

**VERZET IN WEST-FRIESLAND:
DE ILLEGALITEIT IN WESTERLIJK WEST-
FRIESLAND EN IN DE WIERINGERMEER
IN DE JAREN 1940-'45**

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The Second World War in Europe, broke out on 3 September 1939. In the early hours of 10 May 1940, the German armies invaded the Netherlands, and the Dutch monarchy and their government went into exile leaving the Commander-in-Chief, General Winkelman, in control. After a brave attempt at resistance, the country was forced to surrender on 14 May 1940. Almost overnight, a Resistance was formed throughout the country.

Thousands of men swelled the ranks of the various movements, which have been grouped by the English historian Warmbrunn (in *The Dutch under German Occupation*) into three categories according to type of activity. 'Passive resistance' or 'non-collaboration', by Warmbrunn's definition, included all activities which did not carry great risks. Those activities which did involve risks, but were not of a violent or military nature, he categorized as 'militant resistance'. While 'militant resistance' embraced such activities as espionage, sabotage and other actions with military ends. Other categorizations are of course also possible, such as 'way of life' and ideology - there were Protestant and Roman Catholic, nationalist and communist movements. However, it is the Warmbrunn division which *Verzet in West-Friesland* broadly follows.

Nine years ago a book appeared on the activities of the Resistance movements in the eastern region of the Netherlands province of West Friesland during the Second World War. The final editor of this work - writer, journalist and former member of the Resistance, Sjoerd Leiker - described the book "als een ontmoeting van mensen uit West Friesland levend onder de druk van

oorlog en bezetting". In his foreword, Leiker mentioned that he would like to complete the work with a second volume, dealing with western West Friesland. That book, already in its third print and now under review, was produced with Sjoerd Leiker as the propelling and cohesive force behind its publication; and although he passed away before final completion, it definitely carries his mark.

Among other characteristics, this is manifest in the different design which lies at the foundation of the book, which is in fact, so different, that one can scarcely talk of a sequel to the volume on eastern West Friesland. In that book a more journalistic approach was chosen, where interviews with West Frisian members of the Resistance received a prominent place. This presented the advantage that many of the stories related, were literally "encounters" (ontmoetingen), wherein the emotions and tensions of the resistance were presented by direct and penetrating eye-witness accounts. The limitations of this work method, however, are obvious. The picture of the resistance presented, was sometimes one-sided and parochial with large hiatuses; and the lack of primary research was also reflected in the depth of the story told.

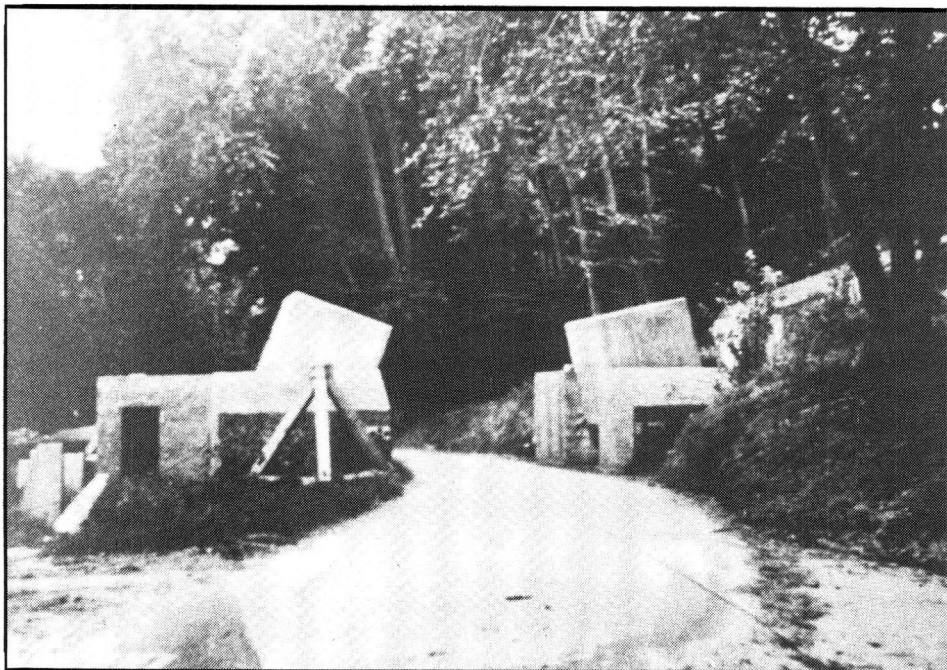
With this book on western West Friesland, the accent was placed on historical research based on information from archives, supplemented with details obtained from 'oral sources' - the actual living participants. Practically all of the authors approached by Sjoerd Leiker had experience in historical research. However, each writer was responsible for the research of his own chapter and a lack of archival sources is reflected in the references of some of the chapters. This has, unfortunately, resulted in a measure of incongruity in the book. Some chapters (including chapters 1, 5 and 8) have tremendous scope and depth. Extensive use was made of material in the custody of the *Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (RIOD), including the archives of the 'Raad van Verzet', and of the Second World War documentation in the *Gemeentearchief Alkmaar*. A few chapters, however, reflect little

thought and almost no research - only newspapers and interviews - and lend to superficiality. This is indeed unfortunate as it is the only drawback of the book.

Without claiming comprehensiveness, the authors tried to cover all aspects of the resistance - help to the underground, church resistance, the dropping of weapons and secret agents, resistance on the part of the professions, military resistance, and the newspapers printed and distributed by the underground. Here and there one finds a small amount of overlapping between chapters. Most often this had to do with the nature of resistance work, where a relatively small group of people had to undertake a variety of activities. Assistance to the underground, the distribution of illegal newspapers, and armed resistance was often united in one person. It is therefore inevitable that some of the same names often keep cropping up in various chapters throughout the book.

'Omringdijk', such as with Alkmaar and Den Helder. Likewise of course, events elsewhere sometimes had an effect on western West Friesland. For this reason, a separate chapter was included on the resistance in the Wieringermeer area and another on dhr A.C. de Graaf ("een bezielende verzetsman uit de Wieringermeer", p.180).

A number of people lent their participatory and advisory support in the making of the book. Special mention was made of Mrs Trien de Boer-Stam, widow of a Resistance hero (p.64), and Henk Ranzijn and Kor Korpershoek. The last mentioned acted as publisher of the first book, but had to withdraw once he had got the second book out of the starting blocks. However, it was the late Sjoerd Leiker who formulated the reasons for the recording and publishing of the history of the resistance in West Friesland. He saw the book as a duty to fallen and living resistance friends whose memory had to be held in honour, and to the youth who had



*Betonnen tankversperring aan de duinvoet bij boerderij
'De Franschman', tussen Bergen en Egmond; 1946.*

For the authors, the geographical delimitation of western West Friesland was more of a guide than a rigid boundary. This could also not have been otherwise. After all, Resistance activities did not take notice of any geographical borders and, indeed, all sorts of contacts and mutual activities existed with the Resistance on the other side of the

to be informed as to what happened in their own community during the war. It contains a definite warning against Nazism - an ideology, in the words of Leiker, aimed at the subjugation of the human, at human hunting and forced labour. Like him, a few of the other authors were themselves also part of the resistance and, although their per-

spectives vary greatly from those born after the war, they all found each other in their points of departure ('Voorwoord', p.7).

The book has a very striking cover, with a black and white illustration of the monument at Zijpersluis commemorating the reprisal murder by the Germans, of ten young Hollanders on 11 April 1945. It is firmly bound and is profusely, yet tastefully, illustrated. The photographs were obtained from inter alia the RIOD, the *Algemeen Nederlandse Fotobureau*, the *Fotobureau Holland* and many private collections (one from as far afield as Brazil). The generation of contemporary sources is a curious thing among Hollanders. Despite the dangers and shortages brought on as a result of the war, many went to great trouble to generate and preserve, such items as diaries, newspapers, correspondence and photographs. The reviewer's own father kept a diary (five volumes), took numerous photographs and preserved copies of many of the Underground newspapers. The illegal newspapers used for the production of the book, were consulted at the *Gemeente-archief Alkmaar* and were taken from the private collection of dhr C.J. Schouten, Schoorl. An arrangement of these newspapers makes attractive illustrations for the endpapers.

The page layout is most pleasing - double column and interspersed here and there with short, interesting and unobtrusive stories and pieces of biography. The work is furnished with a list of abbreviations (p.8) and a chronicle spanning the years of the war, which contains a wealth of information on the day-to-day happenings from 1939 to 1945 (pp.184-192). Chapter ten contains a table listing all the Allied airplanes shot down over Noord-Holland-Noord (pp.138-142). These prove most useful to the reader. It is, however, a pity that the editors did not include an index and a combined source list.

Verzet in West-Friesland was published with the financial support of the 'Dr J.E. Baron de Vos van Steenwijkfonds' and the 'Provinciaal Anjerfonds Noord-Holland'. The bequeathing of money for

the publication of books such as this, has much to recommend it, and is perhaps something which could be looked at in this country.

All in all, *Verzet in West-Friesland* is a most agreeable work. It is a valuable addition to the literature on the Second World War, both from a local history point of view and as a study of the lives of ordinary people under occupation. The book is highly recommended.

Major I.J. van der Waag, *Documentation Service SADF, Private Bag X289, Pretoria 0001.*

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY 1978-1989

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(redakteurs)
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'n Hardeband omslag asook bindwerk van goeie gehalte is faktore wat verseker dat hierdie publikasie 'n lang raklewe behoort te hê.

Soos blyk uit die inleiding is hierdie bibliografie 'n uitbreiding op 'n vroeëre soortgelyke werk getiteld *South African History and Historians : A Bibliography* deur C.F.J. Muller ea. Gesien teen die feit dat hierdie bibliografie reeds in 1979 verskyn het is *A Bibliography of South African History* 'n tydige publikasie van die nuutse beskikbare sekondêre bronne oor Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis.

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