed quiet.⁵⁹⁹ Only a few opponents openly opposed the NSB.

The street was one of the main theatres of discontent in the first year of the German occupation. After mid-1941, some people still used this theatre to express their opinions. Opponents of the NSB and Nazi Germany expressed their discontent by showing their support for the royal family. The celebration of the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina, on August 31st, 1941, brought outbursts of discontent throughout the country.⁶⁰⁰ The two following incidents are described in internal WA reports. An incident in Rijnsburg, a village near the city of Leiden, exemplifies the development of pro-monarchy manifestations leading to a violent response from WA members. This orthodox Protestant village celebrated the birthday of the Queen. The villagers decorated a tree in the village center with the royal color orange. In addition, almost all the residents decorated their houses with orange flowers and in many cases with pictures of the Queen as well. These actions provoked conflicts with the local National Socialists. Members of the WA informed the German political police, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD). The WA members reacted independently as well. Members from neighboring towns gathered in Rijnsburg. In the evening, the WA members tore down all the orange decorations. They performed these actions during the night when villagers of Rijnsburg were not allowed to be on the streets. Afterwards, the SD arrested approximately 30 villagers, who had demonstrated support for the Queen, to set an example. WA men assisted the SD men in the proceedings. In this case the expressions of discontent towards the National Socialists were not directly aimed at NSB members or Germans, and the opponents of the occupation did not use any violence. They peacefully expressed their feelings of support for the royal family. However, the WA and the SD reacted harshly.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁹ Damsma and Schumacher, 'De strijd om de straat'.

⁶⁰⁰ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 275.

⁶⁰¹ NA, CABR, file 70873; NIOD, WA, file 1086, September 1st, 1941; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk V*, 163.

During another incident the WA men reacted boldly when two WA men attacked a man who had made an unwelcome remark. One WA man slapped him in the face and added: “we have nothing to do with the police, we are the bosses. When I come back later and you still have those mugs, I will slap all your teeth out of your mouth.”⁶⁰² Another NSB-member reacted independently and violently to an insult by passing bystanders. He hit the man who had insulted him in the face and complained afterwards that the police were of no use at all. He declared that it was useless to report insults to the police because they were ignorant and would not believe NSB members.⁶⁰³ Again, the action of the opponent was rather innocent, an unwelcome remark, but the reaction of the WA men pretty harsh.

Bars were another theatre of discontent. In the town of Hilversum, a confrontation unfolded in a local pub. Groups of four or five WA members patrolled through the city, in order to prevent people from showing their allegiance to the Dutch royal family. The WA members visited houses with orange floral decorations and urged them –successfully- to remove these flowers. Afterwards, in the evening, the WA members visited a local pub. The WA members installed themselves at the bar. One WA member, Haverkate, loudly ordered many beers and added that the beers should come fast because the WA had no time to wait. The bar owner asked them to quiet down, provoking a brusque reaction from Haverkate. People in the bar responded to this aggressive exclamation. Haverkate was not amused by the attention and warned everyone that “he did not want to be stared at.” He urged the bar owner to leave and added to the staring public: “As long as you are not National Socialists, you are all apes.” The bar owner and his helper asked the WA members to depart. Meanwhile, other patrons of the bar started throwing stuff at the WA men. One WA member, Van der Zee, threw a glass at some other patrons. It was the beginning of a fight where glasses flew through the bar. In the end, the police had to bring the quarrel to an end. The WA men marched out of the bar. The WA organization disapproved of the impudent and rough manners of the WA men. Therefore, the WA suspended Haverkate and Van der Zee for three weeks.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰² “Met de politie hebben wij niets te maken, wij zijn de baas, als ik straks terugkom en jullie hebben nog van die tronies dan zal ik je al je tanden uit je mond slaan”; Haarlem gemeentepolitie, dagrapport, November 3rd, 1940.

⁶⁰³ NIOD, afweerdienst 1279, October 1940.

⁶⁰⁴ NIOD, WA, file 1086, Hilversum, September 12th, 1941.

In 1942 the activities of the WA in the public sphere slowed down. WA members went to other (German) National Socialist institutions and to the front. During that period the NSB experienced success on the national and local levels in the Netherlands. December 1941, when Mussert was appointed head of the Dutch National Socialist State, marked the beginning of the heyday of National Socialism and its influence on the local level.⁶⁰⁵ However, WA men did not disappear from the streets. WA members still patrolled and marched through the cities and initiated activities.⁶⁰⁶ The Archbishop of Haarlem refused to bury an NSB woman in a Catholic cemetery. In reaction, WA members cut a hole in the cemetery fence and organized the funeral themselves in cooperation with other Dutch and German National Socialist organizations. Afterwards, the WA marched triumphantly through a nearby village.⁶⁰⁷ Shortly afterward, opponents desecrated the grave with orange carrots, the color of the royal family.

The heyday of National Socialism was also the starting point of increasing collaboration of individual NSB members with the Nazi exclusivist policies. In addition to fomenting local riots, individual NSB members participated in a form of violence with more serious consequences: the extermination of internal and external “enemies.” Individual members were increasingly recruited for violent tasks by German organizations from 1941 onwards. The Germans were unable to secure order and deport all the Dutch Jews by themselves; they lacked the personnel and knowledge of Dutch language and society. In this task the Dutch National Socialists brought their exclusivist ideology into practice.

NSB members were recruited for the Dutch police forces. In the first year of the occupation, the National Socialists formed a minority within the Dutch police. With German pressure, from 1941 onwards more and more National Socialists were appointed to the Dutch police force. The police force became increasingly nazified, and the National Socialists filled positions at the highest levels of command.⁶⁰⁸

NSB members were also recruited for organizations that organized the extermination of the Jews. The German authorities in The Hague formulated a series of increasingly

⁶⁰⁵ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 322, 350-351.

⁶⁰⁶ NIOD, WA, file 1095, Amsterdam 1942.

⁶⁰⁷ NIOD, WA, file 1093, December 1942, Haarlem, Bloemendaal and Tuindorp.

⁶⁰⁸ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 430. In July 1942, an NSB police chief was appointed in Leiden. He reorganized the police in a hierarchic manner; Archief Leiden, Inventaris van het politie-archief, xxiii.

restrictive anti-Jewish regulations. The NSB leadership supported these measures openly.⁶⁰⁹ In addition to offering ideological support in its party propaganda, the NSB cooperated in implementing the measures. NSB members were overrepresented in the confiscation of Jewish businesses. In August 1941, when the occupier mandated that all Dutch Jews bring their money to the pseudo- “bank” Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co (Liro), this bank was soon filled with NSB employees. Later on, NSB members who had fought on the Eastern Front easily obtained a job at the Liro.⁶¹⁰ In the spring of 1942 the German authorities summoned all Jews to report all their valuables. The Germans established a special organization: the *Hausraterfassungsstelle*. Once more, NSB members were overrepresented in this organization.

The mass deportation of Jews started in 1942. The German occupation regime had delegated this operation to Dutch institutions. One of the main institutions was the *Gewestelijke Arbeidsbureau* (Regional Employment Department, GAB) in Amsterdam. Pressured by the Germans, the GAB recruited many NSB members to its staff. In the first months of 1942, one out of eight employees was an NSB member, and this ratio doubled within two years. Their job of labor mediation was heavily politicized.⁶¹¹ One of their duties was to refer Jews to doctors for examinations, and NSB doctors were recruited for this task. They soon became known for approving the transport of all Jews to the “work” camps in the East.

The NSB in Amsterdam –the city in Holland with the largest Jewish community – favorably commented on the deportations in its local newspaper:

“The Jewish question is gradually but radically resolved by the German government, by removing the Jews from our homeland. [...] The movement [NSB] agrees with this solution in principle.”⁶¹²

In Amsterdam, the first police institution to round up the Jews was the police battalion of officer Tulp, a specialized pro-National Socialist division. An NSB flag hung from its

⁶⁰⁹ Jacques Presser, *Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom. 1940-1945I* (Den Haag 1965) 148-150, 213, 220, 236-239; *De Daad*, June 12th, 1942; *Het Werkende Volk*, May 13th, 1942.

⁶¹⁰ Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 89-100.

⁶¹¹ A.J.H. Bauer, *De openbare arbeidsbemiddeling gedurende den bezettingstijd (1940-1945)* (Amsterdam 1948) 58, 104-105; Presser, *OndergangI*, 198-199.

⁶¹² *De Daad*, September 1942.

building.⁶¹³ About five percent of the regular police force consisted of NSB members. Together with the police, the Tulp battalion rounded up Jewish people from their homes. The members of this battalion were the most active in the forced evacuation, rounding up Jewish people five nights a week.⁶¹⁴ Thus, individual NSB members actively contributed to the persecution of the Jews.

Third phase from 1943 onwards: war

On January 13th 1943, Nazi Germany declared “total war.” As Romijn argues: Nazification became subordinate to the German warfare.⁶¹⁵ The tasks of the WA narrowed as the active members were summoned to the *Waffen-SS*. In February 1943, at the funeral of the murdered pro-NSB general Seyffardt, the WA was disappointed. The National Socialist “auxiliary police”—not the WA—were given the job of protecting high NSB officials.⁶¹⁶ In WA reports officials complained about the activities of WA men for the German *Wehrmacht*. Instead of marching along with the NSB, the men worked for the *Wehrmacht*, which decreased their time spent at WA meetings, loosened the ties with the WA and strengthened those with the *Wehrmacht*.⁶¹⁷

At that time, the WA was not as large as the NSB leadership would have wished. In 1943, 8,000 men were part of the WA nationally, two thousand short of Mussert’s goal of 10,000.⁶¹⁸ At the time, 767 WA men resided in Amsterdam and 1750 in Utrecht.⁶¹⁹ These numbers suggest that a minority of the NSB men at that moment belonged to the WA. This low number is also due to the fact that many NSB members could claim exemption from the WA. All NSB officials, for example, were exempted from WA duty. Because of the high

⁶¹³ Meershoek, *Dienaren van bet gezag*, 151-155.

⁶¹⁴ Marnix Croes and Peter Tammes, ‘Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan’. *Een onderzoek naar de overlevingskansen van joden in de Nederlandse gemeenten. 1940-1945* (Amsterdam 2004) 340-341; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB’er*.

⁶¹⁵ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 397, 465.

⁶¹⁶ Many of whom also belonged to the WA, but under the supervision of Rauter; NIOD, WA, file 1091, March 13th, 1943.

⁶¹⁷ NIOD, WA, file 1096, Amsterdam, January 12th, 1943; Utrecht, January 29th, 1943.

⁶¹⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk IV*, 585.

⁶¹⁹ Vos, *Ledenverloop*, 35, 64. In Leiden, approximately 162 (out of 1222) NSB members were WA members in July 1944. At the same time, in Amsterdam the WA decreased to 522 (out of 12790 NSB members); NIOD, file 123, 1957; file 123, 1941, file 123, 1948.

number of NSB officials, this exemption caused a decrease of the WA potential. Besides, as mentioned before, the WA had expelled many members who were not active enough. Finally, some of the WA men enlisted in the German army.

The German army preyed on the Dutch National Socialists to enlarge its troops. The German authorities wished to recruit NSB members for military service on the Eastern Front. Once more, Mussert hoped to increase his party's influence by helping the Germans achieve their goal. A separate army department was founded: the *Vrijwilligerslegioen Nederland* (Dutch Volunteer Legion). But when the Dutch volunteers arrived in Germany, they were absorbed into the *Waffen-SS* structure and the concept of a separate Dutch division was abandoned by the SS leadership. In total, approximately 25,000 volunteers were dispatched to the Eastern Front, of whom 10,000 were NSB-members; thus one out of ten NSB members fought in the *Waffen SS*.⁶²⁰

Fighting on the front was a tough war experience for the volunteers, thousands of whom died.⁶²¹ The front culture affected the internal NSB propaganda and organization. Footage by NSB- and SS war correspondents was published in the national NSB newspaper *Vova* to inspire NSB members to pledge more personal involvement in the overall war effort. Reading about NSB members fighting for the National Socialist New Order on the front against Bolshevism, NSB members at home would (the organization hoped) consider at least selling some papers in the street. Violence, military violence in this case, a central element of the NSB organization, thus became both a real experience and a propaganda tool.

The German authorities recruited not only for the war against external enemies, but also for the fight against internal enemies. In February 1943, the Germans decided to deploy another group of willing collaborators. Rauter had established the *Vrijwillige Hulppolitie* (Volunteer Auxiliary Police), hoping in this way to bring the WA men under his supervision instead of that of the NSB.⁶²² Only applications from NSB members were taken seriously. For this reason, the institution was filled with NSB members. In Amsterdam, at least 126 WA members worked in this police corps. Starting in February 1943, they rounded up 1,000

⁶²⁰ Perry Pierik, *Van Leningrad tot Berlijn. Nederlandse vrijwilligers in dienst van de Duitse Waffen-SS 1941-1945. Geschiedenis van het legioen, de brigade en de divisie 'Nederland'* (Soesterberg 2002) 71, 74; Van der Zee, *Voor Führer, volk en vaderland*, 168.

⁶²¹ N.K.C.A. in 't Veld ed., *De SS en Nederland. Documenten uit SS-archieven 1935-1945* (Den Haag 1976) 313, 322-326. Thousands of volunteers died at the Eastern front; estimates range from 4000 to 10,000; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, n 114.

⁶²² Meershoek, *Dienaren van het gezag*, 287; Croes and Tammes, *Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan*, 263, 265, 269, 273.

Jews every week, plundering the Jews' possessions in the process. The policemen often mistreated the Jews they arrested. In order to control this behavior, Germans supervised the Dutch collaborators from April onwards, until the dissolution of the police force in June 1943, when the mass deportations were over.⁶²³

In many capacities NSB members acted as accomplices to the Germans: in the deportations and robbery; in the administration; in the pseudo-bank Liro; and in the raids. And in all these organizations, they looted valuable articles for their own use.⁶²⁴ Not that the German authorities approved of this behavior, on the contrary. In the sample of NSB members, I came across several examples of NSB members who were punished for their behavior and were imprisoned or sent to camps. One female NSB member was imprisoned because she insulted a German officer. One of these punished members stole, while in other cases the infraction is not evident.⁶²⁵

The Dutch and German National Socialists encountered growing opposition. From 1943 onwards, violent resistance groups became increasingly active. From that moment on, the National Socialists had to fear violent actions aimed at themselves. Violent resistance groups killed at least 33 NSB members (that we know of).⁶²⁶ For instance, on January 29, 1943, the NSB mayor of Haarlem was attacked. Opponents had tried to kill him with a hand grenade; however, the attempt was unsuccessful.⁶²⁷ Sometimes, the actions of NSB members provoked violent responses. On the same day as the attack on the Haarlem NSB mayor, a WA march through the center of Amsterdam led, in addition to the usual turning of bystanders, to a shot taken at the WA men. A WA man and a German *Waffen-SS* man aggressively arrested the attacker and brought him to the police office.⁶²⁸

The attacks on NSB members and their properties continued and intensified in 1944.⁶²⁹ Whereas violent attacks on NSB members were rare in the first years of the occupation, monthly one or two NSB members were attacked in the Netherlands in 1943. In

⁶²³ Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*.

⁶²⁴ Gerard Aalders, *Roof. De Ontvreemding van joods bezit tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Den Haag 1999) 136-137; Presser, *Ondergang*, II 210; *De Daad*, January 16th, 1942. On the exploitative nature of the Nazi empire; De Haan, 'Imperialism, Colonialism and Genocide', 315.

⁶²⁵ CABR files 86395, 64311, 4825, 20109, 18330; Clasina Jacoba Schnabel.

⁶²⁶ Jack Kooistra and Albert Oosthoek, *Recht op wraak. Liquidaties in Nederland 1940-1945* (Leeuwarden 2009) 136-168.

⁶²⁷ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, January 29th, 1943, 73.

⁶²⁸ NIOD, WA, file 1088, January 29th, 1943.

⁶²⁹ In January 1944, many possessions of NSB members were destroyed; NA, January 1944.

1944 the frequency grew to one or two attacks per week.⁶³⁰ Thus, violence became a regularly used method of resistance to the Nazi occupation and National Socialist violence, and a sort of internal war developed. In this third phase, both the resistance and the NSB radicalized, using violence against each other.

Landwacht

From 1943 onwards, the NSB members had reason to fear attacks on their persons as well as to worry about the situation on the military front. In 1944, D-Day – the Allied invasion in Normandy – discouraged many members. The attack on Adolf Hitler in July 1944 hurt NSB morale as well.⁶³¹ Under the circumstances, the NSB leadership had to think about how to react to these violent resistance actions.

NSB's leader Anton Mussert increasingly aimed at having his own strong arm: an NSB police force. This long-standing desire was reinforced by the attacks of resistance fighters on prominent NSB members in 1943. On March 15, 1943, Mussert finally established the *Landwacht*.⁶³² One of the reasons was the exodus of the WA to the Eastern Front. However, this first *Landwacht* division had a short existence. When every man with the capacity to fight was called up to the war, these *Landwacht* members were eventually sent to the German front. Therefore, the name of the former *Landwacht* was changed into *Landstorm*: thus the ones who fought at the front were no longer *Landwacht* members, but *Landstorm* members. In the Netherlands, a new *Landwacht* was established in November 1943. This organization had to serve its original aims of an internal police force, and new members were recruited.⁶³³

In the same year, the NSB had spread a pamphlet with the message that this new *Landwacht* was established for “defense against internal and external enemies.”⁶³⁴ According to a police officer, the *Landwacht* had to “protect the NSB and law-abiding people in the

⁶³⁰ Meershoek, ‘Onder nationaalsocialistisch bewind’; Jack Kooistra and Albert Overhoek, *Recht op wraak. Liquidaties in Nederland 1940-1945* (Leeuwarden 2009). On June 8th 1944, an NSB confectioner was attacked and died later from his injuries; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, June 8th-16th, 1944, 99; HSSPF, August 1944.

⁶³¹ HSSPF, August 1944.

⁶³² National Archives NA, April 4th, 1944.

⁶³³ National Archives NA, April 4th, 1944.

⁶³⁴ Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4521, 1943.

Netherlands, to combat political assassins and saboteurs.” The members of the *Landwacht* were allowed to ask people to identify themselves, arrest people, search homes and carry and use weapons.⁶³⁵ Armed with these privileges, members of the *Landwacht* arrested people and confiscated goods.⁶³⁶ In order to fulfill their duties, the *Landwacht* borrowed materiel from the German *Wehrmacht* soldiers.⁶³⁷

Mussert entitled all male NSB members to sign up for the *Landwacht*.⁶³⁸ The men who worked at the Voluntary Police Corps (not more than 1000 National Socialist police men) were integrated into the *Landwacht*.⁶³⁹ In total 1200 served officially in the *Landwacht* and 9000 volunteered.⁶⁴⁰

The *Landwacht* members were quite unpopular among the general public. Often people preferred German soldiers to *Landwacht* members.⁶⁴¹ People who were confronted with *Landwacht* members expressed their feelings of discontent within limits. A letter from a bar owner in Haarlem described in detail a visit of the *Landwacht*. In June 1944, the bar owner received a visit from eight *Landwacht* members, who confiscated liquor, tobacco and food. The *Landwacht* members came in the middle of the night and woke up his little baby.⁶⁴² In the summer of 1944 some people still dared to defy orders from the *Landwacht*. A man in Haarlem refused to identify himself as commanded by a *Landwacht* member. However, in the presence of a superior officer of the *Landwacht* the man finally ceased his opposition.⁶⁴³ These examples demonstrate the brutality and greed of *Landwacht* members and the limited acts of opposition to the *Landwacht* in Haarlem. It is likely that *Landwacht* members acted similarly in other places as well.

⁶³⁵ “Landwacht is ter beveiliging van de NSB en ordelievende bevolking in Nld, ter bestrijding van politieke moordenaars en saboteurs, voedselvoorziening, mag mensen vragen om te identificeren, arresteren, doorzoeken woningen, wapengebruik”; letter police commander in Rotterdam, April 5th, 1944; Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522. Members of the *Landwacht* used gunfire; Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, July-August 1944.

⁶³⁶ Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, July-August 1944.

⁶³⁷ Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, April 19th, 1944.

⁶³⁸ March 17th, 1943, Gemeentepolitie Heemstede, 77.

⁶³⁹ However, policemen were discouraged from joining the *Landwacht*; Heemstede gemeentepolitie 1943, April 15th, 78.

⁶⁴⁰ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk Xa*, 56.

⁶⁴¹ National Archives NA, July 27th, 1944; Van der Boom, *We leven nog*. According to De Jong the masses were irritated by the *Landstorm*, which had a military task (and were often mistaken as German soldiers). However, the *Landwacht*, which had a police task, was perceived rather differently; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk VII*, file 1248-1259.

⁶⁴² Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, June 22th, 1944.

⁶⁴³ Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, July-August 1944, June 23rd, 1944.

The *Landwacht* members faced violent opposition as well. Approximately 70 *Landwacht* members were killed.⁶⁴⁴

In September 1944 Nazi Germany experienced an alleged defeat. After that, the warrants of the *Landwacht* members increased because all NSB men were ordered to align themselves with the *Landwacht*. The “self-protecting” force fought against “political criminals and saboteurs” with greater resources, although they still were not allowed to act independently and had to hand over their prisoners to the police within 24 hours. And they were allowed to enter houses only with police permission. They could shoot at a suspect but only when he was trying to escape or when he pointed his gun at the *Landwacht* member.⁶⁴⁵ This final phase between the Germans’ imagined defeat and their real defeat in May 1945 will be discussed in chapter 5.

Phases of violence

Male NSB members participated in different forms and levels of violence. Initially, the WA was the main, active violent organization. Immediately after the German Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, they put on their uniforms, came together and marched through the streets.

What becomes clear from the WA provocations is twofold: first, the interconnection of the WA with the German occupation regime. After initial German restraint, the WA assisted German institutions with their struggle against Dutch resistance from early 1941 onwards. Second, the WA acted brutally in the public sphere. They did not refrain from using violence and thereby provoked Dutch civilians. Third, this study also reveals something about the actions and decisions of the police in different places: the frictions, indecisions and sometimes even randomness of decisions of the police to act during confrontations with the NSB.

In the first year of the occupation the WA men were, especially in cities, visible on the streets. During their marches the WA men often harassed Jews, bystanders and political opponents. In the counterattacks of NSB opponents, the main battleground was the street, where NSB papers and NU papers were sold. Both sides provoked each other. With Jews and bystanders a different pattern occurred. Often a minor insulting look or comment could

⁶⁴⁴ Kooistra and Oosthoek, *Recht op wraak*, 75.

⁶⁴⁵ Archief Leiden, Slats, Sept 18th , 1944, HSSPF.

lead to an aggressive reaction. The attacks on Jews did not need any triggering; the majority of these actions were initiated by WA members on their own impulse. The first arrests of Jews led to an upheaval of discontent by communists and other opponents of National Socialism: the February Strike. From that moment onwards, the Germans reacted harshly against any sign of opposition. The first phase of street battles ended.

The decrease of street battles was also due to internal factors within the WA. Towards the end of 1941, the WA lost some of its influence and visibility.⁶⁴⁶ Due to several factors the level of WA activities decreased. When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, the WA men were recruited to fight on the Eastern Front. The German occupation regime needed reliable manpower in the Netherlands as well. WA members were an attractive “nursery” for the police. In addition to the latter, the WA had to compete with other NSB organizations for personnel and resources. Due to these changes, the violence shifted to other organizations, including the police. National Socialists were increasingly active in the police force. A high percentage of the police who participated in the raids on Jews were National Socialists; almost all participants of the special police squad dedicated to find hiding Jews were NSB members.⁶⁴⁷

While the NSB organization supported the deportations in their anti-Semitic propaganda, individual NSB members participated in a wide range of activities, including the robbery and deportation of the Dutch Jews. Individual NSB members became active in a whole range of institutions founded by the German occupation regime. The most numerous and active collaborators were members of the NSB.⁶⁴⁸

Violence became even more prominent from 1943 onwards. Violence against and by National Socialists intensified. Because other methods of resistance and political activities were forbidden, violence became an increasingly attractive method of showing one’s dislike of the political situation. People are more likely to support violence if other instruments of change are ineffective. And this was in fact the situation faced by many of the opponents of National Socialism. Because desperate circumstances call for desperate measures, violence

⁶⁴⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*. V, 234.

⁶⁴⁷ Ad van Liempt, *Kopgeld. Nederlandse premiejagers op zoek naar joden. 1943* (Amsterdam 2002), 43-44, 57, 171, 313-316, 346.

⁶⁴⁸ Meershoek, *Dienaren van het gezag*, 108, 159; Griffioen and Zeller, *Vergelijking van Jodenvervolging in Frankrijk, België en Nederland*. In the historiography the role of NSB members is underestimated: Bob Moore, *Slachtoffers en overlevenden. De nazj-vervolging van de joden in Nederland* (1998) 235-236.

became an increasingly attractive method during the German occupation.⁶⁴⁹ Hence, the minor acts of rebellion and resistance developed into more radical methods aimed at higher-ranking members of the NSB and of the occupation regime. The German authorities from their side responded violently to these attacks.

Dutch National Socialist violence was further increased with the establishment of the internal NSB police force, the *Landwacht*. The remaining WA men, as well as other male NSB members were recruited for this organization. The *Landwacht* became the most visible Dutch National Socialist organization during the occupation. It was the most hated one as well.⁶⁵⁰ NSB members believed that their time had finally come. However, they were confronted with negative reactions from the Dutch population and were even not always appreciated by the German authorities.

⁶⁴⁹ Russell Spears, 'Group rationale, collective sense. Beyond intergroup bias', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 49 (2010) 1-20, here 10.

⁶⁵⁰ Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists*; Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies*; Thomas Kühne, *Kameradschaft*.

Chapter 4 – Patterns of interaction

Introduction

As a group, the NSB may have met opposition within the community; however, it is unclear whether and how this general rejection determined interaction patterns in individual cases and which elements caused rejections. In this chapter, I discuss the interaction between National Socialists and their surroundings.

The NSB members interacted with their surroundings under very specific circumstances: the German occupation that completely shifted the prewar power balance. The NSB members had an alliance with the Nazis who also rejected the prewar regime, and through their alliance, they had the opportunity to build a completely new National Socialist community. At the same time, nonmembers saw their power base decreasing. While NSB members felt themselves powerful, others in the community were rather powerless. Besides, the nonmembers perceived the NSB members as the ultimate traitors: choosing the side of the German Nazis and an ideology that aimed to destroy the old society.⁶⁵¹

Within the surroundings of NSB members I will study different levels: religious and educational institutions, the workplace, the neighborhood and connections with family members. Which connections endured during the Second World War? The results of this analysis may bring a better understanding of NSB members as well as of nonmembers who interacted with these NSB members. Their opinions of NSB members may shed new light on their attitudes in this tense period.

At different places NSB members interacted with nonmembers. What can be stated about the behavior of National Socialists within non-National Socialist institutions? To answer this question I will focus on two groups of institutions in which NSB members and their family members had contacts with nonmembers: churches and schools. Within these two institutions National Socialists found themselves in a non-National Socialist environment, in most cases even in an anti-National Socialist environment.

After analyzing institutional patterns of interaction, I will shift to the neighborhood level. Within the neighborhood NSB members interacted with both NSB members and

⁶⁵¹ Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*, 124.

nonmembers. As Pamela Swett points out in her PhD research on neighborhood radicalism in Berlin in the 1930s, the cramped housing blocs in a big city created a different neighborhood environment than nowadays. Therefore, residents would know more about the neighborhood, the social life, personal problems, political activities, and each other's daily schedules and income during that time.⁶⁵²

Interaction within and between groups might also say something about the level of trust within society. Robert Putnam elaborated on trust in societies by distinguishing bonding within one's group and bridging with outsiders. The more groups were able to bridge with outsiders, the higher the level of trust in society. As argued in chapter 2, National Socialists were quite successful in bonding with each other. It is, however, unclear if they were bridging. If NSB members were indeed bridging, this will reveal something about the existence of trust in Dutch occupied society.⁶⁵³

One of the social environments is the neighborhood. I have constructed a local case study of three streets in Amsterdam, in different neighborhoods: Kromme Mijdrechtstraat in Amsterdam-South, a district with a high level of Jewish inhabitants; Zacherias Jansestraat in Amsterdam-East with many middle-class/white-collar residents; Hudsonstraat in Amsterdam-West with mainly lower-middle-class residents and workers. Until recently, history from below was rather difficult to carry out in the field of Dutch fascism studies.⁶⁵⁴ Recently, a new source became more easily available: the postwar files of former NSB members. I have analyzed the postwar dossiers of the street inhabitants who were aligned with the NSB in 1942 because a detailed list of NSB members in Amsterdam from that particular year is available. In that year, NSB membership reached its peak, with nearly 100,000 members. Although the files were constructed after the war and during a judicial process, they contain statements of members and those who interacted with them nearest to the period of the occupation. Moreover, the files often include notes, letters and documents from the period of the occupation. For these reasons, this source is perhaps not ideal but by

⁶⁵² Swett, *Neighbors & Enemies*, 227.

⁶⁵³ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling alone. The collapse and revival of the American community* (2000); Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work. Civic traditions in modern Italy* (1993).

⁶⁵⁴ Houwink ten Cate en In 't Veld, *Fout: getuigenissen van NSB'ers*; De Jonge 'Het fascisme en nationaal-socialisme', 166-191.

all means the best source available.⁶⁵⁵ An analysis of these statements demonstrates that the statements came from many different neighbors. In addition, the information offered by these testimonials is combined with other information from the NSB archives and diaries of members and nonmembers. Therefore, these postwar records may offer new insights into the Dutch local community during the German occupation.

The results of these three case studies will be compared with a broader sample of over 250 National Socialists in the regions of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Haarlem, Leiden and Hilversum: nearly 1 percent of the members in this region. In addition, to compare the results with a small village I examine a sample drawn from the coastal village Noordwijk aan Zee. Thus, the data from the capital city with a large Jewish community can be compared with interactions on a local level in other cities and villages in a rural environment.

For the analysis of interactions on an institutional level the information available to us is scattered. Therefore, it is not possible to present a quantitative analysis of the confrontations. But the few available documents do present new insights into the actions and relations of NSB members.

Different factors that could have influenced the level of interaction are taken into account. There may have been a relationship between political activities and relationships with nonmembers. Higher political participation may have led to increasing identification with the NSB, which may have led to a lower level of interaction with the non-NSB environment. It is also possible that there was a relationship between political participation in general and a social personality. According to Lester Milbrath, political participation is positively related to social skills. In 1965 he stated that: “sociable personalities are more likely to enter politics than non-sociable personalities; this is especially true of political activities that require social interaction.”⁶⁵⁶ Therefore, the more active National Socialists could have been more sociable and perhaps had the talent of having contacts both in and outside the party. Another correlation may have existed between violent activities and interactions. The most violent NSB members may have been aligned with the paramilitary WA and/or the internal police organization, the *Landwacht*. Because of their violent activities, the relationships of WA men and members of the *Landwacht* with nonmembers may have been more damaged than those of other NSB members. A final element is the specific features of

⁶⁵⁵ In 2025 the files will be fully disclosed; Donker and Faber, *Bijzonder gewoon*, 83-104.

⁶⁵⁶ Milbrath, *Political Participation*, 75.

the group of NSB members. It may be the case that members were already more isolated before entering the NSB and that it was not their membership as such which determined their socially isolated position in society.

Institutional in- and exclusion

Once the German Nazi occupation regime had been established, Dutch National Socialists impatiently urged the Germans to improve the NSB position in local political, religious and educational organizations. While in September 1940 the rumors about an NSB government were numerous, the Germans still did not consider that option seriously.⁶⁵⁷ Reacting to the deferred expectations, the national NSB leaders hoped to continuously enhance their position vis-à-vis the German regime in the first months of the occupation. In the meanwhile, local NSB members tried to improve their unsure, but hopeful political future at that time. During this process of “takeover” the NSB faced hostility. The NSB members were confronted with opposition on all fronts. Churches, schools and local government institutions received many complaints from NSB members.

One month after the German invasion, the local leader of the NSB in Zandvoort criticized the anti-NSB atmosphere in his village. In a letter to the mayor he elaborated on the suffering of NSB members due to the anti-NSB atmosphere during their internment in May 1940 and afterwards. He summoned the mayor to publish a statement in every local newspaper announcing that “NOTHING, really NOTHING, has been proven nor any information been found that arrested National Socialists or sympathizing National Socialists between May 10-14 indeed had anything to do with treason, espionage, arms smuggling, etc.” He demanded that National Socialists be rehabilitated completely. The mayor replied that due to national announcements by the Land and Naval Commander, he saw no need to repeat the message on a local level. The attempt of the NSB leader was thus unsuccessful.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ Rost's position was better than that of Mussert in the first weeks of the occupation; Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie*, 218-228; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk IV*, 432.

⁶⁵⁸ “Dat NIETS maar dan ook NIETS is komen vast te staan en op welke wyze ook is gebleken, dat Nationaal Socialisten of daarmee sympathiseerende gearresteerden van 10-14 mei ook maar iets met landverraad, spionage, wapensmokkelarij e.d. te maken hebben gehad”; Letter of circle leader of the NSB to the mayor of Zandvoort, June 17th, 1940; Reply of the mayor, June 19th, 1940; NHA, access number 2232, file 2199, gemeentebestuur Zandvoort..

In the same village, an undertaker complained that he was excluded from new business because of his NSB membership. The police took the complaint seriously and started an investigation. However, in their research, a rather different picture arose. The reason for his exclusion was not his NSB membership -another undertaker was a NSB member too- but that he was not a church caretaker anymore.⁶⁵⁹ This is one of probably many examples of the continuous efforts of NSB members to benefit from their “disadvantaged” position. While their membership did not always cause the problems, they used their NSB affiliation to complain and in the end profit from their “misfortune.” These expressions of discontent to the local government of Zandvoort are a good example of a probably more general pattern of dissatisfaction with their position.

The school is one of the meeting points for NSB members and nonmembers. The NSB built many economic and social organizations during the German occupation. However, the NSB failed to organize its own school system since there were only a couple of German-oriented National Socialist schools in the Netherlands.⁶⁶⁰ Most NSB children thus attended non-NSB schools. Their parents’ membership had an impact on the children who were often perceived as “NSB children,” and at school nonmembers surrounded them. NSB members complained about the anti-NSB atmosphere at the schools of their children. The anti-NSB ambiance at schools permeated the national level as well: it was discussed in the meetings of the attorney general. In these meetings in November 1940, after receiving many reports about misbehavior at schools, the “alarming” atmosphere at schools was perceived as an undesirable situation.⁶⁶¹

In the fall of 1940, after the school holidays, NSB members made several complaints. They stated that schoolmates were bullying their children, and they complained that teachers spread anti-NSB feelings at school.⁶⁶² NSB members sent their complaints to the *Afweerdienst*, the judicial department of the NSB. In October 1940, an NSB member sent several letters about the anti-NSB atmosphere at a trade school in Utrecht. He wrote that his son was accused in the school corridors of being a “traitor.” According to the son’s testimony, he was punched in the back twice. As a result, the son slapped one of his attackers in the face,

⁶⁵⁹ NHA, access number 2232, file 2199, Zandvoort, April 1941.

⁶⁶⁰ Paul van der Steen, *Keurkinderen. Hitlers elitescholen in Nederland* (Amsterdam 2009).

⁶⁶¹ PG, November 14th and 21st, 1940.

⁶⁶² NIOD, file 123, ATL, 2048, 2049, April 23rd, 1941, June 18th, 1941 in Utrecht.

which led to the son's suspension, and he was only allowed to come back to school the next morning, after writing 200 lines for punishment. The father of the boy complained about his son's punishment and about the school permitting two other children of NSB members to leave the school ten minutes earlier in order to prevent confrontations. This measure was completely wrong, according to the NSB member, because it made the NSB children look like "black sheep."⁶⁶³ The bullying children and their negligent parents should be punished instead. The letter is full of frustration; the complaining father perhaps had hoped that the NSB and their children would have had a more prominent position at school.

Some problems arose at schools in the village of Aalsmeer, eight miles southwest of Amsterdam. In October 1940, an NSB member elaborated on the verbal abuse (like "traitor") that his son had to endure. According to this NSB member, the French teacher failed the boy for political reasons.⁶⁶⁴ The school responded decisively. The school principal talked with the boy. The latter wanted to give the names of only two boys because the others were his friends. The boy denied the guilt of the French teacher. Afterwards, the school principal gave a long speech to the boys' class, warning them about the consequences should they continue bullying. Additionally, the principal summoned all classes to refrain from speaking about politics at school and in the schoolyard. In a letter to all the teachers in the school, he warned them to be cautious about political expressions. This incident reveals that this school principal had taken serious measures to prevent political expressions and abuses and that the slightest provocation led NSB members to express their objections.

In the same city, a group leader of the NSB expressed his complaints to an even broader circle than only one school principal. In May 1941, he sent a letter to all elementary schools in the city in which he elaborated on the bullying of NSB children that was permitted or even encouraged by the teachers and the school principal. He announced that the NSB would no longer tolerate this behavior. "If I hear of any more complaints, I will not hesitate to take my measures."⁶⁶⁵ Reacting to these threats, the local government assembled all school principals to ask them about their experiences. The principals stated that they were

⁶⁶³ NIOD, Afweerdienst NSB, Utrecht, October 23rd, 1940. And another complaint about a school in Haarlem as well; October 1st, October 14th and 19th, 1940. The school principal acted immediately against the pro-Unie behavior of this teacher at school.

⁶⁶⁴ NHA, 1949, file 624, gemeente Aalsmeer, October 10th, 1940.

⁶⁶⁵ "Mochten mij nog weer klachten bereiken, dan zal ik niet aarzelen, mijn maatregelen te nemen om een regelmatige gang van zaken bij het onderwijs te Aalsmeer in de toekomst te verzekeren."; May 16th, 1941, NHA, access number 1949, file 624.

fully aware of the difficult circumstances these days and tried to ensure good interactions between all children and teachers. The deputy mayor of Aalsmeer instructed all principals to prevent complaints and if there were complaints to report them.⁶⁶⁶

In the week following this statement, school principals reported a couple of complaints. One reported incident dated from the summer of 1940, when two students were verbally abused because of their father's NSB membership. The principal immediately punished the two responsible students. A second principal described how one girl of NSB parents was once shouted at in the summer of 1940. Other principals stated they were already acting firmly against bullying, whether caused by political reasons or other factors. Therefore, the teachers thought the letter of the NSB leader was insulting.⁶⁶⁷ Thus, the local NSB leader failed to make himself very popular among the school principals in Aalsmeer. And he had clearly violated hierarchical lines. In addition, the reason behind the accusation of the school system and local government was rather limited. The other schools in Aalsmeer wrote that nothing remarkable happened at their schools.⁶⁶⁸

One principal in Aalsmeer reported extensively about one incident, which illustrates the dynamics of such a confrontation. An NSB member complained that his son, an NJS member, was insulted at school. Therefore, the father threatened the school leadership. Ten days later, he visited the school again because his son was in a fight. According to the school principal, the student who was fighting with the NJS boy, was an NJS member himself; it was just an ordinary schoolboy fight. However, the NSB father told the school principal to immediately intervene whenever something similar would happen to his son, whenever the boy was "wronged." He threatened to inform the NSB leadership about the incident. The principal notified all teachers; every political conversation or fight in or near the school was prohibited from then on.⁶⁶⁹ As in other confrontations, the school principal took the complaint seriously, while avoiding the political dimension of the bullying in which the message of the NSB member had been expressed.

After December 1941 when the NSB became the only permitted party, the number of complaints decreased. The reason for this development was probably not due to a more

⁶⁶⁶ NHA, access number 1949, file 624, May 21st 1941.

⁶⁶⁷ NHA, access number 1949, file 624, May 19th 1941.

⁶⁶⁸ NHA, access number 1949, file 624, two Catholic schools and one Christian school.

⁶⁶⁹ NHA, access number 1949, file 624, May 19th, 1941.

pro-NSB climate but because the NSB's political power base had increased.⁶⁷⁰ From 1942 onwards, NSB members complained only occasionally. In early 1943, an NSB member complained about the bullying of his daughter at a Catholic school in Leiden. He was especially irritated by the statements of the female history teacher, who according to the complainer, talked about the pillage carried out by the occupier. He even threatened the school principal, if he failed to "take radical measures with less pleasant consequences." He urged the principal to fire this history teacher.⁶⁷¹ This pattern corresponds with previous complaints. Unfortunately, the reaction of the school principal has not been preserved.

NSB members from the CABR sample also complained about the schools of their children.⁶⁷² Two members removed their child to another school because of the bullying. One moved his daughter to a German school.⁶⁷³ In July 1941, a member from a village near Utrecht wrote a letter to the school principal about NSB children being bullied.⁶⁷⁴ A member in a coastal village near Haarlem did the same in the autumn of 1941.⁶⁷⁵

Out of the NSB members in the CABR sample, five were teachers.⁶⁷⁶ These teachers could express their National Socialist affiliation within the classroom. At a school in Hilversum, the headmaster testified about the National Socialist propaganda of one of his teachers. This particular teacher admitted in his trial that he combined his gymnastic lessons with politics; he let his students march around singing National Socialist songs.⁶⁷⁷ Two teachers in Amsterdam reported anti-National Socialist behavior to the SD, one incident involving a fellow teacher in February 1942 and one involving children who refused to learn German in the spring of 1943.⁶⁷⁸ One female teacher – a former member of the national team - trained the girls from the NJS in hockey.⁶⁷⁹ Another teacher in Amsterdam was an active NSB member, but his former students testified in his favor in his judicial file.⁶⁸⁰ Thus, four out of these five were visible as National Socialists.

⁶⁷⁰ Improved position of the NSB; Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie*, 239-241.; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*.

⁶⁷¹ Leiden, Slats, Noordwijk, February 11th, 1943 to the principal of the Barbaraschool in Leiden.

⁶⁷² NA, CABR, files 55673, 52561, 62639, 11089, 42353, 37445, 23823.

⁶⁷³ NA, CABR, file 37445, 62639.

⁶⁷⁴ NA, CABR, file 11089.

⁶⁷⁵ NA, CABR, file 42353.

⁶⁷⁶ NA, CABR, files 85816, 23790, 85750, 86527, 105075, 13374, 105454.

⁶⁷⁷ NA, CABR, file 85816.

⁶⁷⁸ NA, CABR, file 86527, 23790, 85750.

⁶⁷⁹ NA, CABR, file 105075.

⁶⁸⁰ NA, CABR, file 13374, 105454.

Non-NSB members wrote about National Socialists at schools as well. A schoolteacher in Amsterdam wrote in his diary about the impudent behavior of National Socialists at schools. In his opinion NSB employees as well as NJS students misbehaved. They provoked others at school, and whenever they were confronted with bullying or opposition, they used their membership to retaliate.⁶⁸¹

The letters of NSB members to school principals and the diary of the school teacher illustrate the same pattern over and over again: an NSB member felt himself unfairly disadvantaged combined with a sense of overconfidence about his own new position. In other words, while the NSB member felt he had the right to demand and get everything he wished for – the New Order had come – he had the feeling that nonmembers constantly opposed him. He – most of the complaints came from men – expressed this querulous attitude in angry letters, in which he threatened to take severe measures against every opposition. On the slightest provocation a small group of NSB members reacted impudently and irritated, demanding immediate measures. As a result, many school principals did respond, however, mentioning other than political reasons for taking action. The reactions of school principals to complaints from NSB parents were most of the time non-political, emphasizing the apolitical atmosphere at school and the wish to simply maintain “order.” They argued on the basis of “order,” rather than on the New Order. A letter of a school principal in Utrecht in July 1941 exemplifies this reaction, stating that: “Since we are at school to educate the students, politics of any persuasion will be kept outside the school; and we do not know the political persuasion of the parents of any of our pupils.”⁶⁸² National Socialism as ideology and argument for actions remained rejected by educational institutions.

The school was not the only institution where NSB members clashed with nonmembers. Churches were confronted with impudent NSB members as well. The relationship between the NSB and different churches in the Netherlands was complex. The Reformed (*Gereformeerde*) and Catholic Churches were openly hostile towards the NSB from 1936 onwards; the other Protestant Churches were less explicit in their sentiments.⁶⁸³ Where NSB

⁶⁸¹ NIOD, Van der Does, June 12th, 1941, January 14th, 1942.

⁶⁸² “Daar wij hier in de school alleen zijn voor onderwijs aan de leerlingen, wordt de politiek van elke richting buiten de school gehouden en weten wij ook van geen der leerlingen, tot welke politieke richting zijn ouders behoorden.”; Utrecht, July 19th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1473-1476.

⁶⁸³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk, voorspel*, 356; Kooy, *Echer*, 150.

members during the 1930s passively reacted to this rejection, they started responding actively and aggressively when their power base increased. In churches one can see a pattern similar to the one at schools: impatient NSB members refused to tolerate any rejection by the church.

Within the Netherlands, the largest religious community was Protestant. This group was divided into many subgroups. The main ones were the Dutch Reformed (*Nederlands Hervormd*, 31 percent of the Dutch population) and the Reformed Church (*Gereformeerd*, 9.7 percent of the population).⁶⁸⁴ The Dutch Reformed Church was less negative and rejecting than the Reformed Church.⁶⁸⁵ Members of the Reformed Church were overrepresented in the resistance against the German occupiers; members of the Dutch Reformed and Catholic Church were underrepresented. According to Jan Bank, the intense network of organizations and the decades of history of oppositional spirit against an established national church might explain the high percentage of Reformed people in the resistance.⁶⁸⁶

Within the NSB group members of the Dutch Reformed Church (*Hervormd*) were overrepresented (43 percent of the NSB members compared with 31 percent nationally), Catholics (33 percent NSB members and 39 percent nationally) and Reformed (*Gereformeerden*, 2.6 percent compared with 9.7 percent nationally) underrepresented.⁶⁸⁷

One of the openly opposing churches was the Catholic Church. The Catholics were a strong minority in the Netherlands, the majority living in the Southern part of the country. The highest church official, Archbishop Jan de Jong, was based in Utrecht.⁶⁸⁸ Before and even more so during the occupation, the Catholic Church actively banned NSB members from their church.⁶⁸⁹ From October 1940 onwards, tensions arose between the Catholic Church and the NSB. In April 1942, the archbishop stated that “the National-Socialist

⁶⁸⁴ According to the 1947 census out of approximately 9.6 million inhabitants, roughly 3.8 million were Reformed Protestant; of them 2.9 million belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church, 900,000 to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and about 40,000 were so-called Remonstrant adherents, the liberal wing, about 70,000 Lutheran. Catholics: 3.7 million in 1947; Bank ‘Protestantism in the Second World War: The case of The Netherlands and France’, 226.

⁶⁸⁵ Also, cooperation between churches; Pieter van Gent, ‘De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk’ in: Idem et al., *Collaboratie of verzet. Accommodatie van het sociale leven in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Utrecht 2000) 7-17, here 9-12.

⁶⁸⁶ Bank ‘Protestantism in the Second World War: The case of The Netherlands and France’, 259-260.

⁶⁸⁷ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* VI, 385; Bank ‘Protestantism in the Second World War. The case of the Netherlands and France’ 226.

⁶⁸⁸ Lieve Gevers, ‘Catholicism in the Low Countries During the Second World War, 210-211.

⁶⁸⁹ NIOD, Afweerdienst, October 16nd, 1940, Bussum; complaints about anti-NSB behavior of the Catholic Church.

worldview was diametrically opposed to Christianity and was a severe threat to our Christian faith and our Christian morals.”⁶⁹⁰

The NSB had doubts about how to respond to the rejections, as becomes clear from a proposal for a radio speech from September 1941. This aggressive anti-Catholic radio speech was banned.⁶⁹¹ Perhaps it was regarded as counterproductive; according to a note written with pencil in the margins of the speech. the subject needed to be handled more “cautiously.” On May 30th, 1942, the national NSB propaganda leader, Ernst Voorhoeve, wrote a letter to all regional NSB leaders, saying that many National Socialists, especially those on the front, sought and found relief in their faith. He accused all the people who had mislabeled these men as inferior.⁶⁹² On a local level, the NSB leader in Noordwijk similarly rejected the negative attitude towards the NSB held by the Catholic and Protestant churches.⁶⁹³

WA men reacted to church opposition as well. The church could refuse NSB members or their families the right to be buried in sacred ground. This led to discontent among NSB members and even to violent reactions from WA men. At least twice, in Utrecht and in Haarlem, this refusal provoked the WA men to forcibly enter the Catholic graveyard and bury their dead themselves.⁶⁹⁴

The two Protestant communities combined formed the largest group in the Netherlands. While the Reformed Church openly opposed the NSB in 1936, the Dutch Reformed Church expressed the problems of Christianity with Nazism openly in October 1943.⁶⁹⁵ Fifteen Dutch Reformed clergymen belonged to the NSB.⁶⁹⁶ Two important Reformed ministers in the NSB were Wilhelm Theodor Boissevain in the Leiden area and Lodewijk Cornelis Willem Ekering in Amsterdam. Boissevain was an intellectual, whereas Ekering translated these ideas to a larger public and was more popular within his

⁶⁹⁰ April 1942, aartsbisschop en bisschoppen, file 259a: 72f.

⁶⁹¹ Utrechts archief, Archief aartsbisdom, access number 449, file 150, September 1941, De Leeuw.

⁶⁹² Letter Ernst Voorhoeve, 259b-11, Utrecht May 30th, 1942, , prescription nr. 13; Regionaal Archief Leiden.

⁶⁹³ Aan kringpropleider Tegelaar van Beukers: “Oude pol partijen kunnen nog steeds onbestraft het natsoc bestrijden, de levensmiddelenvoorziening saboteren e, het volk ophitsen, met de bijbel in de hand en een vroom gezicht.”; NA, CABR, file 215, 22 April 1942.

⁶⁹⁴ PG, April 17th, 1942, Utrecht and Haarlem.

⁶⁹⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk deel?* , 361; J. Veenstra, *De leiding van de Gereformeerde richting in de Nederlands Hervormde Kerk en het Nationaal-Socialisme voor en tijdens de bezetting* (Ugchelen 1982) 21; Bank ‘Protestantism in the Second World War: The case of The Netherlands and France’, 247.

⁶⁹⁶ Except Ekering; Tijssen, *Dominee van de NSB*, 113-114; NA, CABR, file 20294; Bank, ‘Protestantism in the Second World War: The case of The Netherlands and France’, 242.

community. In Ekering's postwar file one of the police reporters wrote that being a "National Socialist Christian" was "a contradiction in terms." However, his former colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances all testified in his favor.⁶⁹⁷

NSB members could come into conflict with the Dutch Reformed Church. An example of such a confrontation is a meeting of the church officials in September 1942 in Bloemendaal, a coastal village near Haarlem and Amsterdam. One of the local National Socialists, Neumann, was allowed to speak at this assembly. He spoke while ignoring all interruptions. He took his time. He started off by stating that "times change" and as a National Socialist he declared himself as an "optimist." He stated that the NSB is the "State Party" now and that the NSB "represents the will of our people." Therefore, he declared the group leader of the NSB in Bloemendaal to be the leader of all villagers. He regretted the fact that the NSB still lacked the power to withdraw subsidies or arrest people. Neumann threatened the members of the church assembly with unrest in Bloemendaal and unpleasant consequences for all the men present. The audience responded negatively immediately. His mission had failed.⁶⁹⁸ His impudent, aggressive behavior had led to irritation and estrangement.

Individual members sometimes disagreed with the church institutions. Not every member chose an aggressive tactic like Neumann's. An active NSB member from Utrecht wrote in a letter to the Dutch Reformed community that, because of the anti-National Socialist attitude within the council, he would temporarily voluntarily withdraw himself from active service.⁶⁹⁹

As mentioned in chapter 1, only 4 out of the 327 NSB members clearly struggled with the combination of their NSB membership and membership in a religious institution. Two of them struggled with their Catholic faith, one Dutch Reformed and one Reformed. Most members were less attached to any of the church communities in the Netherlands.⁷⁰⁰ Many members did not care very much about their relationship with the church because they were only weakly if at all attached to religious communities; approximately 25 percent of NSB members were not aligned to any church at all, that is, more than the 17 percent of the

⁶⁹⁷ Tijssen, *Dominee van de NSB*, 113-114; NA, CABR, 20294 and STPD, 41.

⁶⁹⁸ RAL, Nederlands Hervormde gemeente, Bloemendaal, 3552, file 88, September 23rd, 1942; Gemeentepolitie Haarlem: were quiet in the churches. Politie Amsterdam: January 23rd, 1942: complaints in the Reformed churches about WA men.

⁶⁹⁹ Letter February 24th, 1942 to the Dutch Reformed church in Utrecht; NA, CABR, file 76881.

⁷⁰⁰ Kooy, *Echee*, 148; Vos, *Ledenverloop*, 51.

entire population.⁷⁰¹ That may be the reason that NSB members complained more about the “anti-NSB” atmosphere at the schools of their children than about the behavior of religious officials.

Street 1. Kromme Mijdrechtstraat

From the institutional level, we shift to the neighborhood and the street levels. The first street in this analysis is situated in the Southern part of Amsterdam: Kromme Mijdrechtstraat. It was a street with a high percentage of Jewish inhabitants.⁷⁰² Approximately 350 people lived on the street.⁷⁰³ Of these residents, approximately 47 were members of the NSB in 1942.⁷⁰⁴ That leads to the ratio of 13 percent NSB members versus 87 percent nonmembers, which was significantly higher than in the rest of Amsterdam, where approximately 2 percent of the population was aligned with the NSB.

The high proportion of Jewish inhabitants is both interesting and a disadvantage to the researcher because 98 percent of these neighbors did not return to the neighborhood after the liberation and therefore could not testify in the postwar trials.⁷⁰⁵ However, the statements coming from many different neighbors present a rich and varied image of the street interactions during the German occupation.

I will first focus on the two most important NSB members in the street, before discussing the rest of the street dwellers. The first one, Wilhelmus Josephus Cornelis Nieuwenhuyse, was an NSB group leader. The second one, Christiaan F. Sluyter, was leader of a “bloc.” These two men were the highest-ranking NSB members in the street and therefore the local center of the NSB. Nieuwenhuyse’s position was one level higher than Sluyter’s.

Nieuwenhuyse was born in 1908. He became an NSB member in 1935 and remained a member until the end. His wife was an active NSB member as well. In 1940,

⁷⁰¹NA, CABR, Antonius Cornelis Johannes de Wit, 12499, 18303, 52561, 76881; Kooy, *Echec*, 148. In this sample: 12 % not aligned and 14 % religion un-known; www.volkstellingen.nl.

⁷⁰² Among the inhabitants many have Jewish last names; Street book, 1939 SAA.

⁷⁰³ List of the telephone book.

⁷⁰⁴ POD, Ledenlijst Amsterdam NSB.

⁷⁰⁵ NA, CABR, file 105853. Approximately 2 percent came back; Henriëtte Lakmaker, ‘De ketters van de overkant’, *Ons Amsterdam* 48:5 (1996)135-140, here 140.

Nieuwenhuysse had a permanent job at the Heineken brewery. When the threat of the German invasion increased in 1939, Dutch men were mobilized for the army. NSB members received an appeal on their doormat as well. Thus, many NSB members were mobilized in the Dutch army. Nieuwenhuysse was one of these Dutch NSB soldiers. According to his own testimony and that of his local tobacconist, Nieuwenhuysse was unhappy at the defeat of the Dutch army. However, he adapted quickly to the new situation. One week after the defeat, he marched down Kromme Mijdrechtstraat in his WA uniform. In these days, Nieuwenhuysse put his heart and soul into his activities for the NSB. He convinced his sister and brother-in-law to become NSB members by warning them about the alternative: working in Germany. He lured his neighbor with a location to sell his flowers.⁷⁰⁶ He enrolled his upstairs neighbors as well.⁷⁰⁷ Bringing in new members was an excellent fulfillment of his tasks as a local NSB boss.⁷⁰⁸

Nieuwenhuysse was clearly anti-Semitic during the German occupation. In his position as NSB group leader he once reported the addresses of all the Jews in his group. According to his own postwar testimony, his attitude towards Jews had “changed” after the German occupation; his anti-Semitism grew and he acted accordingly. In addition to passing on Jewish addresses, he complained to a high-ranking NSB leader about a Jew who returned home after his arrest in September 1941 and added that this man “is one of the villains we would like to never see again.”⁷⁰⁹

Nieuwenhuysse’s active National Socialist behavior led to various reactions in his environment. After the demobilization of the Dutch army, Nieuwenhuysse resumed working at the Heineken brewery till 1942. His coworkers were more or less positive about his behavior. However, one colleague showed open hostility towards the NSB, according to Nieuwenhuysse. In late 1941, he bullied Nieuwenhuysse about his NSB membership by limping out of the room and proclaiming that this kind of physical defect will be the fate of “all traitors.”⁷¹⁰ The jeering coworker was imprisoned for eight months for this insult. Nieuwenhuysse claimed only to have testified and not reported the man to the police. In

⁷⁰⁶ NA, CABR, file 18844.

⁷⁰⁷ NA, CABR, file 86031.

⁷⁰⁸ NA, CABR, file 106559. Other peoples used his address as well for NSB mail; NA, CABR, file 86050, 86080.

⁷⁰⁹ Aan Kardoes “Dit is een van die schurken ie wij nooit meer terug willen zien.”; NA, CABR, file 14487, 85440.

⁷¹⁰ NA, CABR, file 14487, 85440.

Nieuwenhuysen's postwar trial, the coworker explained that Nieuwenhuysen had acted fairly during the trial and that he had liked him before.

While some coworkers gave favorable testimony about Nieuwenhuysen, his neighbors offered rather negative views about his behavior and character. According to his neighbors he terrorized the street, using the full range of methods to spread NSB propaganda. One of his neighbors thought Nieuwenhuysen was a "villainous anti-Semite," who was highly unreliable; for that reason she kept him at a distance.⁷¹¹ Both he and his wife were considered to be fanatic National Socialists and eager propagandists. However, their neighbors denied having experienced any treachery.⁷¹²

At the end of 1943, the Nieuwenhuysen family moved to another street in the same neighborhood but not out of sight. One of his old neighbors remembered seeing him on Mad Tuesday. At that moment, the entire neighborhood was in uproar because of the expected liberation. NSB members experienced these days rather differently: they became nervous because of the coming defeat. NSB members and their families gathered at a street corner to flee to the eastern part of the Netherlands. A jeering crowd surrounded the fleeing NSB members. The old neighbor spotted Nieuwenhuysen in this group. Nieuwenhuysen had a gun with him. According to his neighbor, he pointed his gun at the crowd and fired at them. Nieuwenhuysen testified that he fired in the air only. There are no casualties reported in the police documents of September 1944, but Nieuwenhuysen certainly must have scared the crowd at that time.

Nieuwenhuysen's behavior in the *Landwacht* caused negative reactions. Until Mad Tuesday he had worked irregularly for the *Landwacht*, controlling identity papers and sometimes arresting people. After Mad Tuesday he worked permanently at the *Landwacht*, guarding railways and arresting suspects, sometimes even in his own street.⁷¹³ In the meantime he also seized potatoes and other goods he came upon during arrests and controlling people.⁷¹⁴ Because of his visible National Socialist activities his neighbors judged him unfavorably.

⁷¹¹ Translation: "doortrapte Jodenhater."

⁷¹² NA, CABR, file 86201.

⁷¹³ NA, CABR, file 86201.

⁷¹⁴ In the end Nieuwenhuysen was wounded by Canadian fire and arrested and given eight years' imprisonment; NA, CABR, file 14487, 85440.

Analyzing Nieuwenhuysse's activities reveals something about the internal party culture of the NSB as well: while one had to fill in the name of the "bloc" leader, many failed to fulfill this requirement. Instead, Nieuwenhuysse signed the forms, confirming the idea that he personally brought in many new members and thereby skipping the organizational interlayer of the "bloc" leader, for example Sluyter.⁷¹⁵ Another element is the level of contacts between members. Nieuwenhuysse was group leader of many street dwellers, and members visited him and other NSB members in their street.⁷¹⁶ Apparently, people knew about each other's membership and saw each other during and outside party meetings.

Christiaan Sluyter, a pharmacy assistant born in 1901, was subordinate to Nieuwenhuysse; he was "bloc" leader in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat. He became a member of the NSB and the WA in 1940. His wife was an NSB member as well. Although his membership dated from only two months before the German invasion, his house was searched in May 1940. His black shirt and belt were taken.⁷¹⁷ Immediately after the German takeover he became an active NSB propagandist: hanging a flag, putting NSB posters in his window, selling newspapers on the street and marching with the WA. In his WA uniform Sluyter worked for the German *Wehrmacht*. Sluyter was an active National Socialist on all fronts. In his postwar statement he argued that he became an employee of the WA in the summer of 1941 in order to avoid working in Germany.

According to his neighbors, Sluyter flourished after the German takeover; he enjoyed his uniform and his new status. He used his new status to betray his Jewish neighbors. After a Jewish fishmonger told him a rumor about the negative attitude of a Jewish lady towards National Socialists, he wrote a letter to the WA, denouncing this lady in May 1940. In addition, he accused his Jewish neighbors of intimidating his wife.

In his postwar trial, his non-Jewish neighbors declared that Sluyter was an active NSB member during the occupation, though they believed he had not betrayed his neighbors [which he in fact had done].⁷¹⁸ While his neighbors were moderate in their opinions about Christiaan Sluyter, his wife Anna –of German origin– was regarded as a bothersome person. She behaved badly on many occasions, especially against her Jewish

⁷¹⁵ NA, CABR, file 85848 and more.

⁷¹⁶ NA, CABR, file 14487.

⁷¹⁷ As many others; SAA, Politiearchief, May 1940.

⁷¹⁸ NA, CABR, file 21491, 86142.

neighbors. On her porch she expressed her wish “that Hitler would exterminate all Jews.”⁷¹⁹ When her children quarreled with the neighborhood kids, she intervened. At one moment she even wanted to hit a little kid, and when a neighbor tried to prevent this, she shouted at her and called her a Jew.⁷²⁰ The Jewish neighbor replied that Anna Sluyter “should be ashamed of herself because the whole neighborhood detested her.”⁷²¹ Another neighbor also argued with Anna Sluyter. After a heavy altercation, Anna supposedly threatened: “ugly bitch, the bullet is too good for you.”⁷²² Because of the fights, Anna went to the SD since she simply could not stand her neighbors. Both neighboring women were summoned to the SD office, where they were told to never bother Anna Sluyter again. One of the SD men threatened to send the first, Jewish, neighbor to Poland. The second woman was accused of ignoring Anna and spitting on the ground. She was also threatened with being sent away since Anna Sluyter was “protected” because her husband worked for the German *Wehrmacht*.⁷²³ Afterwards, her neighbors kept their children inside to prevent quarrels with Anna’s children. This reveals how ordinary disputes between NSB members and their neighbors could have serious consequences during the occupation. And if NSB members actively provoked people, it caused negative reactions.

After having looked at the two most prominent local National Socialists, I will now turn to the other NSB members in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat. In general, young suspects could count on less hostility from their neighbors than could older National Socialists. A young steersman saw his dream of a sailing career disintegrate through a sequential series of disappointments. His parents were NSB members from August 1940, and his father enrolled him in the party in June 1943. His neighbors declared that he was very different from his parents; one of them testified “despite everything he had joined, I am sure that boy could do no harm to anyone. He is a good person in the neighborhood and I am sure that he was not able to resist to the power of his parents.”⁷²⁴

⁷¹⁹ “Ik wou, dat Hitler kwam en alle Joden uitroeide”, testimony of a neighbor; NA, CABR, file 85302.

⁷²⁰ “Jodenzwijn”, NA, CABR, file 85302.

⁷²¹ “je mag je wel schamen want de hele buurt spreekt niet veel goed van je.”, NA, CABR, file 85302.

⁷²² “Ielijk rotwijf, de kogel is nog te goed voor je, wacht maar, ik krijg je wel.” NA, CABR, file 85302.

⁷²³ NA, CABR, file 85302.

⁷²⁴ “Ondanks alles waarvan hij deel heeft uitgemaakt, weet ik zeker dat die jongen niemand eenig leed zou kunnen doen. Hij is een hier in de buurt goed gezien persoon en ik weet zeker, dat hij op den duur niet op heeft gekund tegen de drijfkracht van zijn ouders”; NA, CABR, Antonie den Burger.

To see what contributed to a negative image, we can analyze the opinions towards the young steersman's parents. What was it that led to a negative opinion? The attitudes of neighbors regarding his parents were significantly more negative than towards the young man. Several testified they were afraid of his father, Arie den Burger, who was an active NSB member. Arie had a criminal record because of a sex offense. According to his neighbors, his financial situation flourished during the occupation. His wife Catharina den Burger, an NSB member as well, was seen as a "difficult" and "fanatic" person, who had many contacts with Germans.⁷²⁵ The superintendent even talked about "orgies" at Den Burger's place.⁷²⁶ They opposed Arie den Burger's return to society. Several other witnesses described his violent behavior as a member of the *Landwacht*. One man testified that Den Burger took away his strawberries in January 1944 while declaring to this witness that these could be his last strawberries, before giving him 60 lashes and sending him to the prison camp at Amersfoort. The neighbors' statements about this family reveal that these judgments depended heavily on whether somebody was "fanatic," profiting financially, whether somebody was a "decent" person, and on his activities in the *Landwacht*.

The high number of Jews living in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat made it probable that its inhabitants witnessed the raids on Jews. Some neighbors indeed mentioned the raids. According to her neighbor, Catherina den Burger went out on the street, when there were raids although everybody was ordered to stay inside. The witness declared that Den Burger walked by houses of Jews to see if somebody was inside.⁷²⁷ Another NSB neighbor, Karel van Homburg saw the raids but did not betray his Jewish neighbors, according to his own testimony. However, a Jewish neighbor declared that van Homburg threatened to denounce him during a fight. Van Homburg acknowledged the fight with his neighbor – about his barking dog - but denied the threats.⁷²⁸

Provocative behavior was an important element in the image of NSB members, as we have seen with Anna Sluyter. This element was even more important when political borders lay within households. Differences in political views occurred not only between households living in the same street; political disputes could flourish within families as well. A neighbor of Nieuwenhuysse, the florist Van de Hoek, was in his second marriage –with a

⁷²⁵ NA, CABR, file 105494.

⁷²⁶ "zweelgpartijen"; NA, CABR, file 20834.

⁷²⁷ NA, CABR, file 105494.

⁷²⁸ NA, CABR, file 86138.

German woman- when the Germans invaded the Netherlands. The couple had different political convictions: his wife opposed National Socialism. According to his wife and neighbors, the florist kept his NSB membership to himself. His neighbor declared that Van de Hoek was a quiet man, without enemies and with good relationships in the neighborhood.⁷²⁹

While Van de Hoek's positive image could suggest a correlation between active membership and negative interactions, analyzing other people's relationships calls into question this connection. Johanna Lindeman-Blass, born in Germany and married to a Dutch man, decorated her house with posters and hung a portrait of Hitler on the wall as well as an NSB flag outside on the birthdays of Hitler and Mussert. However, her neighbors spoke favorably about her at her trial. They kept in touch and talked with each other, even though German officers visited Lindeman-Blass.⁷³⁰ Apparently, political conversations among NSB members and nonmembers were not uncommon.⁷³¹ She even discussed the work of her husband, who as an NSB member working at the Auxiliary Police (*Hulppolitie*) participated in rounding up Jews. Another woman, of German origin, divorced from her Dutch husband, wore her NSB badge, had posters in her windows, and received the Amsterdam National Socialist paper *De Daad*, but according to her neighbors "acted correctly towards dissenters."⁷³² Apparently, the content of the neighbors' statements mainly depended on whether or not the neighbor had personally suffered from the behavior of the suspect; party activity in itself was not a sufficient determinant.

This leads to the distinction between provocative and active membership. While active membership could lead to rejection by the neighbors, it was not a sufficient condition. Only when the active membership included provocative behavior; irritating or even harming his or her surroundings, did the behavior lead to disapproving reactions.

If NSB members refrained from causing any trouble to their neighbors – provoking them – the neighbors mainly made favorable statements. Hubertus Kemper was a very inactive NSB member, in his own words "a dead member"; his neighbors judged him

⁷²⁹ NA, CABR, file 18844.

⁷³⁰ NA, CABR, file12230.

⁷³¹ Also: NA, CABR, file 18392, 107444.

⁷³² "Gedroeg zich tegen andersdenkenden correct"; NA, CABR, file 87382.

favorably, and some did not even know about his membership. Only his friendship with a fanatic neighbor was frowned upon.⁷³³

It was possible that NSB members helped people around them. A few NSB members undertook actions to support people. One of the street inhabitants was even praised for hiding the radio of his neighbors. He was in fact one of very few members who was a National Socialist as a cover-up for his work at a Jewish theater, the Van Swinden Theater. Because of his membership the company managed to keep their machinery.⁷³⁴

The witness testimonies came from a wide array of street dwellers. One woman, Margaretha Jacoba Hartog – 37 years old – testified often. She was afraid of Den Burger but more neutral towards others.⁷³⁵ She was the one who was quite positive about her German divorced neighbor.⁷³⁶ Her varied testimonies – and those of others - may suggest that the character and behavior of the NSB member determined the nature of the testimony and not only the vindictive or forgiving nature of the testifying neighbor.

The interaction in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat, a street where the persecution of its Jewish inhabitants was never far away, shows the variety in contacts, even for the most fanatic NSB member. The analysis of this street also reveals that when there were any disputes, as in the case of Anna Sluyter, between NSB members and their neighbors, the consequences were far more severe than in other periods. In addition, the interactions reveal that active membership was frowned upon, but it was provocative membership, “coming in the backyard of neighbors,” which led to estrangement.

Street 2. Zacharias Jansstraat

The second street to be analyzed is the Zacharias Jansstraat; a street in the east of Amsterdam. One of the persons discussed in chapter 1, Ernst Zilver, resided in this street, which was populated by mainly white-collar, middle-class people. The level of NSB

⁷³³ NA, CABR, file 85124, 105519.

⁷³⁴ NA, CABR, file 106415, 105999.

⁷³⁵ NA, CABR, file 33807, 20834, 106731, 86134, 105929, 87382.

⁷³⁶ NA, CABR, file 87382.

membership was much lower compared than in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat, approximately 11 in a population of 400, somewhat above the average in Amsterdam.⁷³⁷

The father of Ernst Zilver, born in 1874, was an active National Socialist, who was constantly frustrated because his ambitious plans were obstructed. He saw the NSB as a second chance to be active in society. He applied for several jobs but was rejected because of his old age; following the lines of National Socialist ideology, the NSB preferred the youth above the old. After the rejections he turned his attention to his stamp collection, still in an NSB environment, only on a voluntary basis. The relationships of Ernst Zilver and his father reveal how the reactions of neighbors and different family members can differ. While his father was seen as a moderate man, a neighbor judged the son negatively as a “monstrosity” (*keval*) because the son bothered them and the father did not.⁷³⁸

As in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat, the relationships of NSB members could differ per social circle. The majority of the inhabitants of this street were white collar and middle class. Thus many worked in offices, with nonmembers as colleagues. Bank employee and active National Socialist Willem Schoemaker was an NSB member from 1933, with a short interruption in April 1940 and had the function of “bloc” leader. He threatened his coworkers and was judged unfavorably by them. However, he was a “decent” man according to his neighbors.⁷³⁹ As a member of WA and “bloc” leader he was an active National Socialist. However, most of his activities occurred out of sight of his neighbors. He probably marched through the city center instead of his own neighborhood in the eastern part of Amsterdam. And as a *Landwacht* member he worked in another part in Amsterdam and in September even outside Amsterdam, in a city up north.⁷⁴⁰

The image of NSB members highly depended on whether someone could be trusted. Christiaan van Klaveren, a German teacher, joined the NSB in July 1940. He left the movement in 1941. However, he still acted as a National Socialist at his school. In 1943 he was suffering from problems with students, who refused to learn German. In order to solve his problem, he went to the SD, who did not react to his case. While his colleagues at school saw Van Klaveren as an NSB member, his neighbors perceived him otherwise. One distributor of the illegal paper *Het Parool*, delivered this paper to Van Klaveren’s house and

⁷³⁷ 130 multiplied by 3, telephone list Amsterdam, Stadsarchief Amsterdam.

⁷³⁸ NA, CABR, file86639, 105976.

⁷³⁹ NA, CABR, file85329, 63904.

⁷⁴⁰ NA, CABR, file85329, 63904.

even collected money for it. Another neighbor, an opponent of the NSB, testified that Van Klaveren guarded the neighbor's house against NSB vandalism.⁷⁴¹

National Socialist political activities were not a sufficient factor for ending connections and giving rise to negative opinions in Zacharias Jansestraat even less than in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat. Antje Koster, a widow born in 1877, became a member when she was 73; she read the NSB papers and attended NSB meetings. She even greeted with an NSB exclamation "Houzee" from her balcony when an NJS march passed through the street. Of her children, the youngest two did not align themselves with the NSB, but her two oldest sons did; one of them died in Narwa on the Eastern Front. Despite her political activities, her neighbors did not distrust her and testified that they did not encounter any problems with her.⁷⁴² Perhaps nobody had to fear anything because she was an old lady, or people pitied her after the war.

Hendrik Broekman, born in 1902, was a high school teacher who became an NSB member in 1935. His file reveals another example about how interaction patterns were unrelated to political activities. He was an active member, group administrator and group leader. He read NSB papers, sold papers on the street, attended NSB meetings, hung an NSB flag, and as a group leader he organized meetings every week. Despite all his NSB activities, he was still perceived as a "pleasant" person by his students, his neighbors and his boss.⁷⁴³ His family members and girlfriend declared they had many fights about his political affiliation; his membership was an "abomination" (*gruwel*) but they never "rejected" (*afgestoten*) Hendrik. All his neighbors were positive about him.⁷⁴⁴ His neighbors considered him to be a very fine, distinguished man. Even the principal of the downstairs school building, with Jewish children, was positive about Broekman's behavior as a neighbor.⁷⁴⁵ Because he did not cause any problems and maintained his decency he was judged accordingly.

Sometimes, people saw the NSB membership of their neighbors as an opportunity. Some people actively tried to get in touch with NSB members in order to receive their help or to make use of their contacts at German institutions, such as the SD. The Okx-Zwart

⁷⁴¹ NA, CABR, file23790, 85750.

⁷⁴² NA, CABR, file85931, 106731

⁷⁴³ NA, CABR, file13374, 105454.

⁷⁴⁴ NA, CABR, file 106179, 86007.

⁷⁴⁵ NA, CABR, file 105454, 13374.

family became National Socialists in the fall of 1940. They had many contacts with other NSB members and Germans. Apart from one party with German soldiers in 1940, their neighbors spoke favorably about their behavior, especially about the man, Cornelis.⁷⁴⁶ One of his colleagues visited him to ask him to use his NSB membership in order to free some Jewish friends, who were caught by the SD. However, his efforts had no effect.⁷⁴⁷

Analyzing the NSB members in the neighborhood produces a dynamic and scattered image of interaction. At all sorts of offices, in shops and in schools NSB members interacted with nonmembers. These different locations created arenas of identity: being a detested person in one arena did not necessarily lead to acquiring the image of a detested person in another arena (for example in the neighborhood). From the analysis of this street, the element of visibility of activities becomes evident: if these activities happened out of sight, they had less influence on opinions. Thus, different identities could exist side by side. Street dwellers often changed their political convictions and behaviors during the occupation, and the perceptions of their neighbors altered as well, sometimes as a result of the new behavior, sometimes not.

Street 3. Hudsonstraat

The third street of analysis is Hudsonstraat in the western part of Amsterdam. This street housed mainly workers, municipal officials, and the self-employed. Many self-employed had their own shops. Therefore, in the street were located at least six barbershops, four bars, a diamond cutter, a shoemaker, a milkman, greengrocers, a tailor and a baker.⁷⁴⁸

Approximately 900 people lived on Hudsonstraat, 29 of whom were members of the NSB.⁷⁴⁹

Two of the NSB members living on Hudsonstraat had criminal pasts before joining the NSB.⁷⁵⁰ This background caused a negative image. One of these criminal NSB members living in Hudsonstraat was Marinus Voogd. He had a criminal past of embezzlement,

⁷⁴⁶ After Mad Tuesday they moved to Weesperkarpsel; NA, CABR, file94786, 86213

⁷⁴⁷ NA, CABR, file21042, 85878. Zacharias Jansestraat: May 18th, 1943, bomb number 20, Stadsarchief Amsterdam.

⁷⁴⁸ Thanks to Peter-Paul de Baar and his personal archive of streets in Amsterdam; Peter-Paul de Baar, 'Terug naar de Hudsonstraat', *Ons Amsterdam* 52:10 (2000) 282.

⁷⁴⁹ 310 addresses, approx. 3 per house: 900 is an estimation of the author.

⁷⁵⁰ Of the sample: NA, CABR, file 20221, 106686.

swindle and mistreatment. He was a widower with six children and a very active National Socialist. He was rather unpopular. Both his fellow NSB members and his neighbors disliked him. He was regularly drunk and often ended up in a fight. In November 1940, he was beaten to the ground after a WA march in The Hague, after which he needed fourteen days of recovery. In 1941 he was beaten again by a police officer, after an NJS march. His house also suffered damage: his windows were smashed by opponents. In the meanwhile, Voogd pursued a criminal career, profiting from his NSB membership. His main criminal activity was cajoling money in the neighborhood bar. Voogd promised to arrange freedom for people in exchange for money. His methods included coercion and threats. He forced people to give money for Frontzorg, the institution for National Socialists soldiers. According to records of the ATL – the NSB Secret services –, he threatened customers, swindled money without any exchange and had affairs with girls younger than his own daughters. His daughter, born in 1919, was a member of the National Socialist youth organization (NJS) and had, according to their neighbors, many contacts with Germans.⁷⁵¹ Voogd's entire family was seen in a bad light. One neighbor testified that no one interfered with the family because she thought it was dangerous.⁷⁵² The NSB organization viewed Voogd unfavorably as well. Several times he was discharged from the NSB because of his bad behavior: in August 1941, in May and in June 1944; on May 10th, 1944 he was dishonorably discharged from the WA. He was thus disliked by everyone. However, the NSB gave him at least two second chances.⁷⁵³

Sometimes the negative attitude of non-NSB members corresponded with the views of the Germans, as was the case when members exhibited criminal behavior. Like his neighbors, the Germans did not hold favorable views of Voogd. Early in 1944 he was arrested by the SD and sent to camp Amersfoort.⁷⁵⁴ The fact that German institutions disliked and punished criminal behavior of National Socialists is not uncommon; other NSB members encountered similar opinions and actions.⁷⁵⁵

Untrustworthy behavior made members, including those who were not criminals, rather unpopular. Willem de Gans, born in 1889, worked for an insurance company and was

⁷⁵¹ NA, CABR, file106150.

⁷⁵² NA, CABR, file86331.

⁷⁵³ NA, CABR, file 20221.

⁷⁵⁴ NA, CABR, file20022.

⁷⁵⁵ At least four: NA, CABR, file86395, 64311, 4825, 20109, 18330, 17918.

also sentenced to imprisonment during the German occupation. Both his coworkers and his neighbors detested De Gans: he was a “swindler,” who used his political advantage to denounce anyone he disliked. At his work, he was the “social leader” (*sociaal voorman*) of the National Socialist workers organization (*Nederlands Arbeidsfront*). Because of De Gans’ position, his boss did not dare to fire him, although their relationship worsened during the occupation. De Gans refused to serve under a Jewish man who worked in the company, and in the meanwhile De Gans tampered with the company documents. De Gans was not only obstructing the company internally; he also accused them in German court. De Gans testified in 1942 against his coworkers, claiming that they had listened to illegal English radio broadcasts; as a result his boss was sentenced to eighteen months’ imprisonment. In the same year, he went to the police because a watchmaker in Hudsonstraat failed in making his watch, and his wife accused a neighbor of listening to English radio broadcasts.⁷⁵⁶ De Gans was not only the subject but also the object in an indictment. A few months before his testimony against his colleagues, De Gans was sentenced to one month in prison himself because of benefit fraud.

These examples show how people could fear their NSB neighbor, coworker or pub mate, especially when NSB members had a criminal background or expressed themselves in an untrustworthy manner.⁷⁵⁷ Trust was an important determining factor.

A new phenomenon in this street is that some street dwellers were members of the NSB, without their neighbors knowing it: for example, Aukje Baarslag, of whom her neighbor testified that she never could have taken Baarslag for an NSB member since she was such a “nice girl.”⁷⁵⁸ Another NSB member, a cabinetmaker, who irregularly read the NSB newspaper and visited three NSB meetings, was perceived as a “nice and abiding family man”: Nobody knew he was an NSB member.⁷⁵⁹ Also, a third NSB member in Hudsonstraat, Martinus van Damme was never identified as such. The neighbors marveled when he was arrested. According to their testimonies, he always helped his neighbors out.⁷⁶⁰ Apparently, the least noticeable, quiet NSB members received more favorable testimonies.

⁷⁵⁶ NA, CABR, file107630, 86446.

⁷⁵⁷ Also: family Van Lee: NA, CABR, file21360, 85747, 17832, 85774.

⁷⁵⁸ NA, CABR, file106113.

⁷⁵⁹ NA, CABR, file85976, CABR 314.

⁷⁶⁰ NA CABR, file 20914, 85407.

As in the other streets, expressing one's NSB membership openly did not always lead to negative reactions either. Petrus Keizer, a Hudsonstraat greengrocer, regularly read NSB papers, was subscribed to two National Socialist newspapers, displayed NSB posters in his windows and marched in his black WA uniform. He also served in the *Landwacht*, although he didn't have to do many outside shifts because he suffered from a limp. His neighboring potato-dealer stated that Keizer was a "good human being," always willing to help someone. Keizer had told the neighbor personally about his NSB membership. Every day they spoke with each other at the vegetable market, though they never discussed politics. According to the testimonies of several neighbors, Keizer was definitely no "traitor"; he warned his neighbors whenever it was better to turn their radios down.⁷⁶¹ Another active NSB member, Sipke Westenberg, read the NSB papers and even attached a poster to his window, stating that people could enroll in the NSB at his address. However, his neighbors testified favorably about Sipke – a "decent" guy.⁷⁶²

One Hudsonstraat NSB member, Dirk Kors, was an exceptional NSB member.⁷⁶³ He worked as an undercover NSB member for the Amsterdam police from 1933 till May 1940. In his postwar trial, he first tried to convince the court that he continued his activities until 1945. He even presented fake testimony from a deceased police official. However, gradually it became clear that in May 1940 he turned from being an undercover member to a real NSB man. He joined the National Socialist workers organization and worked for Dutch and German National Socialist organizations. Opponents once attached a poster to his window to indicate his position in the NSB. According to his neighbors, Kors was an active NSB member, and a policeman testified that he was absolutely convinced of his trustworthy behavior, but only till May 1940. Afterwards he became, in Kors' own words a "purebred" (*rusechte*) NSB member. His family profited financially during the occupation: they received coal, money and food, which was all noticed by his neighbors and judged negatively.⁷⁶⁴ Profiting financially was often a reason for negative reactions.

In the case of criminal NSB members, membership increased their already negative image. Once again, we can distinguish a pattern of an indirect relationship between political

⁷⁶¹ NA, CABR, file21816, 87382.

⁷⁶² While in general NSB members were perceived as "worse than Germans"; Van der Boom, *We leven nog*; NA, CABR, file85582.

⁷⁶³ Also very different from the files of NSB members in other cities.

⁷⁶⁴ NA, CABR, file106709.

activities and broken relationships. The provocative behavior of NSB members towards people in their direct environment was more relevant than NSB membership in itself in determining interpersonal relations. Secondly, criminal behavior led to rejection by non-NSB neighbors, coworkers and German authorities. And thirdly, trust was an important distinctive element in determining people's opinions.

Noordwijk aan Zee

To compare the results of the capital city with a village, I will examine the NSB community in Noordwijk. In Noordwijk there lived 100 NSB members out of a population of more than 10,000 people, approximately one percent.⁷⁶⁵

Because of its coastal location, many inhabitants of Noordwijk had to be evacuated for the construction of the *Atlantikwal*, the Nazi defense system. Perhaps contrary to what one might think, the position of the NSB members was not very privileged. Of the evacuees, the percentage of NSB members was a little bit below average; some NSB members succeeded in being exempted from evacuation.⁷⁶⁶

Pieter Beukers, born in 1900, was the main NSB official in Noordwijk aan Zee. He had joined the NSB in 1934 and became active in a wide range of National Socialist organizations: as leader of the WA in Noordwijk, as “bloc” leader of the NVD and as social leader of the NAF, and he also joined the *Landwacht*. Beukers' moment of glory was when Mussert visited Noordwijk in the summer of 1944. Beukers maintained many contacts with NSB members in and outside Noordwijk; he corresponded with National Socialists from Noordwijk who went to the front. In many letters to schools, church institutions and NSB officials, Beukers expressed his National Socialism and his impatience and dissatisfaction with opponents of National Socialism. His confident and headstrong behavior provoked

⁷⁶⁵ 1930 www.volkstellingen.nl, consulted on December 27th 2012;RAL, collectie Slats, January 1st, 1943; inhabitants: 13161.

⁷⁶⁶ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 541-542; RAL, collectie Slats, Noordwijk doos 1, map5, installatie Musegaas; doos 3, map 6: 4662 out of 13161 inhabitants stayed in Noordwijk, of the NSB members and members of related organizations the figure was 90 out of 270. See also same pattern in Zandvoort: Aby Grupstra, “Zon, zand en NSB” (unpublished Masters' thesis).

much disapproval. He made himself very unpopular by denouncing many villagers. His untrustworthy behavior caused negative reactions. He reported the publication of a Catholic paper to the police in 1942 because it might have triggered smashing windows of NSB households in Noordwijk. And as a member of the *Landwacht*, he seized many cars. He admitted to having taken a can of meat as well. He made himself popular among NSB members but rather unpopular among everyone else.⁷⁶⁷

Other NSB neighbors provoked different reactions among nonmembers. As in Amsterdam, youth was an important element. Teun van de Niet, born in 1923, was a young carpenter. He was raised in a National Socialist family and joined the NSB and WA himself when he was 18 years old. His former schoolteacher testified favorably about him, as did his coworkers. He also maintained his contacts at the local soccer club.⁷⁶⁸ It was not only the youthful members who received favorable testimonies. Gijsbert van der Wiel (1888), a painter, joined the NSB in 1934, and one of his sons became an NJS member. He had some minor functions within the NSB. In his file one can find a list of approximately 100 people who signed a letter in which was stated that he was a good-hearted person because he had helped them to escape deportation for work in Germany.⁷⁶⁹

Jan Muysen, born in 1908, was an active National Socialist; he joined the WA and the *Landstorm*. According to Muysen himself and many of his letters, he was an “inveterate idealist” who completely lost himself in the NSB. However, his neighbors and coworkers still maintained good relationships with him. His chief, the director of public works, saw Muysen as a “good officer,” who never encountered any problems and never acted provocatively; he even attempted to spare Noordwijk from German violence. In his letters from Veenendaal, where he served in the *Landwacht*, to his mother in Noordwijk, he expressed his National Socialist feelings regularly.⁷⁷⁰ According to her neighbor, they still talked with each other during the occupation and Muysen’s mother never expressed any

⁷⁶⁷ NA, CABR, file37445.

⁷⁶⁸ NA, CABR, file37223.

⁷⁶⁹ NA, CABR, file91225.

⁷⁷⁰ “Muysen was een goed ambtenaar. Nimmer hebben wij eenige last van hem gehad. Hij was een rechtvaardige idealist. Hij heeft altijd, zooveel als in zijn vermogen was, getracht Noordwijk voor het geweld der Duitschers te sparen. Nimmer is hij provocerend opgetreden.”; NA, CABR, file 37267. He helped his mother to get a new tobacco card by mentioning his work the *Landwacht*.

National Socialist ideas. Slats, the collector of the archival material, assessed her as “harmless.”⁷⁷¹

One of the other National Socialist women in Noordwijk was Elisabeth Bosman (1891), who never discussed politics with her neighbors and interacted with both NSB and non-NSB neighbors.⁷⁷² According to one of the latter, she never made any trouble. Another female member, Anna Dallinga, born in 1916, expressed her National Socialism in many letters to friends and family. Despite her National Socialism, her neighbors still gave positive or neutral statements about her.⁷⁷³ Apparently, she did not express her anti-Semitism to her neighbors, or her anti-Semitism was not a reason for her neighbors to detest her.

Not all female members were perceived as pleasant neighbors. Provocative behavior was particularly disapproved of. Catharina Hoffman, born in 1911, was an active NSB member. She insulted the Dutch royal family and the Dutch government in England. She reported many complaints about anti-NSB behavior and expressions to the police. According to one of her neighbors, who was visited by a policeman because of a complaint, she was a woman of the lowest – and an NSB member of the meanest – kind.⁷⁷⁴ Hoffman regularly quarreled with neighbors. She testified that she indeed hated the Dutch government. After her internment in May 1940, she became more fanatic than before and expressed to her neighbors that “her time finally had come.” Hoffman quarreled not only with her non-NSB neighbors but also with fellow NSB members. In the fall of 1940 she was expelled from the NSVO. She admitted having “a passionate (*driftig*) nature.”⁷⁷⁵ This is an example of the same anti-social behavior we have seen with some male NSB members in Hudsonstraat: if somebody was aggressive, criminal or less than decent, NSB membership was an extra reason to despise that person.

In conclusion we can say that the patterns of interaction of NSB members in Noordwijk did not significantly differ from those in Amsterdam. A person’s “decency” was more important than his or her party membership. In the case of maladjusted people, their membership increased the negative opinions; likewise, provocative, aggressive behavior and

⁷⁷¹ NA, CABR, file 95061.

⁷⁷² NA, CABR, file 94785. Also: file 110122, 94620.

⁷⁷³ NA, CABR, file 74278.

⁷⁷⁴ “was een vrouw van het laagste en een NSBster van het gemeenste soort”; NA, CABR, file 94817.

⁷⁷⁵ NA, CABR, file 94817 (PRA Leiden 3827).

open denunciations led to negative statements. An analysis of members of other small cities suggests the same dynamics.⁷⁷⁶

Different patterns of interaction

The previous case studies of three streets in Amsterdam offer insight into the patterns of interaction among different groups living in Amsterdam. However, one may hypothesize that interaction strongly differed between and in communities. The interaction in a more “anonymous” city life might be different from that in small villages. First, I will consider some of the general patterns of interaction before focusing on a sample drawn from a small village.

In the analysis of the larger sample several patterns become clear. As in the three streets, higher political participation did not necessarily lead to a lower level of interaction with nonmembers. Many members, active and non-active, maintained their prewar relationships with non-National Socialists.

The workplace was one of the social circles where people with different political views met. Work relations could still function despite party membership. Martinus Kriekaard, who owned a vegetable shop in Utrecht, had many non-NSB customers at his shop.⁷⁷⁷ Stephen Jansen, a conductor in Amsterdam, maintained his position with his orchestra.⁷⁷⁸ Theodor Esser, an NSB member in Haarlem from 1936, was viewed favorably: his former boss testified that “he behaved himself properly, including after May 1940.”⁷⁷⁹ And an NSB pharmacist in Leiden did not generate offense. According to his colleagues, he would never betray anyone; he only looked a little bit angry when he was confronted with patriotic remarks but did not cause any nuisance.⁷⁸⁰

The neighborhood is the second social circle. Neighborly relations could endure. In his postwar trial, the neighbors of a local NSB leader in Hilversum assessed him as a “very

⁷⁷⁶ Zeist, Zuilen, Bussum, Naarden, Zandvoort, Naarden, Maartensdijk.

⁷⁷⁷ NA, CABR, file 97135, 55699.

⁷⁷⁸ NA, CABR, file 18825. Others fired him.

⁷⁷⁹ “Ook na mei 1940 gedroeg hij zich zeer behoorlijk.”; NA, CABR, file 64563.

⁷⁸⁰ NA, CABR, file 37024.

humane man and a good patriot.”⁷⁸¹ Even Hendrik Schuilenburg, the man who established the National Socialist Museum had good contacts; one of its neighbors (not an NSB member) even visited this museum.⁷⁸²

What determined prolongation of interactions or estrangement? If it was not political behavior, and if it was not related to social circles, what was it then? One of the distinguishing factors was criminal behavior. The troublemakers in the neighborhood were most of the time bothersome figures in all social circles, before and during their NSB membership. We can see this by looking at the criminal NSB members. Gerrit den Hartog from Amsterdam was one such notorious troublemaker. He terrorized the neighborhood. Moreover, he had problems within the NSB and was expelled six times; thus, he rejoined the party regularly. One female NSB member declared in an NSB report about him: “He is a spoiled boaster with brooding evil thoughts and an impure character.”⁷⁸³ He also encountered problems with the Germans, who disliked any disobedience and robbery, and with the National Socialists. He was sentenced to one year in prison because of his attempt to rob Jews by presenting himself as a German policeman.⁷⁸⁴

Some NSB members were just notorious troublemakers. Not all marital troubles were politically related. The file of a very active NSB member in Woerden is filled with troubles and fights. From 1941 till 1944 he wrote letters to his neighbors, his wife, the mayor, a colleague and other NSB members; many of these letters have been saved in his postwar file. Apparently the troubles with his wife became so intense that she threatened him with a saw. Whereas the fights with his wife and his neighbor were non-political, he had many political troubles and fights with fellow NSB members as well. He quarreled with almost everyone around him, with each one about the subject their relationship was based upon.⁷⁸⁵

As mentioned in the street samples, some political divisions lay within families. At least two thirds of the NSB members of the CABR sample had family members who belonged to the NSB.⁷⁸⁶ Thus, a minority of members did not have any support for their

⁷⁸¹ NA, CABR, file 61151.

⁷⁸² NA, CABR, file 64233.

⁷⁸³ “Het is een over het paard getilde zwetser met broeiende slechte gedachten en een onzuivere inborst”; NIOD, file 316c.

⁷⁸⁴ NA, CABR, file 20109.

⁷⁸⁵ Letters of Johannes Oldenbroek from 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944; NA, CABR, file52561.

⁷⁸⁶ NA, CABR, 221 out of 322 members.

NSB membership from family members. In Utrecht, the political opposition of the wife of an NSB member even led to the termination of his membership. A fine example of a politically torn apart family is that of a director of a large company, mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation. The director, Willem Hoebee, had sympathized with the NSB in the 1930s but turned against the NSB in May 1940. However, his wife, daughter and son remained active NSB supporters.⁷⁸⁷ Their housekeeper could closely follow all developments within the household. She stated after the war that the relationships between family members before 1940 were rather good, but after May 1940, the battle started. At one moment, Mrs Hoebee threw a silver pitcher at her husband's head and her daughter expressed the hope that her father would be arrested. When his health deteriorated significantly, his wife announced that she would rather see him die today than tomorrow. The hatred was mutual. At the end of the occupation, Mr Hoebee named one of his friends as his heir.⁷⁸⁸

In addition to criminal behavior, provocative behavior led to rejection. Johan Wopkes was a "terror neighbor." He was born in 1902, a teacher in Amsterdam, who propagated National Socialism at every occasion; he talked about his three children as National Socialists. Many street dwellers feared and hated him. They testified that Wopkes was the worst NSB member in the neighborhood, provoking people in the street. In 1942, Wopkes had a political discussion on the street with one of his neighbors, whom he threatened to report to the intelligence service.⁷⁸⁹

The example of the troublemaker in Woerden was mainly based on letters written during the occupation. Letters and diaries from the period of 1940-1945 from National Socialists and nonmembers reveal similar patterns of interaction.⁷⁹⁰ A fanatic National Socialist girl, from an NSB family, kept a diary from 1942 till 1944. While she was an active NJS member and dated many German soldiers, she also had friends outside the National Socialist community. In 1943 she was sent to a boarding school in Hilversum. In Hilversum, she did not tell her friends about her NSB family and made friends with anti-NSB girls. Back in her hometown, Gouda, she returned to her mainly National Socialist friends. She adjusted

⁷⁸⁷ NA, CABR, file 17828.

⁷⁸⁸ At that time, his son had died in the German army; NA, CABR, file 17828; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 53.

⁷⁸⁹ NA, CABR, file 86527. In 1942 a mother prevented a letter of a son of a National Socialist front soldier from reaching her daughter by tearing the letter up; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, July 1st-2nd 1942.

⁷⁹⁰ NIOD, dagboekencollectie 244, files 714, 591, 1264, 1179, 1362, 1141, 1263, 1096, 1002.

herself to the political environments she was in. When she was back in her National Socialist environment in Gouda, she dated an anti-NSB boy, who tried to convince her – unsuccessfully – of the coming German defeat. While the affair ended before the liberation, the political dispute between the two short-term lovers was not the reason the affair ended.⁷⁹¹

Institutional exclusion versus individual interaction

Interactions between NSB members and their surroundings were dynamic over time. These dynamics were mainly visible in the interaction of NSB members within institutions and in the image of NSB members held by outsiders. First, the German invasion had led, especially among long-term NSB members, to strong feelings of superiority, which caused friction between NSB members and their surroundings. In the first year of the occupation, the deferred grant of political power led some frustrated NSB members to behave impudently and imprudently, which in turn led to irritation of the persons they complained to. The position of the NSB improved in the fall of 1941, and NSB members could enhance their power in local politics. While their struggle to the political top seemed to be rewarded with Mussert becoming the “Leader of the Dutch people” in December 1942, in reality, the political power base and membership shrank. For outsiders, the continuous “threat” of an NSB government was something to reject and fight against.⁷⁹² However, despite the negative image of the NSB, the party was able to attract new members in the first two years of the occupation.⁷⁹³ Not every individual was deterred by this image.

In the meanwhile, the interactions developed in time more in a centrifugal than centripetal direction. Unlike nonmembers, NSB members were exempted from handing in their radios and bicycles. Over one third of NSB members of the CABR sample kept their radios.⁷⁹⁴ Non-members had to guard NSB buildings and German institutions, whereas the

⁷⁹¹ NIOD, Dagboekencollectie 422, file 1002.

⁷⁹² Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie*, 246.

⁷⁹³ Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie*, 232.

⁷⁹⁴ NA, CABR 132 out of 322 files.

NSB members were exempted.⁷⁹⁵ From 1943 onwards, the discrepancy of duties between NSB members and nonmembers increased further. Initially, NSB members were excused from the *Arbeidseinsatz*.⁷⁹⁶ In addition, NSB members were more often permitted to stay in their houses, while others were evacuated.⁷⁹⁷ And in 1944, the generally detested *Landwacht* was established. All these political decisions and social developments created a framework in which the NSB group and non-NSB group became further estranged on a group level, though not on an individual level.

This study reveals that NSB members often continued their relations with neighbors, family members and coworkers. There is evidence that even active members were not necessarily viewed unfavorably by those around them. The nature of the reactions may be related to the setting in which NSB members expressed their National Socialist behavior. Some of the NSB member activities were easily noticed by neighbors: members hung NSB flags from their flagpoles, placed posters in their windows, and/or wore their NSB uniforms. Other member activities were less easily noticeable, such as party meetings, which were often held inside and out of public view. Many activities also took place outside the National Socialists' own living environment: large party gatherings were held on squares all over the city or in surrounding villages. Neighbors, family members and coworkers were not always aware of member activities.

Because NSB members were not always recognizable as such in all contexts, they could behave like non-NSB members. They had possibilities to work and have identities outside their NSB membership. Along with his or her National Socialist identity, a member could be a pleasant colleague, a fine neighbor or a decent person. This "mixed" identity of NSB members relates to the findings of Bosworth and Passmore, historians who argue that other identities such as being a husband, wife, coworker, Catholic or Protestant, determined the identity of a fascist as well. The identity of NSB members was highly related to circumstances as was their image among those around them.

Another factor that should be considered is the status of the NSB members' prewar relationships. Some members were already more isolated or rather nonconformist before joining the NSB. An indication of this nonconformist lifestyle is the high number of

⁷⁹⁵ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, February 2nd, 1943, 74; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* deel?; Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie*, 231.

⁷⁹⁶ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 494.

⁷⁹⁷ See Noordwijk.

divorces among NSB members. Unlike today, divorces were rare in the 1930s and 1940s in the Netherlands. The chances that an NSB member was divorced were approximately five times higher than those of an average Dutchmen, in the sample for this research. Former “misfits” maintained their outsider status. However, this outsider status may not have been fully caused by their membership.

Under certain conditions NSB membership led to negative reactions. For example, criminal NSB members were viewed unfavorably by those around them. In their case, NSB membership was a catalyst of previously held negative opinions. Witnesses testified negatively when an NSB member hassled or denounced people. In these cases, the testimonies corresponded with the general negative image of the NSB.

Beyond criminal behavior, there were a few other reasons for negative testimonies. The main determinants of individual rejection are: aggressive behavior, fanaticism, denunciations (unreliability), financial prosperity and provocation. Thus, negative reactions followed when an NSB member terrorized his neighborhood, denounced his colleagues, profited from his membership financially or provoked people surrounding him. However, if an NSB member refrained from these behaviors, the testimonies were mostly neutral or positive. NSB membership was not a sufficient reason to detest someone.

When an NSB member did behave violently, aggressively, or provocatively, his or her NSB membership was seen as a very negative factor. Such a judgment is also related to the general opinion about NSB membership that is visible or implicit in the testimonies. NSB members were indecent, “horrible” people. For that reason, favorably judged people were described in terms such as “despite their NSB membership, he was still a decent person.” The negative image of *the* NSB member is widespread and visible in every statement of neighbors, colleagues and family members.⁷⁹⁸

There are many attenuating variables and reasons for neighbors and coworkers to testify favorably about NSB members. In general, extenuating circumstances included helpfulness, being young and growing up in a National Socialist family, quiet behavior, being “normal” and not causing any trouble.⁷⁹⁹ The positive or negative opinion was largely related

⁷⁹⁸ General negative image: Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*; Hirschfeld, *Bezetting en collaboratie*, 246-247; Van der Boom, *We leven nog*.

⁷⁹⁹ This pattern of social interaction and connections with the “outside world” is also visible in the lives of Dutch and British communists from 1901 till 1970; Elke Weesjes, *Children of the Red Flag. Growing up in a communist family during the Cold War* (Sussex University 2010) 24.

to the extent to which his or her NSB membership affected the activities of the NSB member and thus the non-NSB member personally. Many postwar testimonies seem rather indifferent about the National Socialist character of their neighbors, family members or friends, which they regarded as less important than deeds. Therefore, the ideological differences seem less important than provocative behavior. Thus, if NSB members did not create any problems, witnesses exempted these members from the general, negative image.

As long as the personal sphere was respected and people were not personally offended, the statements of their neighbors were positive. This element is also present in the judicial decisions. The jurist Belinfante concluded in his study of the prosecution of collaborators that those who had harmed others were punished more harshly than those who were “only members of the NSB.” Judges treated “normal” crimes such as murder or maltreatment more severely than political deeds.⁸⁰⁰

This result may say something about the level of fear within Dutch occupied society. A sociologist’s analysis of East German society reveals how a high level of fear in a totalitarian society can destroy relationships and trust between citizens; apparently, this mechanism was not fully operational in the Netherlands.⁸⁰¹ This difference may also be related to the early belief in a German defeat; the first thoughts about the punishment of former NSB members dated from the fall of 1940.⁸⁰² The belief in an Allied triumph increased with the victory at Stalingrad in February 1943.

The situation for every individual National Socialist would change dramatically after Mad Tuesday, in September 1944. Approximately half of the National Socialists fled to the (north-) eastern parts of the Netherlands or to Germany and the internal party organization collapsed, while at the same time, the internal police organ, the *Landwacht*, became more active and violent than ever before. These developments, of course, affected the patterns of interactions. Because of the interconnection between all these levels, they will be discussed together in the chapter about the final stage.

⁸⁰⁰ Belinfante, *In plaats van bijltjesdag*, 479.

⁸⁰¹ Beate Völker and Henk Flap, ‘Weak ties as a liability. The case of East Germany’, *Rationality and Society* 4 (2001) 397-428.

⁸⁰² Van der Boom, *We leven nog*, 41, 102, 105

5. The final stage: disillusion, disintegration and radicalization

Introduction

On Sunday, September 3rd, 1944, the Allied forces liberated Brussels; Antwerp followed the next day. Thus, the Dutch believed they could be liberated any minute. Rumors about an imminent German defeat were widespread. These rumors were given weight by the English radio announcement about the arrival of the Allied army in Breda in the southern part of the Netherlands. People told each other crazy stories about the approaching Allied army. Because of all these stories, September 5th was labeled “Mad Tuesday” (*Dolle Dinsdag*).⁸⁰³

These developments gladdened most Dutch citizens but troubled NSB members. Thinking their defeat was at hand, the German and Dutch National Socialists panicked. They dreaded the long-anticipated retribution. Because of their fear of retribution, NSB leaders chose to destroy troublesome documents in the Netherlands and to send NSB women and children to Germany. Nearly half of the NSB members, including a number of men, fled eastwards.⁸⁰⁴ In the CABR sample over one third fled after Mad Tuesday.⁸⁰⁵ From that moment onwards, the NSB was split in two, each group with its own perception of the impending Nazi defeat.

Almost half of the NSB members fled to Germany, thus excluding themselves physically from Dutch society. However, their temporary residence in Germany did not disrupt their ties with the Netherlands and with the NSB. Within this specific atmosphere they developed their ideas about National Socialism, the NSB, the future of National Socialism and their own future.

NSB members who stayed in the Netherlands were confronted with a deteriorating NSB organization. They reacted differently to the altered organization and perspectives for the future; some persevered in their beliefs, while other NSB members became disillusioned. The historian Kooy noticed this pattern of simultaneous radicalization and disillusion in his study of the NSB members in Winterswijk.⁸⁰⁶ Disillusion led to a new group in the Netherlands: NSB members who resigned their membership. Their different reasons for

⁸⁰³ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 136-142.

⁸⁰⁴ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* Xb, 281.

⁸⁰⁵ NA, CABR-files, 131 out of 322.

⁸⁰⁶ Kooy, *Echev*, 183, 225-226; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 185.

their resignations will be analyzed in this chapter.

The other category stayed in the Netherlands and retained its NSB membership; they persevered in their beliefs. This group was confronted with the disintegration of the NSB as well, and people belonging to this group had to rethink their relationship with the NSB. Their feelings of connectedness to their fellow members could have been enhanced in this final stage because of their shared uncertainty about the future. Under uncertain conditions people strongly identify with highly distinct entities.⁸⁰⁷ This connection may be an explanation for the clinging of NSB members to the NSB group. Moreover, many NSB members may not have seen other options beyond clinging to their NSB identities.

Within those NSB members remaining in the Netherlands a subgroup emerged; the most active group of NSB members in the Netherlands had been drafted into the *Landwacht*. These men decided to work for the violent National Socialist internal police organization. This internal police organization gradually developed into a militia that came increasingly under the supervision of the German authorities. Perhaps the *Landwacht* members were attracted to the organization because of the insecure situation that emerged after the alleged defeat. According to the psychologist Russel Spears, people are more likely to support violence if other avenues of change are ineffective, and desperate circumstances call for desperate measures.⁸⁰⁸ The insecure – one might even say “desperate”- period after Mad Tuesday led to a new impulse for the organization of the *Landwacht* because Mussert took the opportunity to apply pressure to male NSB members to join. Consequently, the *Landwacht* organization grew and became the main active National Socialist organization in the Netherlands.

Thus, the NSB members were divided into three different groups and a sub-group: the ones who withdrew (and thus in fact became nonmembers), NSB members in Germany, and NSB members in the Netherlands, the final group including a sub-division of radical *Landwacht* men. Each group responded to the changing war opportunities and perceived the situation in its own way. After the alleged Allied victory in September 1944, the interactions, ideological commitments, activities and violence changed dramatically. Because the levels intertwined strongly, I analyze these levels together in this final stage of the German

⁸⁰⁷ Sherman, Hogg, Maitner, ‘Perceived Polarization: Reconciling Ingroup and Intergroup Perceptions Under Uncertainty’, 96.

⁸⁰⁸ Russell Spears, ‘Group rationale, collective sense’, 10.

occupation.

In order to analyze these groups on a grassroots level I have collected letters from the archives: letters of people who resigned their membership and letters of members who fled to Germany with their family members. These letters are interesting new sources to study this period of disintegration, disillusion and radicalization.

The eight months following the September crisis were an unsafe period for the Dutch. The period following the September crisis was characterized by the German declaration of a “total war,” which led to increasing terror against Dutch citizens.⁸⁰⁹ The war atmosphere was visible everywhere, for both nonmembers and NSB members. All inhabitants of the not-yet-liberated northern provinces were confronted with a harsh winter and food shortages. In the so-called Hunger Winter between 15,000 and 25,000 people died because of the shortages.⁸¹⁰ The perils of the war, food shortages, the disintegration of the local government and the increased Nazi terror led to a tangible war situation.⁸¹¹ The period was filled with fear and hope about the future. In the case of NSB members, the fear became pressing and their hope was eclipsed by wishful thinking.

Disillusion

Mad Tuesday seemed the perfect opportunity for NSB members to quit the party. Unfortunately, it is unclear how many members resigned and how many stayed active members.⁸¹² However, we have some insights into the reasons for resignation because of the letters NSB members wrote to the NSB. This is a new source to analyze resignation and disillusion. Many letters of resignation ended up in the NSB archive, and these letters are an interesting source. Most of the remaining letters are from Utrecht and Amsterdam.⁸¹³ The letters from Amsterdam members are the most extensive. Sixty-four resignation letters from Amsterdam members are dated from August 1944 till March 1945.⁸¹⁴ All NSB members tried

⁸⁰⁹ Peter Romijn, “‘Restoration of Confidence’: The Purge of Local Government in the Netherlands as a Problem of Postwar Reconstruction” in: Deák, Gross, Judt, eds, *The politics of retribution in Europe 173-193*, here 177.

⁸¹⁰ Naar CBS, 1948; <http://www.niod.knaw.nl/nl/content.asp?s=/nl/CijfermateriaalDuitsebezetting.html>, consulted on December 27th, 2012.

⁸¹¹ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 566-567.

⁸¹² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, Xb, 315; Donker and Faber, *Bijzonder gewoon*, 53.

⁸¹³ NSB Utrecht, September 1944-April 1945.

⁸¹⁴ Of these letters, 24 were written in September 1944.

to justify their resignation by mentioning various reasons.

A less obvious reason for resignation from the NSB was most often stated as a key reason in the letters of resignation: frustration with the malfunctioning NSB organization.⁸¹⁵ Members often expressed their “deep disappointment” toward the NSB, its leaders and its members.⁸¹⁶ Therefore, members commented on the organization from which they were resigning. They blamed the organization instead of their own choices. Thus, members avoided seeing themselves as changeable and “cowardly” characters. The organization of the evacuation eastwards was blamed as well. A few members resigned when they returned from their stay in Germany. One member mentioned his negative experiences in Germany as one of the main reasons to resign.⁸¹⁷ Another member expressed his discontent about the journey to the east. The NSB evacuated him with his family to Westerbork. In his eyes, the organization was problematic, and the behavior of other members filled him with “disgust.” Despite his aversion towards the NSB organization, he maintained his belief in National Socialism.⁸¹⁸ For these members, their disappointment in the organization of the NSB was the main reason they left the party, not their disappointment or disillusion with National Socialist ideology.

It is a pattern one can see in the majority of the letters: it was the organization that had changed, while they had remained the same person. NSB members blamed the organization in order to portray themselves as stable personalities and maintain their self-esteem. They sought the reasons for leaving the party outside themselves not internally. Apparently, it was more difficult for members to distance themselves from the ideology they had believed in or still believed in. It was easier to blame something outside their belief system: the faltering organization. The resignation letters do not reveal whether the faltering functioning of the NSB was the real reason. It is quite possible that it is not. However, these letters do show us that NSB members willingly blackened the NSB in order to maintain a positive self-image.

Some members stressed other non-political reasons. They focused on personal

⁸¹⁵ NIOD, 123, file 1918: January 1945, JN Varenhorst.

⁸¹⁶ NIOD, 123, file1918, November 7th, 1944, NJ Voormeulen.

⁸¹⁷ NIOD, 123, file1918, December 4th, 1944, PA Bosman.

⁸¹⁸ NIOD, 123, file1918, November 8th, 1944, C Scheffer; “met walging vervuld.”

affairs as the main reason for leaving the party.⁸¹⁹ One female member resigned because her NSB husband – the reason for her membership - left her for another woman.⁸²⁰ One man mentioned the importance of “domestic happiness.”⁸²¹ But most personal affairs were related to the political situation. Two female members openly expressed their fear of retribution, not for themselves, but for their family. They feared the retribution promised by the resistance movement.⁸²² These women expressed their wish to protect their family: a female virtue. Thus, members formulated personal reasons such as the protection of domestic happiness or the safety of their own family. In this manner, they drew a positive picture of themselves, full of virtues instead of fear. Moreover, these female virtues also connected to the National Socialist ideas about female behavior. Thus, the internal mindset remained unchanged and unchallenged. Again, personal weaknesses as reasons for resignation were avoided.

Another way of keeping up appearances was stressing renewed interest in religion. As mentioned in chapters 1 and 3, a tension existed between National Socialist ideology and Christianity. The Catholic Church officially allowed former NSB members to return to the church. Two members explicitly mentioned their return to the Catholic Church as a reason for resigning from the party.⁸²³ Another member mentioned Christianity in general as his reason for quitting the NSB.⁸²⁴ He added that he still sympathized with his NSB leader and did not lose his faith in National Socialism. Religion as a reason was also a motive that did not call into question someone’s weakness of character or ideological changeability.

Some members literally mentioned their “disillusion.”⁸²⁵ A long-term member resigned in March 1945, stating that “the ideals, which are so beautifully displayed, became completely neglected” and he expressed his “regret at having given the best 12 years of his

⁸¹⁹ A male NSB member resigned in November 1944 because he had lost everything: his house, his wife, his family. Therefore, he refused to sacrifice anything else thing for the NSB. Thus, with an about-face, he blamed the NSB organization as well, as an organization which destroyed everything he had loved; NIOD, 123, file1918, November 16th, 1944; LC Appels.

⁸²⁰ NIOD, 123, file1918, November 27th, 1944, Frau B Spaan-Auwen.

⁸²¹ “Mijn huiselijk geluk boven alles gaat. Tevens in het feit dat het optreden van de Landwacht in de dagen van de spanning zulk een figuur heeft geslagen die ik niet met mijn eer en geweten kan overeenbrengen.”; NIOD, 123, file 1918, September 13th, 1944; H. v.d. Bosch.

⁸²² NIOD, 123, file 1918: August 15th, 1944, Ms R. Lugthart; September 21st, 1944, Mrs J.S.J. van Wijk- van Beek (her husband died on the Eastern Front).

⁸²³ NIOD, 123, file 1918, September 19th, 1944, NJ de Rooy; November 23rd, 1944, H.P. Rijkhoffe.

⁸²⁴ NIOD, 123, file1918, October 15th, 1944, Joh. v.d. Steen.

⁸²⁵ NIOD, 123, file1918, February 17th, 1945, H. Mulder; “Ik ben de 62 reeds gepasseerd, beter vind als een vergeten burger, dan als een verlaten idealist mijn verdere leven te slijten”; NIOD, 123, file1918, September 17th, 1944, N.J.A. Lagerwey.

life for an ideal, which proved to be a great fiction.”⁸²⁶ He did not blame the ideals but the way the NSB had executed these ideals. Therefore, he again blamed the organization instead of the ideology. A resignation letter from a postwar file from a NSB member in Hilversum shows disillusion with humanity in general. This member resigned in February 1944 because “even the NSB” was not able to construct a new society. He literally distanced himself from “cowardice” by stating that it “would not be cowardly to leave, but it would be cowardly to stay against my conscience.”⁸²⁷

Members tried to avoid giving a “cowardly” impression. Therefore, the most obvious reason, the changing fortunes of war, remained largely unmentioned; almost none of the members mentioned the changing tide of the war as a reason to resign their membership. Only one NSB member explicitly admitted to having lost faith in a German victory.⁸²⁸ Most members tried to keep up the appearance of fearlessness. For this reason, members distanced themselves from those members leaving out of fear of an expected German defeat.⁸²⁹ A couple of NSB members, who resigned in October, mentioned that they did not want to resign in the critical days of September.⁸³⁰ Thus, they disassociated themselves from “cowardly” members.

In general, the majority of these 64 NSB members mentioned their disappointment with the NSB organization as the main reason for their resignation. In these letters disillusion was blamed on the National Socialist organizations, not on the Nazi ideology. Members wished to avoid the image of a changeable character, full of weaknesses and fear of a German defeat. Therefore, they blamed external factors: the church forced them, they wanted to protect their family and above all: the NSB had itself to blame.

⁸²⁶ “De zoo mooi weergegeven idealen zijn in de praktijk volkomen verwaarloosd geworden.’ And slechts mijn spijt over uitdrukken dat ik 12 van de beste jaren van mijn leven heb gegeven voor een vermeend ideaal, hetwelk achteraf blijkt een groote fictie te zijn” NIOD, 123, file1918; March 3rd, 1945, H. Visscher.

⁸²⁷ “Ik zie het echter nu zoo, dat het niet meer laf is om te gaan, maar laf zou zijn om te blijven tegen mijn geweten in. Ik heb thans de overtuiging dat ook de N.S.B. niet in staat is om een betere samenleving te stimuleeren en op te bouwen.”; letter February 21st, 1944; NA, CABR, file74405. .

⁸²⁸ NIOD, 123, file1918: September 11th, 1944; writer claims to have written the letter on August 20th 1944.

⁸²⁹ NIOD, 123, file1918: September 11th, 1944; writer claims to have written the letter on August 20th, 1944. And Oosterveer and Oosterveer-Boonstra, January 1st, 1945; December 4th, 1944, PA Bosman.

⁸³⁰ NIOD, 123, file1918: October 15th, 1944, J. Mathot; October 16th, 1944, R Berends.

Refugees in Germany

The second group of NSB members were those who had fled to Germany. They panicked in the early days of September 1944 and left their homes.⁸³¹ They travelled through the eastern part of the Netherlands and were assigned different placements in Germany.

For the NSB the evacuation was a difficult process. The NSB organization had problems keeping its members under control. The NSB lacked trains to transport all members to the eastern part of the Netherlands and to Germany. Moreover, the NSB wanted the useful male NSB members to stay in the Netherlands. The NSB leaders intended to evacuate only NSB women, children, the disabled and the elderly; however, some men managed to join their families. According to De Jong, approximately half of all male, female, young and old members fled, nervously and in a disorderly manner. Of this group, 65,000 collaborators, including NSB members, arrived in Germany; half of whom settled in the Lüneburgerheide. The others stayed in the eastern or northern parts of the Netherlands.⁸³²

After their arrival in Germany, some male NSB members were separated from their wives and children.⁸³³ The citizens of the host country were not always very pleased about the arrival of the Dutch refugees. Some Germans even perceived the NSB members as traitors to their home country. Moreover, the refugees all needed housing and food, which Germany had to provide.⁸³⁴

In Germany, Dutch National Socialists experienced a change in their position in society: in the Netherlands they were seen as outsiders, while in Germany they were refugees.⁸³⁵ The experiences of NSB members in Germany can be analyzed by reading the letters they wrote to family members and friends in other parts of Germany and in the Netherlands. The postwar judicial investigators collected these letters. In these letters members wrote about their perception of the war, of Germany and of National Socialism. The letters are full of hope, fear, reassurances and plans for the future.

One of the main objectives was assuring their loved ones about their situation. Thus,

⁸³¹ Leiden, dagboeken Tuesday September 5th, 1944; 'De NSB'ers verlaten in paniek Leiden?.

⁸³² De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk X*, 281; Ismee Tames, *Besmette jeugd. Kinderen van NSB'ers na de oorlog* (Amsterdam 2009) 26. Many Belgian National Socialists fled as well; Bruno De Wever, *Greep naar de macht*, 620.

⁸³³ NIOD, Utrecht, February 25th, 1945, letter from Germany.

⁸³⁴ Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 29-30.

⁸³⁵ Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 29-30.

many members informed their readers about the large quantity of food in Germany. A girl wrote to her father that she was gaining weight in Germany and that she even had bacon.⁸³⁶ Another woman wrote a similar story to her father and her aunt. She bragged about the amount of food she and her husband had received. One could live like a “prince.”⁸³⁷ One of the reasons for these food-centered messages may have been to comfort family members back home. In Tames’s analysis of children of NSB members in Germany, the perspective on food is different: the children remembered shortages instead of plenty of food.⁸³⁸ But these memories could also be related to the “innocent child” story and the victimhood that children tried to claim; perhaps they remembered a more negative story than the situation had been in reality. And some memoirs of children also mentioned the existence of enough food; sometimes they disliked the specific dish, but they gained weight during their stay in Germany.⁸³⁹

It is possible that the food rations in Germany were reasonable but very different from what people were used to eating.⁸⁴⁰ The same mechanism is visible in the Netherlands in the period *before* September 1944. According to the historian Hein Klemann, until September 1944, the diet of the Dutch was actually healthier than before the occupation. The perception of food shortages was more serious than the actual food shortages: in other words, people still had something to eat, but because they were not able to eat the same food as they had before the war, it felt like a shortage of food in general.⁸⁴¹

Besides the abundance of food, the sustaining belief in a Nazi victory was a recurrent theme in letters from Germany.⁸⁴² It is interesting that many members in Germany did not write about the victory of the NSB or Mussert. They wrote about Germany and Hitler. A woman wrote about how she kept her faith in the “genius” Hitler: “I have never believed

⁸³⁶ Letter October 11th, 1944; NA, CABR, file 55673.

⁸³⁷ “Ik ben er echter nooit zo van overtuigd geweest dat Duitschland deze oorlog zal winnen als nu.”; NA, CABR, file 85816, letter December 6th, 1944, to father and aunt Sien; NA, CABR, file 105389, letter from Luneberg Germany, February 18th, 1945.

⁸³⁸ Tames, *Besmette jeugd*.

⁸³⁹ Iet van Bekkum, *Vlucht naar Duitsland, 1944-1945. Verslag aan de hand van brieven van 2 kinderen* (unpublished manuscript, 2006, collection NIOD) 8, 20, 29, 38, 50; Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 31-36.

⁸⁴⁰ They disliked the German food; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* Xb, 292.

⁸⁴¹ Klemann, H., *Nederland 1938-1947. De sociaal-economische ontwikkeling in jaren van oorlog en bezetting* (Amsterdam 2002); Trienekens, G, *Tussen ons volk en de honger. De voedselvoorziening 1940-1945* (Soest 1985); Vrints, A. “Alles is van ons”. Anonieme brieven over de voedselvoorziening in Nederland tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog” *BMGN-LCHR* 126:3 (2011) 25-51.

⁸⁴² NA, CABR, file 105398, March 4th, 1945, letter to sister-in-law and brother; Na, CABR, file 105244, letter October 10th, 1944, from Germany.

more strongly in Germany's victory than right now."⁸⁴³ Apparently, they were fully adjusted to the German Nazi environment and did not see a difference between the German and Dutch National Socialist cause. NSB members in Germany seemed to identify themselves increasingly with the German Nazis.⁸⁴⁴

While the previous paragraphs may have suggested that everything was "fine" in Germany, not all members were happy about their situation as evacuees. A girl in Hamburg wrote to her aunt that she wanted to leave as soon as possible because it was a "giant mess" and she was homesick.⁸⁴⁵ Another problem that was mentioned was moral decay. A woman wrote to her husband in the Netherlands about children drinking beer.⁸⁴⁶ On January 25th 1945, Mussert wrote a letter to Seyss Inquart expressing his concern about a group of 14-year-old National Socialist girls who were paired with German soldiers on New Year's Eve, with the idea that they would have sex.⁸⁴⁷ Historian De Jong also observed these annoyances about "asocial" members and Germans in his analysis of letters from several NSB officials in Germany.⁸⁴⁸

The letters sent from NSB members on the German Eastern Front formed a separate category. In September 1944, a Dutch soldier sent a letter to his parents, describing his situation in Germany as follows: "It is hard here, but you have to sacrifice something for the final victory." He strongly believed in a quick victory.⁸⁴⁹ Other soldiers wrote about their belief in the Nazi victory as well.⁸⁵⁰ The fact that soldiers wrote about their belief in the Nazi victory is not strange; on the one hand, they were fully integrated into the war culture at the front⁸⁵¹ and, on the other hand, the letters were censored. Thus, even had the soldiers been disillusioned, they would not have written about it to their family members.

The soldiers were not the only ones who were connected with the Nazi war effort.

⁸⁴³ "Ik ben er echter nooit zo van overtuigd geweest dat Duitschland deze oorlog zal winnen als nu."; NA, CABR, file 85816, letter December 6th, 1944, to father and aunt Sien; NA, CABR, file 105389, letter from Luneberg Germany, February 18th, 1945.

⁸⁴⁴ NA, CABR, file 19346, 94196, letter December 13th, 1944, December 22nd, 1944; Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 26.

⁸⁴⁵ NA, CABR, file 105389, letter from Mies, Hamburg to aunt Eva, January 8th, 1945.

⁸⁴⁶ NA, CABR, file 97235, 55723, letter November 8th, 1944 from Germany to father in the Netherlands.

⁸⁴⁷ "Voel mij verantwoordelijk voor deze meisjes die in september het land verlaten moesten als gevolg van het nationaalsocialisme van hun ouders. Moeten direct terug,, anders wordt het nationaalsocialisme in de grondvesten geschokt."; letter Mussert to Seyss-Inquart, January 25th, 1945; NIOD 123, file 252.:

⁸⁴⁸ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk Xb*, 291-299; Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 32.

⁸⁴⁹ "Is wel zwaar hier maar ja voor de eindoverwinning moet je wat over hebben"; letter September 15th, 1944, Germany; NA, CABR, file 80 ..

⁸⁵⁰ NA, CABR, file 105389, letter December 28th, 1944.

⁸⁵¹ On the camaraderie between soldiers: Thomas Kuhne, *Kameradschaft*, 272.

The NSB evacuees experienced many war-related phenomena: some had travelled in a train from the Netherlands to Germany that was bombed, others saw shootings and bombings in Germany, NSB boys were recruited for the army, and woman and girls had to work for the war industry as well.⁸⁵²

The NSB members did not intend to stay permanently in Germany.⁸⁵³ Mussert had tried to repatriate them in 1944, without success. Only in January 1945, did he manage to get permission for the members to return.⁸⁵⁴ Many members came back in the early months of 1945, from January till March 1945. One member wrote in January 1945 how much he looked forward to being an active National Socialist in his village again.⁸⁵⁵ However, the NSB leadership did not always encourage the return of NSB members. A member from Utrecht had been promoted to foreman of a police company and therefore was discouraged from returning.⁸⁵⁶

While some were forced to stay, others were not so pleased to leave Germany and return back home. The reluctance was related to the (moderate) satisfaction about the situation in Germany and the rumors about the problems in the Netherlands. People feared what they would encounter when they returned. They had heard rumors about damaged houses and the shortages of food.⁸⁵⁷ One of the returnees regretted her return because she had appreciated the food and drink in Germany.⁸⁵⁸ A woman, who stayed in Germany with her five children, was also reluctant to leave in March 1945; she dreaded the journey.⁸⁵⁹ Another young female member regretted her departure from Germany; Germany had been very exciting and “much more cozy” in her opinion.⁸⁶⁰

The limited expectations were not unlike the reality. In first instance, the evacuees were lodged in hotels, schools and farms in the northern part of the Netherlands.⁸⁶¹ When

⁸⁵² NA, CABR, file 105244, letter April 1st, 1945; NIOD, 1480, January 30th, 1945; Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 35, 39.

⁸⁵³ NA, CABR, file 19346, 94196, Letter January 26th, 1945; Permit to return to the Netherlands.

⁸⁵⁴ Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 35-36.

⁸⁵⁵ “Ik zou dolgraag de inwoners van Wijk [bij Duurstede, JD] weer eens willen bewerken met VoVa”; NIOD, Utrecht, January 3rd, 1945.

⁸⁵⁶ NIOD Utrecht, February 22nd, 1945, bureauleider van Erp to district leader Van der Land.

⁸⁵⁷ NIOD, Utrecht, January 12th, 1945.

⁸⁵⁸ NA, CABR, file 105398, March 4th, 1945, letter to sister in law and brother.

⁸⁵⁹ NA, CABR, file 19346, 94196, March 25th, 1945; NA, CABR, file 21839, 94289, letters October 14th, 1944, December 17th, 1944, February 19th, 1945.

⁸⁶⁰ While her family quarreled often with the anti-NSB family who lived in the farm, they had plenty of food. She appreciated the food and the safety because Germany was very dangerous; NA, CABR, file 105244, Letter from Scheemda, Groningen, the Netherlands, April 1st, 1945 from Pieterella to Co.

⁸⁶¹ Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 39-49.

NSB members finally returned to their former municipalities, they could find an unpleasant surprise. Some of the houses had been taken over by other people; they had been abandoned without any surveillance. Depending on the local government and NSB officials, someone had looked after the houses or not.⁸⁶² Despite some surveillance and official guidelines about municipal protection, there were many reports of damaged houses.⁸⁶³ Houses of NSB members, who fled to Germany, were plundered or destroyed.⁸⁶⁴ The majority of these reports of damages were made in February and March 1945 when the house owners just had returned from Germany.

The damaged houses made the homecoming of NSB members often an unpleasant experience. They returned as unwelcome inhabitants, who were rejected by the people in their surroundings. While they had perceived themselves as evacuees or even as war victims, other Dutch citizens perceived them rather differently.⁸⁶⁵ Their stay in Germany had distanced them further from these non-NSB Dutch citizens, not only physically, but also mentally. NSB evacuees had identified themselves with the German cause and war machine. Thus, the NSB members returned from a militarized Germany – with which they sympathized – to a Dutch environment, where the majority of the people impatiently awaited the German defeat.

Disintegration

A third group of NSB members decided to stay in the Netherlands and to remain in the party. These members belonged to a disintegrating NSB, which struggled to reorganize itself. The members themselves were confronted with this malfunctioning NSB organization, the food shortages and the fear of forthcoming retribution. Members who decided not to resign their membership had mainly two options: to quietly dodge all NSB activities or to fight till the very end.

In the post-September period, the organization was confronted with a low level of

⁸⁶² NA, CABR, file 19346, 94196, March 25th, 1945, letter from Hilversum.

⁸⁶³ On February 6th, 1945, a female member complained to the NSB that her house was occupied. She demanded the immediate return of her residence; NIOD, Utrecht, February 6th, 1945, Mrs J vd Heubel- v. Putten; NIOD, Utrecht, March 12th, 1945; February 2nd, 1945 ; March 13th, 1945; March 16th, 1945. Municipal protection: NIOD, file1484, November 13th, 1944, letter of Evacuation office to the mayor of Amsterdam.

⁸⁶⁴ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, March 15th, 1945; April 15th, 1945; NIOD, Utrecht January 25th, 1945; NIOD, Utrecht, February 27th, 1945; March 12th, 1945, March 13th, 1945, March 16th, 1945.

⁸⁶⁵ Tames, *Besmette Jeugd*, 48-49.

activity and NSB members struggled with their belief in National Socialism. Interesting sources are available for the study of the processes of disillusion and radicalization during this period. Letters written by (former) NSB members were collected to be used at their postwar trials; the majority of these letters are from 1944 and 1945. In 37 cases out of the CABR-sample one or more letters were saved. In addition, a few diaries exist. These sources combined provide an interesting insight into the perceptions of a group of ideologically motivated people whose defeat seemed imminent. An analysis of these letters and diaries will show us this final stage of the occupation through the eyes of NSB members.

In the summer of 1944, the feelings of fear of retribution skyrocketed among NSB members. While rumors of retribution dated back to the fall of 1940, these rumors boomed after D-Day in June 1944, when the Allied forces landed in Normandy. The failed assassination attempts on Hitler in July 1944 increased the agitation, which is visible in the documents of individual NSB members. A prominent NSB member in Haarlem received a warning letter in his mailbox from the so-called “union of retribution,” wherein the possibility of his sudden death was added in parenthesis.⁸⁶⁶

In August 1944, an NSB propagandist from Hilversum wrote a letter to his ex-mistress, a nonmember. He wrote extensively about the unrest everywhere. While he still believed in Hitler’s secret weapons, he also asked her to bring all his manuscripts to a safe place in order to secure them for posterity. He even discussed the possibility of his own death. He added that he truly hoped that Hitler would win because it was “better for the majority of the people in Europe.”⁸⁶⁷ This letter shows us the mixture of fear and hope. On the one hand, he feared retribution, while on the other, he still believed in a Nazi victory.

In September, the fear of retribution became urgent. The early weeks of September were filled with panic and insecurity. On September 18th, 1944, an NSB member wrote to his girlfriend that he considered it was likely that “terrible things” would happen and that he was very nervous himself.⁸⁶⁸ The fiancée of an NSB soldier wrote to her fiancé about the horrible insecurity she had to endure. She felt the relief of non-NSB members about the evacuation

⁸⁶⁶ “Wij willen eindigen met U een lang en gelukkig leven toe te wensen (je kunt nooit weten, of je zoo in eens op straat doodgeschoten wordt!! Brrr!) en hopen U binnenkort nadere bijzonderheden over ‘Uw beurt’ te kunnen mededeelen. Met de vaderlandse groet: Wij blijven trouw.” Afz. De Vergeldingsbond D.V.B.; NA, CABR, file 42353. ‘

⁸⁶⁷ “Ik hoop dat Hitler wint. Het is beter voor het meereendeel der menschen in Europa”; Letter August 26th, 1944; NA, CABR, file 22952..

⁸⁶⁸ NA, CABR, file 105244, letter September 18th, 1944, from Han to Nel.

of NSB members. This insecurity was an important factor in the perceptions of NSB members. However, the insecurity was not all-encompassing, disrupting her life and plans for the future entirely. The young fiancée continued her preparation for their marriage: she even bought breakfast cloths.⁸⁶⁹

In order to have a closer look at an individual National Socialist life during and after Mad Tuesday, it is interesting to analyze the diary of a young girl from an NSB family in Gouda. During the end of August and the first weeks of September, Dini Vis wrote about the normal daily grind. That changed on Sunday September 3rd. Her parents discussed evacuating to Germany. Dini also mentioned the changes in the German army. The day after, she was very nervous. On Tuesday she tried to flee eastwards by train. However, the situation was chaotic: trains were full, late, damaged by shootings, or missing, or the trains were even not allowed to stop at the platform. It was a hectic day; she forgot to eat the whole day. Finally, they just walked home.⁸⁷⁰ The first days she had been nervous and worried, but during the weeks that followed she was “bored to death.”⁸⁷¹⁸⁷² In the period after Mad Tuesday, the main subjects of her writing are how bored she was and how much she liked to flirt with German soldiers. For that reason, she even regretted the fact that her house was not chosen as a billet for German soldiers.⁸⁷³ This diary shows us that the climax of uncertainty lay in the early weeks of September 1944. After this period, the main worries for this girl from an NSB milieu were those of a typical adolescent girl and not related to the war; except when they involved her beloved German soldiers.⁸⁷⁴

Some NSB members reacted aggressively to the insecurity in September by provoking their neighbors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, an NSB official in Kromme Mijdrechtstraat fired a gun in the air on Mad Tuesday, frightening the curious crowd surrounding the fleeing NSB members. Another member in Amsterdam asked his neighbor to watch his house and furniture when he left for Germany. The NSB member threatened the neighbor should he refuse. The neighbor went to the police, who said that

⁸⁶⁹ NA, CABR, file 69339, Letters from Woerden, September 11th, 14th, and 26th.

⁸⁷⁰ Waddinxveen. September 3rd, 8th, 1944; NIOD, Diary 1002.2.

⁸⁷¹ At the end of September, she pitied the people who lived in the cities that were “invaded” by the Allies and worried about the future. In the meantime a non-NSB boy tried to seduce her; she rejected him because she preferred German soldiers; September 29th, October 15th, 1944, NIOD Diary 1002.2.

⁸⁷² After the attack on a National Socialist, she scolded the “dirty” underground resistance movement; she hoped that the perpetrator would be tortured; October 16th, October 18th, 1944, Diary 1002.2.

⁸⁷³ November 1st, 1944 Diary 1002.2.

⁸⁷⁴ For children in Germany a similar pattern: Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 33.

they were powerless in these kinds of situations.⁸⁷⁵ Both men were members of the *Landwacht*, an organization that generally provoked disgust from the public, which will be discussed below.

Because approximately half of the NSB members fled to Germany and many members left the movement, the NSB organization disintegrated. The NSB leaders tried to prevent the exodus from their organization. On September 11th, 1944, Mussert's office issued a statement to all district leaders of the NSB, ordering all authorities to remain at their posts and all men to sign up for the *Landwacht*.⁸⁷⁶

Actually, the disintegration of the NBS organization had started before September 1944. In the beginning of 1944 problems arose with NSB officials, including a shortage of staff due to the competition with Dutch and German National Socialist organizations.⁸⁷⁷ After September, the shortage of staff became more severe. NSB buildings were left empty, which made them vulnerable to attack.⁸⁷⁸ In the period after the September crisis, the NSB tried to purify its organization, by excommunicating members who had misbehaved during this period.⁸⁷⁹ This final attempt at resurrection failed to lead to a new impulse. The previously hopeful prospects about a powerful and prominent NSB seemed to lie far behind.

After the September crisis, the NSB had to reflect on its situation and tried to regroup its members.⁸⁸⁰ The regrouping was problematic because many complained about the NSB organization. It was a period in which complaints about the chaotic September days flourished. In October and November 1944, many members wrote about their frustrations with fellow members, about quarrels among members and the people who resigned at a time, "when others were fighting and dying for National Socialism at the front."⁸⁸¹

Some local NSB members doggedly continued their NSB propaganda. Two of its

⁸⁷⁵ NA, CABR, file, 12657, 20974.

⁸⁷⁶ All women, disabled men and men above 60 years, who did not wish to evacuate were held responsible for their own fate. All men between 18 and 59 had to sign up for the *Landwacht*, with the exception of local NSB leaders. If it should become necessary to withdraw, that should happen in closed vehicles that were protected by the *Landwacht*; Utrecht 213-216, September 11th, 1944.

⁸⁷⁷ NA, CABR, file 26026 en 28345, letter January 27th, 1944 to Kardoes.

⁸⁷⁸ Empty NSB buildings and houses were an attractive object for destruction by needy and greedy citizens. In Heemstede, the NSB building was left empty by the local NSB organization. This empty building was an appealing target for children; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, December 28th, 1944; Heemstede gemeentepolitie, February 20th, 1945; reported officially to the police on March 20th, 1945.

⁸⁷⁹ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk Xb*, 317; NIOD, Utrecht, November 22nd, 1944, January 4th, 1945.

⁸⁸⁰ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in Oorlogstijd*, 576.

⁸⁸¹ NA, CABR, file 105244, letter October 3rd, 1944.

sub-organizations, Winterhulp and the NVD, were still active at a certain level till March 1945.⁸⁸² Even in April 1945, some remaining members tried to activate fellow members. One member from Utrecht wanted to sell newspapers on the street and wrote a letter to 80 members, but nobody answered his request.⁸⁸³ Many other local NSB leaders failed to carry out propaganda activities. NSB officials often mentioned the ambiguities of responsibilities and financial problems in their letters.⁸⁸⁴ In general, the activity level dropped dramatically. The number of copies of *VoVa* sold plummeted from 200,000 weekly to 15,000.⁸⁸⁵

One young local NSB official from Utrecht who worked at the headquarters, Pieter Hormann, struggled with his relationship with the NSB. He wrote many letters to his National Socialist family. In November 1944, he mentioned his deep disappointment with the NSB organization because everything had “collapsed like a house of cards.”⁸⁸⁶ He experienced the turbulent September days in the NSB headquarters in Utrecht. According to his own notes, he never left the NSB building. He expressed his displeasure about the cowardly behavior of many NSB officials, who “sneaked around” in their civilian clothes, which made him “sick of the whole thing.” He saw many NSB officials flee.⁸⁸⁷ Hormann’s disgust increased further after some of the officials returned to the building. In his eyes, these officials wrongly tried to accuse the ones who had remained behind of stealing. In addition, they continued gossiping, and filled days with discussion and reports. He concluded gloomily that: “The Movement was a fiction. The only thing the NSB has achieved is that many people found the road to National Socialism through the organization.” He continued to maintain his enduring belief in Mussert, Hitler and in National Socialism.⁸⁸⁸ In January, his faith in the NSB had dropped even further. He

⁸⁸² NIOD, Utrecht, December 15th, 1944; March 7th, 1945; March 10th, 1945; March 17th, 1945; Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 592, 595-596. Individual members still applied for coal or financial support to the NSB; NIOD, Utrecht, March 9th, 1945.

⁸⁸³ This member reported having sold 185 *Vovas* and 7 papers of the WA. He regretted the fact that after April 7, *Vovas* no longer appeared. Whenever they would reappear, he would sell them again, he promised; NIOD, Utrecht, April 15-16th, 1945.

⁸⁸⁴ NIOD, Utrecht, March 7th, 1945; NIOD, Utrecht, January 29th, 1945 and before.

⁸⁸⁵ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk Xb*, 312.

⁸⁸⁶ NA, CABR, file 76881; “als een kaartenhuis ineengestort,” November 13th, 1944, to his family.

⁸⁸⁷ NA, CABR, file 76881; “in civiel zien rondsluipen,” “ik werd misselijk van het hele gedoe,” November 13th, 1944, to his family.

⁸⁸⁸ “De Beweging was een fictie. Het eenigste wat de NSB heeft bereikt, dat een groot getal mensen de weg naar het nationaal-socialisme door haar heeft gevonden, maar zoals het reeds voor September was, zoo is het nu veel sterker, de NSB verouderd en de idealisten, zie die werkelijk strijder voor het nationaal-socialisme willen zijn streven de NSB voorbij en blijft van de NSB alleen de schim over. Ik pleeg geen verraad tegen over

complained about only hearing from the NSB when they needed his contribution. He assumed the end of the NSB had finally come.

Despite Hormann's loss of faith in the NSB organization, he still believed in his fellow members, his friends, and in the Nazi ideology. He stated that National Socialists could only become more fanatic because the harder they are attacked, the more fanatic they would become. He also maintained his belief in a German victory: "If asked when the war would be over, only one answer is right: when we have won it. Heil Hitler."⁸⁸⁹ In February 1945, Hormann is even a bit optimistic about the future. He made plans for the future.⁸⁹⁰ His letters show us the internal tensions among NSB members, similar to those in the letters of resignation. On the one hand, they struggled with the malfunctioning of the NSB organization, and on the other, they still believed in the National Socialist ideology and Nazi victory. Their loyalty remained with National Socialism, while their letters criticized the movement.

New Year failed to bring NSB members new chances. The winter cold and hunger prevailed, and the fear of retribution persisted. However, not all members gave up.⁸⁹¹ Like Hormann, members tried to be more positive from February 1945 onwards. In March 1945, the family of a *Landwacht* member dreamed about their reunion when the war was over. They planned a party on June 12th, on their 30-year anniversary and hoped for a family get-together in their hometown Leiden. Apparently, they failed to think about, or write about, the forthcoming defeat and retribution. Either they still believed in the Nazi victory or they pretended to in order to reassure their son.⁸⁹²

The persistence in a belief in a Nazi victory was also related to the doomsday scenarios of a Nazi defeat, which would mean "the crumbling of their world." A young NSB

de Leider als ik dit zeg. Voor hem moet deze tijd wel de grootste teleurstelling zijn."; NA, CABR, file 76881, November 13th, 1944, to his family.

⁸⁸⁹ "In deze tijd kan je alleen maar fanatieker worden als nationaal-socialist, we hebben altijd gezegd, hoe harder ze op ons los hakken hoe fanatieker we worden." and "Op de vraag wanneer de oorlog afgelopen is, is dan slechts een antwoord, en wel als wij hem gewonnen hebben. Heil Hitler"; NA, CABR, file 76881, Letter January 14th, 1945.

⁸⁹⁰ NA, CABR, file 76881, Letter February 18th, 1945, to his mother.

⁸⁹¹ In the rural area around Utrecht, the local NSB leader spoke to farmers about his wish to continue his work for Mussert and the NSB in February 1945; "Het is mijn vurigste wensch zoo door te mogen gaan, tot heil van ons Volk Met en voor onzen Leider Mussert wil ik de Gemeenschap dienen en alzoo medewerken aan de opbouw van een nieuw Europa en daarmede ook van ons zoo dierbaar Vaderland. Met Mussert voor Volk en Vaderland Hou Zee."; NIOD, Utrecht, file 1484, February 1945, Utrecht, Veenendaal.; Ad van Liempt, *Verzetshelden en moffenvrienden* (Amsterdam 2011) 35; "dat [geloof] houd ik vol tot misschien de Engelsen me de mond snoeren." 35, 37.

⁸⁹² Letters Leiden, March 8th, 13th, 1945 NA, CABR, file 95147; NIOD, Diary W.A.J.

man from Zeist wrote to his girlfriend, who had been evacuated to Friesland, about his hopes and fears about the future in March 1945. He wrote that “losing meant perishing,” which they had to prevent by all means.⁸⁹³ And if the anticipated victory could not be achieved, his expectations about retribution were far from hopeful. He expected “nothing but cruelty” from the antis and “their God”, who as a replica of the cruel antis would be cruel as well.⁸⁹⁴ The negative visions about retribution reinforced the dichotomy between losing and winning; although the wind was changing, members had to maintain their belief in the Nazi victory.

From Mad Tuesday onwards, the solidarity with the Germans increased. Members wrote as much about Hitler as about Mussert and included in their letters both the NSB slogan “Houzee” and “Heil Hitler.” Also in official letters the solidarity between German and Dutch National Socialists was stated.⁸⁹⁵ Thus, the NSB members both in Germany and in the Netherlands increasingly felt themselves connected with Nazi Germany.

Generally, NSB members hoped, like the rest of the population, that the war would be over as soon as possible, only with a different outcome.⁸⁹⁶ Therefore, many members tried to be positive in their letters about the future, perhaps sometimes against all odds. On April 2nd 1945, an NSB member from Maartensdijk (Utrecht area) wrote to his family about his concerns regarding the situation in Utrecht. He had heard rumors about damaged schools and poorly dressed and malnourished children. However, he wanted to avoid being “bleak as a Reformed pastor,” because “we keep the spirits up.”⁸⁹⁷⁸⁹⁸

On the same day, an active NSB member from Kromme Mijdrechtstraat in Amsterdam, Arie den Burger, wrote a more pessimistic letter to his National Socialist family. He wrote about all the things that had been stolen from their family’s house. He also mentioned the poor conditions in the city. His fellow members had disappointed him. He wanted to protect his family by resigning from membership because he knew something

⁸⁹³ “Verliezen is voor ons ondergang en ondergaan mogen, willen en kunnen we niet”; NA, CABR, file 105244, letter March 25th, 1945.

⁸⁹⁴ “Zou die God van die anti’s dan niet een heel klein beetje medelijden hebben met al die vrouwen en kinderen. Ach nee, zoo wreed als ze zelf zijn zoo wreed hebben ze ook hun God gemaakt.”; NA, CABR, file 105244, Letter March 25th, 1945.

⁸⁹⁵ NIOD, *Landwacht*, file 253, letter March 3rd, 1945.

⁸⁹⁶ “Hoop dat alles gauw voorbij is”; letter March 4th, 1945, from Amsterdam; NA, CABR, file 12657, 20974..

⁸⁹⁷ “Zoo somer als een gereformeerde dominee” and “wij houden er den moed in”; NA, CABR, file 55673. And on May 5th, a NSB leader used “Houzee” as a salutation in a letter.

⁸⁹⁸ NIOD, Utrecht May 5th, 1945.

horrible would happen as soon as the Allied forces invaded Amsterdam.⁸⁹⁹ Den Burger makes a defeated impression in his letter. The only little hope that he had left was that he still could resign from the movement. Another member of the *Landwacht* was also not convinced of the Nazi victory. He wrote in March 26th that something really special had to happen; otherwise the future would be dark; he hoped for the best.⁹⁰⁰

Unlike Den Burger, most people who did – or at least seemed to - believe in the Nazi victory became radicalized in their belief in National Socialism and wanted to sacrifice everything they had for a Nazi victory. On April 1st, 1945, a young NSB boy wrote to his father that his brother had signed up for the SS, which he approved of: “You can surely imagine that he would not be able to look us in the eyes, when the war has been won for us, and he did not help personally.”⁹⁰¹

Thus, while the first period of the September crisis was characterized by panic and disorder, the period thereafter was full of a combination of hope about a Nazi victory and fear of retribution; these two feelings reinforced each other. NSB members had nothing and everything to lose. In the winter of 1944-1945, NSB members in general perceived the pressing situation as “hit or miss.”⁹⁰²

Further radicalization

One National Socialist organization consisted of the most radical and violent National Socialists in the Netherlands during these perilous final eight months: the *Landwacht*. Its members were the most violent and visible Dutch National Socialists. The *Landwacht* included approximately 1250 professionals and 9000 local voluntary members in the summer of 1944. In September, Mussert summoned all male NSB members to join the

⁸⁹⁹ NA, CABR, file 20834 and 13419, Letter April 2nd, 1945.

⁹⁰⁰ “Er zal nog wel iets bijzonders moeten gebeuren anders zie ik het n donker in maar laten we nog maar hopen dat er iets gebeurd waardoor er een goede wending komt”; letter March 26th 1945 from Groningen; NA, CABR, file 11089.

⁹⁰¹ “Je kan je toch wel voorstellen dat hij ons niet oprecht zou durven aanzien als deze oorlog voor ons gewonnen is en hij zou er zijn persoonlijk deel niet bij hebben toegedragen”; letter April 1st, 1945, from Machiel to father; NA, CABR, file 105123, 85629.

⁹⁰² Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 34-35.

organization.⁹⁰³ According to De Jong, half of the pre-September *Landwacht* members resigned in September. During that same period, the NSB recruited and activated as many new men as possible. Whereas before September, the NSB checked everybody strictly, now they recruited even handicapped NSB members.⁹⁰⁴ Male returnees from Germany had to sign up as well, especially if their wives and children had remained in Germany.⁹⁰⁵ After September the *Landwacht*, enriched with the new recruits, consisted of 6000 professional and 2000 voluntary members: thus far more professional and fewer voluntary members than before, which meant that more members received a salary for their activities.⁹⁰⁶

The NSB ordered the *Landwacht* members to perform police tasks, assisting the Dutch and German police. In order to fulfill these tasks, members were ordered to control identification cards, enforce the night-time curfew, destroy the black market and track down hiding people. Thus, they executed the most unpopular and visible tasks of the Nazi occupation regime.⁹⁰⁷ To accomplish these tasks, *Landwacht* members were permitted to arrest people, search homes and make use of weapons.⁹⁰⁸

The members had to be energized to fulfill these unpopular tasks. Therefore, local leaders tried to motivate their members. The local NSB leader Beukers in Noordwijk hoped to increase the productivity of local NSB members by appealing to their local loyalties: “you don’t want to be protected by men from the neighboring village, do you?”⁹⁰⁹ In this case, as in the NSB propaganda, *Landwacht* members were energized by local competition.

Anyone who signed up for the *Landwacht* became a member of an active and unpopular organization. The negative image of *Landwacht* members is well known.⁹¹⁰ However, in the historiography of the Nazi occupation, the actions and perceptions of the

⁹⁰³ The members of the NSB youth organization were mainly left alone. Only the evacuated members from Amsterdam in the eastern Netherlands were recruited; ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, file 42620; Dagboek W.A.J.

⁹⁰⁴ NA, CABR, file 95147.

⁹⁰⁵ NA, CABR, file 94134; NA, CABR, Inv nr 21839, NA, CABR, Inv nr nr 94289; 11089; 22086; 97118, 56593.

⁹⁰⁶ De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, Xb, 201.

⁹⁰⁷ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 552-553; NA, CABR, File 97520, 18370, 14481, 56941, nr 86.

⁹⁰⁸ “Landwacht is ter beveiliging van de NSB en ordelievende bevolking in Nld, ter bestrijding van politieke moordenaars en saboteurs, voedselvoorziening, mag mensen vragen om te identificeren, arresteren, doorzoeken woningen, wapengebruik”; Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, letter of police commander in Rotterdam, April 5th, 1944. Members of the *Landwacht* used guns; Politiearchief Haarlem, file 4522, July-August 1944.

⁹⁰⁹ NA, CABR, file 37445; “zal toch niet de bedoeling zijn dat Katwijkse kameraden jullie moeten bewaken.”

⁹¹⁰ Havenaar, *Mussert*; Houwink ten Cate en in ‘t Veld, *Fout*, 108; De Jonge, *Nationaal-socialisme*, 180; Van der Zee, *Voor Führer, Volk en Vaderland*, 257.

Landwacht members themselves remains an unexplored subject. This study will explore their activities in order to shed some light on what they did and thought during the final stage of the occupation. Their postwar files reveal new perspectives on the members of this group.

Out of the CABR sample, 53 men participated in the *Landwacht*. These men were on average 40 years old when they participated in the *Landwacht*. The eldest was born in 1883 and the youngest in 1923: thus 61 and 21 years old in 1944. By far the majority of these men had had previous careers and experiences before joining the *Landwacht*. Coming from different backgrounds and age groups they were united in this active Nazi organization. Most had been connected with the NSB organization for a long time. The majority of the *Landwacht* members had actively participated in the NSB before joining the *Landwacht*; forty-one members had held official functions within an NSB organization, only twelve did not. Thirty-one had been a WA member. Thus, the *Landwacht* members generally had been active National Socialists, who, as WA members, had participated in violent actions on the streets. The majority believed in National Socialism; two thirds were ideologically committed to National Socialism.⁹¹¹ They had been loyal members; *Landwacht* members were mainly long-term National Socialists. Twenty-two men had joined after May 1940. This means that 31, more than half of the group, were prewar members. The latter is an interesting result, considering the fact that only one third of the NSB members during the occupation had been members before 1940.⁹¹² Thus in general, these men had been loyal, active, ideologically committed NSB members before joining the *Landwacht*. They had been formed in the National Socialist movement and prepared for their participation in the most radical National Socialist organization in a radical period.

The *Landwacht* members operated in a period—the winter of 1944-45-- in which many of the Dutch suffered from hunger and cold. The harsh situation was exacerbated by the policies of Seyss Inquart. At the end of September 1944, Seyss-Inquart prohibited food transports for six weeks, a reprisal for the railway strike.⁹¹³ This decision was one of the reasons that food and fuels were scarce in the so-called “Hunger Winter,” during which

⁹¹¹ 33 out of 53.

⁹¹² NA, CABR, File 12499, 18303, 18370, 85351, 107785, 22678, 22730, 52561, 64233, 56307, 56941 86, 64643, 56910, 14481, 110161, 70873, 62909, 109741, 109790, 56104, 63824, 77033, 707, 20295, 64359, 95147, 95935, 92364, 94134, 97520, 92501, 11089, 12657, 20974, 55724, 11089, 22086, . 57131, 42620, 20834, 13419, 21480, 21105, 14487, 85329, 2310, 63904, 87382, 21816.

⁹¹³ Romijn, *Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd*, 587.

approximately 20,000 people died because of food shortages and cold.⁹¹⁴

While most Dutch people living in the western parts of the Netherlands suffered from food and coal shortages, the *Landwacht* members had many options for obtaining food and fuels. The *Landwacht* members received several benefits from their job. The professional members of the *Landwacht* received a decent salary, per day or per month. In the summer of 1944, an older *Landwacht* member who worked on a temporary basis earned 0.75 guilders an hour during the day and 1 guilder an hour during the night.⁹¹⁵ While the salaries differed among members, in general, full time members received approximately 200 guilders a month.⁹¹⁶ Another interesting aspect revealed by the postwar files is the long-term functioning of the payment of salaries. The salary system of the *Landwacht* worked till the very end. In April 1945, members were still receiving their salaries.⁹¹⁷ In addition to their salaries, all members received extra distribution of food and goods.⁹¹⁸ Family members of *Landwacht* and *Landstorm* men received double portions of potatoes in the harsh winter of 1944-45.⁹¹⁹ One member even mentioned the extra food as a reason to join the *Landwacht*.⁹²⁰

Whereas the *Landwacht* members received benefits from the NSB, they also collected some extras themselves. Many former *Landwacht* members admitted having stolen food, wine, linen, radios and other electrical appliances when searching houses or arresting people.⁹²¹ Controlling the black market was a lucrative business as well. They could easily pilfer something.⁹²² The stealing by *Landwacht* members was revealed during their postwar trials.

The files of these trials also offer insights about how the *Landwacht* arrests proceeded. One of the *Landwacht* activities was trying to locate those in hiding. There are several examples of physical abuse in the files during the search for and arrest of these

⁹¹⁴ Naar CBS, 1948; <http://www.niod.knaw.nl/nl/content.asp?s=/nl/CijfermateriaalDuitsebezetting.htm>, consulted on December 27th 2012.

⁹¹⁵ NA, CABR, file 707.

⁹¹⁶ NA, CABR, CABR, file 707.

⁹¹⁷ NA, CABR, File 95147, was also handicapped. Another one 200 guilders a month file 92501; 205 guilders a month, file 20834 and 13419. One leading *Landwacht* member received 6449 a year.

⁹¹⁸ NA, CABR, File 21839, 94289, April 12th, 1945. In April still choosing whether to stay at Landwacht: 62909.

⁹¹⁸ NA, CABR, file 52561, 56104, 54405.

⁹¹⁹ High NBS officials received them as well; NA, CABR, File 56307; NIOD, Utrecht, file 1484, February 28th, 1945.

⁹²⁰ NA, CABR, File 56941.

⁹²¹ NA, CABR, file 37445; 14487.

⁹²² NA. CABR, file 64643; 56910.

people.⁹²³ *Landwacht* members were allowed to shoot a suspect but only if he was trying to escape or pointed his gun at the *Landwacht* member.⁹²⁴ This actually happened. In the very final phase, on April 27th, 1945, *Landwacht* members unsuccessfully tried to arrest a man and shot him dead while the man was trying to escape.⁹²⁵ These violent actions started before September 1944; at the end of August, two *Landwacht* members shot at an escaping cyclist.⁹²⁶ This violence was not an exception. Many arrests involved physical force, according to the statements of those who were arrested and the confessions of *Landwacht* members themselves.⁹²⁷ One member literally admitted at his trial to having treated an arrested man “pretty harshly.”⁹²⁸

Due to their pilfering and violence, the *Landwacht* members made themselves quite unpopular.⁹²⁹ The negative opinions were expressed not only in words but in deeds as well. *Landwacht* members were a popular target for resistance movements, who used violence. From 1943 onwards, there were assassination attempts on *Landwacht* members.⁹³⁰

Their negative image was sometimes shared among NSB members. NSB members expressed their doubts about the *Landwacht* in their resignation letters.⁹³¹ NSB members also wrote about their doubts about the *Landwacht* in letters to family members and friends. A female member expressed her joy when the *Landwacht* members left her village in the end of September 1944.⁹³² Another girl was relieved when on September 26th; the members of the *Landwacht* left her village.⁹³³ The negative image had reached NSB members in Germany too. In February 1945, one member in Germany wrote about his hope to repair the damage done by the *Landwacht* in the Netherlands.⁹³⁴

In general, NSB members had a negative image; were individual *Landwacht* members perceived as even worse? Here we can see the same pattern as in the interaction of “normal” NSB members. The most aggressive ones, and the ones who financially enriched themselves,

⁹²³ NA, CABR, File 20834,13419, 14487, 76881.

⁹²⁴ Archief Leiden, Slats, Sept 18th, 1944, HSSPF.

⁹²⁵ NA, CABR, File 97520.

⁹²⁶ NA, CABR, File 62909.

⁹²⁷ NA, CABR, File 64233.

⁹²⁸ “Het is mogelijk dat ik hem bij dit gesprek wat hardhandig heb aangepakt”; file 85351, 107785, 22678, 22730.

⁹²⁹ National Archives NA, July 27th, 1944.

⁹³⁰ NIOD, file 123, File 2126 and 2125; Kooistra and Oosthoek, *Recht op wraak*.

⁹³¹ NIOD, 123, File 1918: September 11th, 1944; writer claims to have written the letter on August 20th 1944.

⁹³² NA, CABR, file 69339, Letters from Woerden, September 26th, 1944.

⁹³³ NA, CABR, file 69339, Letters from Woerden, September 26th.

⁹³⁴ NA, CABR, File 105389, letter from Luneberg Germany, February 18th 1945.

were hated in their neighborhoods.⁹³⁵ A *Landwacht* member who used threats to order his neighbor to safeguard his house received very negative testimonies.⁹³⁶ More moderate members received more positive reactions.⁹³⁷ The reactions of those around the *Landwacht* member depended on the location of the member's activities. A member in Amsterdam's Zacharias Jansestraat was sent to Alkmaar and Hoorn, two cities 25 miles north of Amsterdam; here he arrested many people. However, because he was not active in his own neighborhood, his neighbors testified positively about him.⁹³⁸ One member was aware of this mechanism and asked for a transfer from the *Landwacht* in Amsterdam, where he had to seize bicycles, to an eastern province of the Netherlands.⁹³⁹

In the face of this public rejection *Landwacht* members bonded with each other. Letters of a *Landwacht* member to his fiancée in Bloemendaal show the conviviality and the camaraderie among members.⁹⁴⁰ Four members of the voluntary *Landwacht* decided to stay together in Bussum, ignoring the order to leave for other places. The four men together independently functioned in their municipality. This also means that the national leadership was not strong enough to maintain a strict, hierarchic structure.⁹⁴¹ This example shows us both the local initiatives and camaraderie. In the meanwhile, members of the *Landwacht* persevered in their belief in the Nazi victory, similar to the radicalization of German soldiers.⁹⁴² The importance of bonding fits into general patterns of extremist group behavior. The isolation from outsiders protected the members from critical challenges. Therefore, they could maintain their belief in a Nazi victory even when the signs of a Nazi defeat became overwhelming.⁹⁴³

However, some members were discouraged as a result of the declining war prospects or the activities of the *Landwacht* itself, and they wanted to resign from the *Landwacht*. While Mussert aimed at increasing the size and unity of the *Landwacht*, it was possible to leave the

⁹³⁵ NA, CABR, file 21480.

⁹³⁶ NA, CABR, file 12657, 20974.

⁹³⁷ NA, CABR, file 55724, 57131, 21105, 87382, 21816, 109790, 97118, 56593.

⁹³⁸ NA, CABR, file 85329, 2310, 63904.

⁹³⁹ NA, CABR, file 64359.

⁹⁴⁰ On February 20th; NA, CABR, file 42620, Letters February 5th, and 20th, and March 13th, 1945.

⁹⁴¹ NA, CABR, file 21839, nr 94289.

⁹⁴² NA, CABR, file 42620; Richard Bessel; *Germany 1945. From war to peace*. (New York 2009) 16-17.

⁹⁴³ Russel Hardin reinterprets Jeremy Bentham's fanaticism as a group-based phenomenon. "Fanaticism requires an exclusionary group because it needs isolation to protect spurious beliefs from critical challenges."; Breton et al., eds, *Political Extremism and Rationality* XV.

organization.⁹⁴⁴ The NSB agreed to allow members of the *Landwacht* to avoid participation in *Landwacht* activities if they worked for other NSB organizations.⁹⁴⁵ Participation in another NSB organization was thus seen as an acceptable excuse.

Other reasons were accepted as well. However, the NSB did not allow members to refuse all NSB activities without “good reasons.” One *Landwacht* member had voluntarily signed up because he wished to combat the black market. During one of his first actions, a colleague pilfered some things. He disapproved strongly of his stealing fellow *Landwacht* member. This theft, combined with his wife’s threats of divorce, led to his resignation from the *Landwacht* and the NSB.⁹⁴⁶ He was imprisoned for a few days. Resignations in April 1945 were punished as well. A *Landwacht* member who refused active service was arrested in April 1945.⁹⁴⁷ Two other *Landwacht* members who deserted in April 1945 were arrested because of this action.⁹⁴⁸ To sum up, one was permitted to resign if one was willing to still work in the NSB; otherwise resignation was punished.

Resignation was not always judged positively by a member’s National Socialist acquaintances. The wife of a *Landwacht* member wrote to her husband about the “nasty hypocrite” who resigned from the *Landwacht*.⁹⁴⁹ Perhaps she disliked the man because he deserted the sinking ship, while she stayed on board.

In addition to the *Landwacht*, another organization was mobilized. The *Landstorm* was supervised by the German *Waffen-SS*. While the preliminary task of the *Landwacht* was policing, members of the *Landstorm* had a military role; they had to defend the Nazi Netherlands against the Allied army. Because of all these reasons, the *Landstorm* was in fact a National Socialist organization but not an NSB organization; it was organized under German control. However, the *Landstorm* did recruit NSB members. One of the members, NSB member Jan Muysen from Noordwijk, wrote many letters to his mother from different *Landstorm* locations. This source shows us the military characteristics of the *Landstorm*. Muysen’s image of his himself is that of a soldier.⁹⁵⁰ On September 5th, he was excited about the forthcoming events; he looked forward to fighting and to throwing the Allied forces

⁹⁴⁴ NA, CABR, file18820; NA, CABR, file77033.

⁹⁴⁵ NA, CABR, file110161, 21046.

⁹⁴⁶ NA, CABR, file109790.

⁹⁴⁷ NA, CABR, file11089.

⁹⁴⁸ Heemstede gemeentepolitie, April 14th, 1945.

⁹⁴⁹ “Wat een gemeene huichelaars, ik ben woest gewoon weg”; Letter from Martha to her husband Varekamp, February 16th 1945; NA, CABR, file 11089.

⁹⁵⁰ Letter July 6th, 1944 from Veenendaal; NA, CABR, file 37267.

out.⁹⁵¹ He assumed he would be arrested if the Allied invasion succeeded. His letters show us how militarized this *Landstorm* division was. They acted and perceived themselves as soldiers. Because they were physically separated from the rest of society, their perception of the war situation was fully nazified: the options were a Nazi victory or being arrested by the Allied army. This correlated with the perceptions of National Socialists in the *Landwacht* and/or the NSB.

The National Socialist defeat

NSB members and nonmembers had thought about retribution from 1940 onwards; finally the moment had arrived. NSB members did not know what to expect, but they knew it would not be pleasant. They reacted differently to the forthcoming arrests. One member tried to hide and thus avoid the first chaotic days of the liberation. Some members still believed they had nothing to fear. The letters that came to light in the postwar NSB trials reveal many mixed feelings of persistence, disillusion, reassurance and disappointment. However, most members did not know what to do.⁹⁵² They just waited fatalistically for arrest.

For non-NSB members, it was *the* time to express pent-up hatred. The Dutch government in exile in London had warned everyone to refrain from arresting collaborators themselves because the arrests had to be executed in an orderly fashion. Whether the arrests were carried out chaotically or orderly depended on local circumstances. High-profile and despised NSB members received more attention; their arrests could be big happenings.⁹⁵³ When the leader of the Amsterdam youth NSB Ernst Zilver was arrested, a large group gathered around him and his associates. He was transported in a flatbed to prison.⁹⁵⁴ An active *Landwacht* member, who had financially flourished during the occupation, was beaten by his neighbors.⁹⁵⁵

As Romijn argues in his study on the purge of Dutch collaborators, in the end it was

⁹⁵¹ Letter July 3rd, 1944, and September 5th, 1944 from Veenendaal, CABR, file 37267.

⁹⁵² NA, CABR, file 12657, 20974; police report of arrest; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 143.

⁹⁵³ Tames, *Besmette jeugd*, 41-42; Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 142-144.

⁹⁵⁴ Damsma and Schumacher, *Hier woont een NSB'er*, 145-146; NIOD, Ernst Zilver, 'Alles voor het vaderland', 29.

⁹⁵⁵ NA, CABR, file64643.

not a desire for revenge which prevailed but pragmatism.⁹⁵⁶ In totality, 150,000 collaborators were arrested, including many NSB members; they were distributed among more than 100 prison camps in the Netherlands.⁹⁵⁷ During the days of the liberation, perhaps a dozen collaborators were lynched; within the camps approximately 40 to 50 prisoners died. Forty were put to death after a trial. In France over 10,000 collaborators were killed, and in Belgium 230 collaborators were sentenced to death. The arrest of 150,000 people was an enormous and chaotic undertaking.⁹⁵⁸

The insecure period, filled with fear of retribution and sometimes some hope, finally seemed to have come to an end in the Netherlands. Another insecure period started, involving their trials and sentences as well as their future as former NSB members within Dutch society. The camps with collaborators were packed; therefore the “lighter” cases were gradually freed. However, the return to society often went slowly because of discussions between officials of different institutions.⁹⁵⁹ The NSB members’ return to society, as well as their camp experiences is the subject of other research.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁶ Peter Romijn, *Snel, streng en rechtvaardig. De afrekening met de 'fonte' Nederlanders* (Amsterdam 2002).

⁹⁵⁷ Peter Romijn, *Streng, snel en rechtvaardig*; Donker and Faber, *Bijzonder gewoon*, 17; Belinfante, *In plaats van bijltjesdag*, 53.

⁹⁵⁸ Romijn, *Snel, streng en rechtvaardig*.

⁹⁵⁹ Romijn, *Snel, streng en rechtvaardig*.

⁹⁶⁰ Legacies of collaboration: Ismee Tames, Helen Grevers and Bram Enning.

Concluding remarks

This book studied the politicization of private life in the Netherlands during the German occupation. In the first three chapters, I argued that many Dutch National Socialists were ideologically committed and politically active and that a small group of National Socialists was violent. In the fourth chapter, I concluded that, despite their National Socialist affiliations, NSB members continued to interact with the surrounding non-NSB community and institutions. While the interactions and activities shifted over time, these developments were gradual.

In this chapter of final remarks I will focus on different levels of the lives of NSB members: the individual member, the member in his or her local environment, the member versus the party, and the NSB member in Dutch society.

Politicization: The individual member

NSB members belonged to a political movement that demanded full participation and thus the politicization of their private lives. One of the results of this research is the finding that on the local level the degree of politicization was high. Politicization is related to both ideological commitment and political participation. Two thirds of the CABR sample were more or less ideologically committed to Dutch National Socialist ideology. Thus, National Socialist ideology played a role in the lives of individual NSB members. The National Socialist mindset influenced individual members; this Nazi ideology was a revolutionary form of fascism. It was not always ideology that attracted members to the party, but National Socialist propaganda influenced the majority of NSB members towards adopting a National Socialist ideology.

They also made their membership visible: half of the CABR sample expressed its NSB membership by wearing an NSB badge, 40 % by wearing an NSB uniform, more than one out of three displayed an NSB flag, and half of the members had a function within the movement. Thus, NSB members were committed to both National Socialist ideology and action. The level of political participation was high. This is also related to the interconnectedness of ideology and action in National Socialism.

Apart from their high level of politicization, what are the general characteristics of

NSB members? Firstly, the socio-economic backgrounds of NSB members ranged widely: from factory workers to civil servants, from shopkeepers to intellectuals.⁹⁶¹

A remarkable pattern is the high level of divorces within NSB families. Forty-four out of 322 NSB members in the sample experienced a divorce in their family. Unlike today, divorces were rare in the 1930s and 1940s in the Netherlands. The chances that an NSB member was divorced were approximately five times higher than those of an average Dutchmen, based on the research sample. This difference may have been related to the nonconformist choices of people who became NSB members. Perhaps these members were already rather nonconformist before joining the NSB. Perhaps they were already used to making choices that deviated from the common patterns in society. Thus, while in socio-economic backgrounds NSB members differed little from nonmembers, perhaps they were a bit more used to nonconformist choices than others.

The member versus the party

The NSB party demanded full participation from its members. These demands caused frictions between (local) leaders and members. Tensions existed between the NSB leadership and local members.

The NSB organized both political and social life of its members. Political and social activities were often connected: biking around the country was aimed at propagating the party, but was also a “cozy” happening, as well as meetings at local NSB offices. The NSB broad along more than a political program; the NSB was a social network as well.

In the first years of the occupation, the NSB shifted towards becoming an increasingly inward-looking, elitist movement. NSB members were indoctrinated by a revolutionary ideology, which radicalized during the years of occupation. Failing in its attempts to reach out to the general public, the NSB decided to consider itself as a revolutionary vanguard. Thus, they distanced themselves even more strongly from the non-NSB Dutchmen. In that sense, the NSB continued to propagate a strong national Dutch community, but the non-members played a decreasingly part in the image of that community. This image was even more troubled, because the NSB increasingly incorporated

⁹⁶¹ Similar to fascism theories: Michael Mann, *Fascists*, 18-22.

an image of a Nazi community – together with the German Nazis – , instead of a solely Dutch National Socialist society.

Dutch National Socialism was a revolutionary form of fascism and the National Socialist mindset increasingly influenced individual members. Local members recognized the movements' revolutionary character. The revolutionary language was very visible in both national as well as local NSB newspapers. Still, there was a tension between the totalitarian claim of fascism and obstinacy of some local members. The self-directed behavior of NSB members conflicted with the fascist ideals of hierarchy and discipline. Some NSB members failed to submit to the party hierarchy. Even the paramilitary WA, which should have been the most disciplined unit of the NSB, acted autonomously. The NSB members set up local actions and had their own ideas about how the NSB organization should function.

Local NSB officials discussed the tensions between Dutch and German National Socialist ideas and goals; however, local members seemed less concerned with these debates. During the occupation the NSB increasingly adopted the positions of German National Socialism. In 1940, the NSB already was an anti-Semitic movement to begin with. The NSB embraced racial theories and in particular Anti-Semitism. The NSB supported German measures against the Jews in its propaganda. While anti-Semitism was basic to both Dutch and German Nazism, the NSB altered its views in other matters, because of its alliance with Nazi Germany. For example, the NSB minimized the importance of religion in its ideology; while the NSB in the 1930s had been pro-religion, religion became of decreasing importance in its organization in the 1940s. And while the NSB had been one of the most outspoken advocates of maintaining the Dutch empire with the Dutch Indies, it later decided to settle for colonization of Eastern Europe in line with German policy. The Dutch fascists coped with Japan thwarting their aim of a colonial empire by subscribing to the German Nazi ideal of colonization of Eastern Europe as a substitute. There were some internal disputes about the Dutch Indies and also on whether Dutch Nazis had to follow German Nazism. However, individual members seemed to be less interested in these disputes. In some cases the ideas of the party and members overlapped. In the end, both the national NSB organization and individual NSB members chose unconditionally to support Hitler and Nazi Germany.

In the meanwhile, the German authorities tried to use NSB members to carry out German policies. The paramilitary WA members were an attractive “nursery” for different

German organizations. When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, the WA men were recruited to fight on the Eastern Front. The German occupation regime needed reliable manpower in the Netherlands as well; thus they recruited “trustworthy” people for the police. As such, the paramilitary part of the NSB was an intermediating organization for a collaborationist career.

In the final phase of the German occupation the situation became more extreme: half of the NSB members fled the country because the impending defeat in September 1944, thus they excluded themselves physically from Dutch society. Besides, the Dutch and German National Socialist institutions recruited Dutch NSB members for the *Landwacht*, who roamed through the streets. The *Landwacht* members performed police tasks, assisting the Dutch and German police. They were ordered to control identification cards, enforce the night-time curfew, destroy the black market and track down hiding people. Thus, they executed the most unpopular and visible tasks of the Nazi occupation regime. The *Landwacht* made the NSB an even more unpopular organization.

The NSB member in Dutch society

The high politicization of private life affected relationships in an NSB member’s local environment. One of the reasons was the claim of the National Socialist movement on individual members. The high level of politicization becomes even more relevant if we compare it to the low level of politicization of the non-NSB members in Dutch society.

In general, the NSB was detested. The perception of treason is the main reason for the antipathy towards the Dutch National Socialists. NSB membership was perceived as a continuous process of treason: every political act in support of the NSB was seen as an act in favor of the occupation and against the Dutch population. However, on an individual level the degree of antipathy depended on actual behavior. This finding reveals the tensions between institutional exclusion and individual interaction.

In the first year of the occupation, the delay in acquiring political power led to impudent behavior by some frustrated NSB members. The position of the NSB improved in the fall of 1941, and NSB members could enhance their power in local politics. Meanwhile, the interactions developed over time more in a centrifugal than centripetal direction. The

discrepancy between duties of NSB members and nonmembers increased. The paramilitary part of the NSB contributed to the negative image, which got even worse as in 1944, the generally detested *Landwacht* was founded. All these political decisions and social developments created a framework in which the NSB group and non-NSB group became further estranged on a group level, though, not necessarily on an individual level. NSB members, in the Netherlands as well as in Germany, were confronted with feelings of disillusion or radicalization as well as with the disintegration of the NSB and of Dutch governance.

The first social circle is the household. In half of the sample the spouses of NSB members were also aligned with the NSB; in half of the sample this was not the case. These different political ideas affected family life. In the case of the Hoebee family, the NSB membership of the wife and her children broke their family apart. After May 1940, when the meaning of the political choices of the different family members became so much more important in the politicized period of the German occupation, evidence of estrangement became greater.

NSB membership also affected relations at the workplace, in two ways. It changed relationships in “older” work environments, especially if NSB members had enhanced opportunities for jobs and promotions because of their party membership. However, the reaction depended on the specific environment: jobs in the NSB office or related organizations placed the member in an NSB environment, while jobs in, for example, the local government, where NSB membership was the reason for hiring or promotion, were more problematic.

These “fractured” relationships depended on whether the individual expressed himself as a member. The more a member tried to profit from his membership or was openly rude, the higher the chances of fractures in the relationships.

The neighborhood was one of the key focuses of this study. The case study of three streets in Amsterdam has broad different insights. Inhabitants of the streets revealed different patterns of interaction. Through this microstudy the politicization of NSB members on a local level becomes visible. It also shows that while “nice” neighbors were judged positively, “unpleasant” neighbors were judged very negatively. The broader sample of NSB members, in different cities and villages, show basically the same interaction patterns as the three Amsterdam streets.

The case studies and the broader sample of NSB members reveal that NSB members often continued their relations with neighbors, family members and coworkers. Because NSB members were not always recognizable as such in all contexts, they could behave as a non-NSB member. They had possibilities to work in non-NSB environments and to have identities outside their NSB membership, leading to a “mixed” identity of some NSB members.

Another factor is the status of the prewar relationships of NSB members. Former “misfits” maintained their outsider status. However, this outsider status may not have been fully caused by their party membership.

Under certain conditions NSB membership provoked negative reactions. For example, criminal NSB members were viewed unfavorably by those around them. In their case, NSB membership was a catalyst for previously held negative opinions. Witnesses testified unfavorably if an NSB member hassled or denounced people. In these cases, the testimonies corresponded with the general negative image of the NSB. Besides criminal behavior, the main determinants of individual rejection were: aggressive behavior, fanaticism, denunciations (unreliability), financial prosperity gained through unfair advantage and provocation. Thus, negative reactions followed when an NSB member terrorized his neighborhood, denounced his colleagues, profited from his membership financially or provoked the people surrounding him. However, if an NSB member refrained from these behaviors, the testimonies were mostly neutral or positive. NSB membership was not a sufficient reason to detest someone.

The negative image of *the* NSB member is widespread and visible in every statement of neighbors, colleagues and family members. Nevertheless more positive judgements were attached to specific individuals in terms of “despite his NSB membership, he was still a decent person.”

There are many attenuating variables and reasons for neighbors and coworkers to testify favorably about NSB members. In general, extenuating circumstances included helpfulness, being young and having grown up in a National Socialist family, quiet behavior, being “normal” and not causing any trouble. Whether someone was viewed favorably or not was largely related to the extent to which NSB membership affected the person’s actions and thus the non-NSB member personally. The ideological differences seem less important than provocative behavior. Thus, if NSB members did not create any problems, witnesses

distanced these members from the party's general negative image. As long as the personal sphere was respected and people were not personally offended, neighbors were willing to speak favorably about those being tried.

Studying interaction patterns involves not only the NSB as a group but also the society in which the NSB members lived. Was the Netherlands a depoliticized society? Did the politicization of NSB members make it more difficult for nonmembers to relate, to understand, or to be attracted to them?

One of the key terms in describing the Dutch society is “verzuiling,” pillarization. The NSB copied in the end the system of the pillarized system it strongly opposed. One of the key issues in the NSB program was the abolition of the pillarized society, and to create a ‘volksgemeenschap’ (one of the key parts of fascism). In many aspects the NSB resembled prewar pillarized organizations: the NSB was over-organized with a sub-organization for every group. Plus, these organizations also tried to include civil society. However, in one aspect the NSB did not resemble the prewar pillarized system. While religion was one of the key dividing elements within Dutch society, the NSB tried to separate religion from politics.

While in the system of pillarization most groups had to mobilize their own supporters, the NSB had to reach out to other groups. Therefore they had to be more active, fanatic and above all more politicized than prewar pillarized groups. This leads to the question of whether the degree of politicization of NSB members was extraordinary in the Dutch political landscape. NSB members broke out, or had to break out, of the pillarization.

A small minority of the Dutch belonged to the National Socialist movement. While politically losing touch with the non-NSB majority they became a “fringe” culture within Dutch society. The NSB members developed a subculture on the border of society with political power based on illegitimate grounds. Whereas the political mobilization of NSB members was a success, the communication with outsiders was a failure. The NSB had become political insiders as a result of their political orientation and their leaning towards the occupier. At the same time, they remained cultural and social outsiders.

What does these findings add to international debates on fascism and collaboration? First, the NSB fits well into the authoritative definitions of fascism: as provided by Paxton and Mann: the NSB was indeed an revolutionary movement, aimed at building a completely new national community and economy, with a struggle of a hierarchy of race, with a focus on

empire and with paramilitary groups using violence means. In that sense, the NSB as such was a *Dutch* movement, and moreover most definitely a *fascist* movement.

Thus, the NSB was part of a larger international fascist movement. For this reason, we can compare the Dutch case with other countries. However, research on grass roots level collaborators is limited. The best case to compare with is Aline Sax' research on Flemish collaborators. Comparing with the case of Flemish collaborators the outcomes differ. While we both argued the importance of ideology on the lives of individual collaborators, the Flemish collaborators (her research focuses on a broader group of collaborators) were more isolated than the Dutch. The reasons for this can be broad: perhaps the Flemish collaborators were even more hated; or the influence of politics on individual levels (politicization) was higher in Flanders. A probable answer might also be the content of the sample: whereas Sax studied Flemish collaborators who were sentenced for more than only the membership of a collaborative movement, my sample is based on this membership, many were sentenced only because of this reason. Perhaps the offense of my sample of NSB members was 'lighter', and therefore the opinion of their surroundings less harsh.

To sum up: Dutch Nazis were in majority politically active, ideological motivated; thus they were politicized, and their identity was influenced by their membership (although it was not their sole identity); however; this identity did leave room for interactions with non members. In other words: Dutch Nazis were politicized, but as collaborating Nazis not excluded in Dutch society. During the war, the tension between Dutch National Socialism and collaboration increased. Ideologically the NSB moved toward German Nazism, and in the fall of 1944 half of the NSB members fled to Germany. The May 1945 liberation of the Netherlands meant the imprisonment of many Dutch National Socialists. Their identity during the Second World War had impact on their lives after 1945. But that is a different story.

Summary (in Dutch)

‘NSB’er’ is nog steeds een populair scheldwoord. De persoon in kwestie is lafhartig, in staat tot verraad, of in ieder geval iemand van wie je je verre moet houden als het erop aankomt in oorlogstijd. Dit beeld is grotendeels gebaseerd op de keuzes en daden van NSB’ers ten tijde van de Tweede Wereldoorlog, de hoogtijdagen van het Nederlandse nationaalsocialisme. In de bezettingsjaren was de NSB (Nationaal Socialistische Beweging) als partij op het toppunt van haar macht, aantal leden en organisatiegraad. Het relatieve succes had de NSB grotendeels te danken aan haar samenwerking met de Duitse bezetter. Deze collaboratie leidde naast (een zekere) macht ook tot afkeer bij de rest van de Nederlandse samenleving. Onder historici is dit ongenoegen voornamelijk beschreven in termen van een ‘geïsoleerde’ positie van NSB’ers in de Nederlandse samenleving, maar in hoeverre klopt dit beeld?

Dit proefschrift ontrafelt de spanningsvelden tussen het lidmaatschap van een collaborerende nationaalsocialistische beweging en het ‘gewone’ leven van alledag, in een tijd waarin dit ‘gewone’ leven door de ongewone situatie van een bezetting onder druk stond. Er konden in de sociale omgeving van NSB’ers spanningen ontstaan binnen gezinnen, op de werkvloer, in de buurt, tussen vrienden en families, tussen partijleden en binnen de partij. Voor dit onderzoek is een steekproef van ruim driehonderd NSB’ers genomen in de regio’s Amsterdam, Utrecht, Hilversum, Leiden en Haarlem om de NSB-geschiedenis ‘van onderop’ te bestuderen.

De NSB-leden vormden niet zozeer een uitzondering als het gaat om religie of om beroepsachtergrond. Dit ‘normale’ patroon past ook in de lijn van onderzoek naar internationale fascistten. In dit onderzoek komt echter wel een opmerkelijk gegeven naar voren: het gemiddeld aantal scheidingen lag vijf maal hoger in de steekproef van NSB’ers dan onder de rest van de Nederlandse bevolking. Een mogelijke verklaring hiervoor is dat NSB’ers naast hun keuze voor de NSB, vaker non-conformistische keuzes maakten dan gemiddeld. Ook al was hun achtergrond niet erg afwijkend, NSB’ers waren wel gewend afwijkende keuzes te maken.

Tijdens de bezetting was de ideologie en het karakter van de NSB verre van statisch. Op nationaal en regionaal niveau was de propaganda steeds duidelijker Duits georiënteerd;

de NSB nam steeds meer Duitse standpunten over, ook die punten die in eerste instantie niet overeenkwamen met het Nederlandse nationaalsocialisme. Zo liet de NSB Nederlands-Indië vallen en koos zij eieren voor haar geld door in plaats daarvan zich te richten op de kolonisatie van Oost-Europa. En waar de NSB in haar eerste jaren sterk christelijk georiënteerd was, verdween de rol van het geloof – mede door de continue afwijzing van de Nederlandse kerkelijke instituten – in de laatste jaren steeds verder naar de achtergrond. Deze ideologische koerswijzigingen leidde ertoe dat de NSB een steeds radicalere, naar binnen gekeerde beweging werd. Terwijl de NSB in de eerste jaren van de bezetting nog een ‘massapartij’ probeerde te zijn, veranderde zij mede vanwege de vele afwijzingen van instituties en mensen in het land steeds meer in een revolutionaire voorhoedepartij.

Leden maakten met hun keuze voor de NSB ook een keuze voor actieve politieke participatie. NSB-leden toonden zich op verschillende manieren actieve nationaalsocialisten. Ze lieten hun lidmaatschap op een aantal manieren zien: door het dragen van uniformen, insignes, het verkopen van kranten en het plaatsen van affiches achter de ramen. Bovendien bezochten velen van hen regelmatig bijeenkomsten en vervulde de helft van de leden een functie in de – zeer uitgebreide – NSB-organisatie. Hoewel de participatie naar onze huidige maatstaven hoog lijkt, was die voor de NSB-leiding nooit voldoende. Immers, als ware NSB’er was het noodzakelijk om dag en nacht nationaalsocialist te zijn. Omdat bijna niemand aan deze hoge verwachtingen voldeed, was de toon in propaganda vaak ontevreden en soms zelfs klagerig. Bestudering van propaganda schetst het beeld van een inactieve, slechts uit opportunisme lid geworden, achterban. Terwijl lokale archieven en persoonlijke dossiers een veel actiever beeld van NSB-leden laten zien.

De NSB was naast een partij ook een sociaal netwerk. De beweging ageerde jarenlang tegen het Nederlandse verzuilde systeem; deze verzuiling moest worden afgebroken waardoor een nationale eenheid zou kunnen ontstaan. Paradoxaal genoeg begon de NSB na mei 1940 zelf steeds meer op een verzuilde organisatie te lijken. Haar voortdurend uitdijende organisatie behelsde aparte clubs voor jongens, meisjes, mannen, vrouwen, en een hele rits aan beroepen. Voor veel NSB-leden waren de bijeenkomsten van deze organisaties een bijzonder aangename aangelegenheid. Dit laatste was voor de NSB-leiding dan weer aanleiding om te hameren op het belang van ‘de politiek’ in plaats van de ‘gezelligheid’.

Participatie was niet de enige eis waaraan NSB-leden moesten voldoen. De NSB-top eiste ook totale onderwerping aan de hiërarchische structuur. Dikwijls botste deze eis met de eigengereidheid van de leden. Wellicht juist omdat veel NSB-leden een functie vervulden binnen de organisatie, leken ze zich – tot op het laagste niveau – een zekere mate van autonoom optreden te permitteren. Ook de leden van de Weerbaarheidsafdeling (WA) - de mannelijke voorhoede van de NSB - gedroegen zich dikwijls zelfstandig, veelal tot ongenoegen van de leiding.

De WA'ers traden veelvuldig met geweld op. Deze geweldsuitingen passen in de politieke cultuur van nationaalsocialistische organisaties. Zeker in de eerste oorlogsjaren provoocerden WA-mannen tegenstanders op straat, vaak met vechtpartijen tot gevolg. Deze confrontaties maakten de spanning tussen de NSB en de niet-NSB gezinde bevolking zichtbaar. De WA'ers traden vaak gezamenlijk op met troepen van de Duitse bezetter. Ook blijkt dat de WA een ware kweekvijver was voor Duitse dienst. Aan het eind van 1941 werd de WA minder zichtbaar en invloedrijk. In de jaren erna traden vele WA'ers in dienst van het Duitse leger of de Landwacht – een hulpdienst van de Duitse bezetter in Nederland –, om zo actief en gewelddadig het nationaalsocialisme uit te dragen. Na september 1944 waren alle mannelijke NSB-leden verplicht om tot de Landwacht toe te treden. De Landwachters controleerden identiteitskaarten, traden op tegen zwarte handel en spoorden onderduikers op. De Landwachters werden met hun openbare gewelddadige optreden in het laatste oorlogsjaar de meest gehate groep NSB'ers.

Maar de haat betrof niet alleen de Landwachters. Uit dagboeken, politierapporten en interviews in processen-verbaal blijkt dat de NSB als organisatie algemeen gehaat werd. Ook 'de NSB'er' kon op afkeuring rekenen. NSB'ers werd vooral het 'verraad van het vaderland' aangerekend. Daarom was 'de NSB'er' in wezen erger dan 'de Duitser'; die laatste had immers niet zelf voor zijn nationaliteit gekozen, de NSB'er wel voor zijn lidmaatschap.

Zoals gezegd is het de vraag of deze algemene haat ook leidde tot individuele afkeuring. Daarom zijn in dit proefschrift drie straten in Amsterdam als 'microstudie' uitgelicht. In een van deze drie straten, de Kromme Mijdrechtstraat, woonden relatief veel NSB'ers en veel Joden; de deportaties van Joden vonden voor de neus van NSB'ers en hun burens plaats. In deze straat in Amsterdam-Zuid woonde ongeveer 350 mensen, waarvan bijna 50 lid waren van de NSB in 1942. Dit betekent dat hier ongeveer 13 procent NSB-lid was, significant meer dan de 2 procent in de stad Amsterdam. Een analyse van de Kromme

Mijdrechtstraat geeft een gelaagd beeld van de interactie tussen NSB-leden en hun omgeving. De wijd geschakeerde verklaringen van burens na de bevrijding laten zien dat het oordeel over NSB'ers afhing van hun al dan niet provocerende gedrag. Actief lidmaatschap werd weliswaar afgekeurd, maar pas als ze persoonlijk last hadden van het lidmaatschap van hun NSB-buur, leidde het lidmaatschap tot verwijdering. Het NSB-lidmaatschap moest 'not in my backyard' komen. Daarnaast laat deze straat zien dat als iemand reeds in een negatief daglicht stond, het NSB-lidmaatschap werkte als katalysator. Zelfverrijking of zichtbaar geweld werd nadrukkelijk afgewezen, dit gedrag paste namelijk in het algemene negatieve NSB-beeld en bewees dat hij of zij een 'echte NSB'er' was. Bovendien kon in enkele gevallen het NSB-lidmaatschap een ruzie laten escaleren. De NSB'ers voelden zich immers gesteund door de Duitse bezetter. Zo liep bijvoorbeeld een buurtruzie tussen een NSB-lid en haar buurvrouwen uit de hand doordat het NSB-lid de buurvrouwen aangaf bij de Sicherheitsdienst, die de buurvrouwen vervolgens een ernstige waarschuwing gaf.

Het beeld dat uit de microstudie naar de Kromme Mijdrechtstraat naar voren komt, correspondeert met de twee andere onderzochte straten – de Zacharias Jansestraat en de Hudsonstraat – in Amsterdam, en met andere steden en dorpen in het westen en midden van Nederland. Als een NSB'er zich niet te erg misdroeg, leidde het lidmaatschap van de NSB niet automatisch tot afkeuring. Het oordeel van de omgeving was afhankelijk van het gedrag van de betreffende persoon. Dit betekende een spanningsveld tussen de mening over de groep – de NSB werd gehaat – en het individu. Pas bij verraad, provocaties of zelfverrijking werd hij volgens omstanders een 'typische NSB'er', en keerde men zich nadrukkelijk van hem af. De NSB'er had dus nog ruimte om banden en andere identiteiten te behouden.

In september 1944 veranderde de situatie radicaal. Na Dolle Dinsdag vluchtte ongeveer de helft van de leden naar Nazi-Duitsland en plaatste zichzelf zo dus letterlijk buiten de Nederlandse samenleving. Deze laatste fase van de bezetting wordt gekenmerkt door desillusie, desintegratie van de NSB organisatie en radicalisering van de leden. De dreigende nederlaag leidde tot gedesillustioneerde leden die hun lidmaatschap opzegden. Een analyse van brieven waarin leden hun lidmaatschap opzegden laat zien dat zij veelal een onderscheid maakten tussen hun eigen denken (dat niet gewijzigd was) en de organisatie (waarvan zij zich afkeerden). Het was de organisatie die gefaald had, niet de ideologie – laat

staan zichzelf. Deze oud-leden bleven, ook al participeerden ze niet meer in de beweging, in hun eigen ogen dus nationaalsocialisten.

De leden die bleven zagen een organisatie die uit elkaar begon te vallen. Afhankelijk van lokale leiders functioneerden delen van de organisatie in meer of in mindere mate. Ondanks deze ontwikkelingen bleef er ook een groepje – wellicht tegen beter weten in – geloven in de toekomst van het nationaalsocialisme. Zij waren de laatste actieve leden van een beweging van politiek actieve, grotendeels door ideologie gemotiveerde Nederlandse nationaalsocialisten, die ondanks hun politieke keuze niet geïsoleerd stonden in de Nederlandse samenleving.

Acknowledgments (in Dutch)

In 2007 – toen was ik 22 – had ik nooit kunnen denken dat ik me bijna zes jaar in NSB'ers zou verdiepen. Eerst een tutorial, vervolgens een scriptie, en nu ligt hier dan mijn proefschrift. Met veel plezier bedank ik hier iedereen die me heeft geholpen, en die de promotieperiode een prettige tijd heeft gemaakt.

Zonder Peter Romijn had ik de NSB-geschiedenis niet leren kennen, willen onderzoeken, of willen en kunnen promoveren in de geschiedenis. Hij heeft me gesteund tijdens mijn onderzoek, bij het schrijven en ook in mijn wens om mijn horizon te verbreden; zowel binnen als buiten de universitaire wereld. Vervolgens heeft mijn co-promotor Volker Berghahn ervoor gezorgd dat ik tweemaal een inspirerende tijd heb mogen beleven aan Columbia University in New York.

De oorsprong van dit proefschrift ligt in het gezamenlijke tutorial met Erik Schumacher, en ons idee om door het doen van archiefonderzoek een 'echte' historicus te worden. Zonder deze gezamenlijke start was ik waarschijnlijk nooit aan dit proefschrift begonnen. Samen hebben we archieven doorgespit, discussies gevoerd en geleid (zoals de 'Middag met Mussert') en geschreven. Het gezamenlijk schrijven van het publieksboek *Hier woont een NSB'er* is een van de hoogtepunten van mijn promotietijd. Bovendien ontslaat het me ook fijn van de plicht om – alleen – nog een publieksversie van mijn proefschrift te schrijven.

Toen ik mijn onderzoek alleen voortzette, was ik gelukkig niet helemaal op mezelf aangewezen. In het archief heb ik veel hulp gehad. Daarom wil ik hier allereerst Marjolein Jorna van het Nationaal Archief bedanken, die onvermoeibaar karren met archiefdozen voor me klaar heeft gezet. Ook wil ik de archiefmedewerkers van het NIOD bedanken. Het is een luxe om als onderzoeker je materiaal zo dichtbij te hebben staan.

Ook inhoudelijk stond ik niet alleen. Ik ben blij dat ik opgenomen ben in de onderzoeksgroep 'Erfenissen van Collaboratie' van Ismee Tames, Bram Enning en Helen Grevers, en dat ik zelfs een werkplek in de 'foute kamer' op het NIOD kreeg. De besprekingen, workshops en congressen die we gezamenlijk hebben georganiseerd hebben mijn denken aangescherpt en werkplezier vergroot. Zij waren niet de enigen die meegedacht en meegeholpen hebben. Wichert ten Have heeft meegedacht in verschillende fases van mijn onderzoek, en het manuscript ook kritisch meegelezen. Daarnaast dank ik Pieter Lagrou die mijn manuscript las en met wie ik vervolgens een van de meest inspirerende gesprekken van mijn promotietijd voerde. Ook wil ik mijn stagiaire Indra van der Graaf bedanken die aan het eind van m'n proefschrift heeft geholpen de puntjes op de i te zetten.

Naast het NIOD had ik nog een hele fijne werkplek. Op kamer 457, oftewel de 'Gouden Eeuw'-kamer was ik qua onderwerp een vreemde eend in de bijt. Maar het was wel een erg prettige werkplek, die we zelf nog plezieriger maakte door het naar binnen slepen van een espressoapparaat (met helaas korte levensduur), een ijskast en niet te vergeten: een tafelvoetbaltafel. Daarvoor wil ik mijn leuke kamergenoten graag bedanken: Coen Wilders, Lodewijk Petram, Sabine Muller, Suze Zijlstra, Irena Adjinovic, Marringje Paijmans, Vera Sykora en Femke Deen. Niet alleen voor jullie gezelligheid op de kamer, maar ook voor de etentjes erbuiten.

Zoals hiervoor vermeld, is het leven buiten de universiteitsmuren ook belangrijk. Daarom wil ik graag een aantal van mijn vrienden bedanken: Annemat, Josine, Lotte en Renee. Zonder jullie was mijn proefschrifttijd heel saai en on sociaal geweest. Josine heeft bovendien (samen met Hans) de Engelse taal van het gehele manuscript nagekeken en verbeterd. Tenslotte heeft Joni me de steun en ruimte gegeven om tegelijkertijd m'n proefschrift af te ronden en ons bedrijf JO Cadeau op te bouwen.

Mijn ouders hebben me altijd een gevoel van veiligheid gegeven, zodat ik altijd de vrijheid en het vertrouwen heb gevoeld om zoveel mogelijk te ontdekken, te leren en te doen. M'n vader dank ik vooral voor het mee lezen, m'n moeder voor het meeleven.

Tot slot wil ik Jaap bedanken: voor het mee lezen, meeleven en zelfs het mee promoveren (dat laatste maakt het meeleven een stuk makkelijker), en het vertrouwen dat ik het allemaal gewoon maar kan.

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