

## Handout Group #2 - The Resisters

The Dutch resistance movement came about because of two simple facts - outrage that their country had been invaded and sheer horror at what was happening to the Dutch Jews. They found many ways to resist the German Occupation. It was noble, unselfish work, risking their lives to help stand up for their country and save others. Unfortunately, resistance of any kind was always fraught with terrible danger, often resulting in capture, torture and execution.

### *Passive Resistance*

German occupiers tried to restrict what could be owned by Dutch citizens. However, many Dutch refused to accept German rule, so they resisted in many non-violent ways.

- when German's took away American films, the Dutch "boomed" throughout the German films, and then eventually stopped going to films altogether;
- when the Dutch were ordered to turn over their antiques, jewellery and other metal treasures to be melted down for German ammunition, the Dutch hid what they could for safekeeping.

In the town of Heerenveen, the de Jong family owned one of the 'restricted' radios. Their radio, was not only great entertainment – it also had the ability to receive short-wave communications, making it a possible tool for the resistance. The radio became a serious problem and the family could have been shot if it was found. In fear, the family wrapped the radio in oilskins and buried it. Once Holland was liberated, the radio was disinterred and continued to provide enjoyment for years afterwards. When the family came to Canada in 1952 the radio came with them.

### *Dutch Resistance Fighters*

A secret "underground" network of people called the Dutch Resistance was formed to fight against their enemy and to create obstacles for Hitler's army. They:

- forged identification papers and ration coupons to help people survive,
- found hiding places for people,
- printed and distributed posters and pamphlets to keep the people informed about the war when German occupiers took over the newspapers,
- were involved in sabotage operations (blew up bridges, destroyed railroads ), and
- spied (coding and decoding secret messages from Britain, and acquiring intelligence about enemy operations).

20-year old Hannie Schaft of Haarlem was part of the underground resistance. As with many Dutch who tried to resist, on March 21, 1945 Hannie was arrested by the Germans. After being questioned for several days, she was executed on April 17, 1945 (just two weeks before the liberation of the Netherlands). Following the Liberation of the Netherlands, Queen Wilhelmina called her a 'symbol of resistance'.

### ***In Hiding***

When the German's began arresting Jews and taking them away to concentration camps, Jews resisted by going into hiding in the homes of friends and strangers, for months, and even years. Anne Frank was a young girl who hid in a secret room in Amsterdam with the rest of her family and others during the Occupation. She wrote her world famous diary in that room. Many Jews were successful in resisting the German's by going into hiding, but alas, many also were not. The Germans captured 120,000 Jews including Anne Frank. Anne's family was in their secret rooms for over two years before the Germans discovered their hiding place on August 4, 1944, and sent them to concentration camps.

### ***Hiding People***

To hide people was one of the most dangerous ways of resisting because German's considered it a terrible crime. Yet families did it to help others. One brave Dutch family, was the Ten Boom family who lived in Haarlem (near Amsterdam). They risked their lives hiding Jews, and members of the Dutch underground resistance movement in their home. Yet, as with most who try to resist, on February 28, 1944 the German secret police raided their home. They could not find any people in hiding (because they were safely hidden behind a false wall in the bedroom), yet it was suspected they were hiding people, so the Ten Boom family was imprisoned in a concentration camp.. One of the daughters, Corrie survived, and went on to write "*The Hiding Place*" which became a best seller and also a major motion picture.

### ***Strikes***

Strikes were also a way to resist. In September 1944, believing Holland would soon be free, the Dutch government sent coded radio messages from London, instructing the Dutch Resistance to organize a country-wide railway strike to interrupt German military transports. On the designated morning, not one of the many thousands of railway workers showed up for work, bringing transportation to a standstill. To punish the Dutch...the Nazi's cut off all their food supplies, leaving an already starving population without nourishment at the approach of winter, and caused what became known as "Hunger Winter".