

HANS RENDERS

A guise of humour for political periodicals  
*Pseudo-propaganda periodicals and the Second World War\**

Periodicals are representative of a particular culture: a journalistic, cultural, literary or political culture. In order to define such a culture it is necessary to keep a sharp eye out for either hidden or overt ideological messages in periodicals. Just as there are writers who publish under a pen-name, it can be observed that there are also periodicals which appear in disguise. They look white but in fact they are black. The pseudo-propaganda periodicals that appeared during the Second World War are an example of this. Propaganda works best when it is not interpreted as propaganda, pseudo-propaganda is even more subtle: using the methods of the enemy, messages from the selfsame enemy are given a one hundred and eighty degree turn. As far as the Second World War is concerned, this phenomenon can be aptly illustrated by a few minor periodicals which were actually aiming for the opposite of that which at first sight they appeared to represent. In this article I shall be concentrating upon so-called resistance periodicals set up by the Nazis, in which the resistance movement is cunningly made to look ridiculous. This is also the goal aimed for in a few semi-literary, semi-political periodicals which in the first half of 1945, on the threshold of war and peace, made fun of not only Nazis but also the so-called 'good Dutch people'. In contrast to pseudo-propaganda radio broadcasting in the Netherlands, these periodicals have never been an object of study.<sup>1</sup> But this is not the only reason to devote attention to *De Gil* [The Yell], *Metro, Sic* and other now forgotten periodicals. Upon further study it can be seen that they also belong to a hidden opposition movement, that of anti-pluralism *avant la lettre*.

In order to understand what anti-pluralism is, we must first clarify the term pluralism. A famous study published in America by the Dutch researcher A. Lijphart convincingly describes pluralism as a system of religious and cultural isolation originating in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The word segregation is

\* This article is part of a wider study of journalistic literary periodicals between 1940 and 1960. Earlier results of this study are: 'De verborgen ideologie van *Mandril* (1948-1953) [The hidden ideology of *Mandril* . . .]', in: *TS. Tijdschrift voor Tijdschriftstudies*, 4 (2001), no. 9, pp. 34-48 and 'Humor in journalistiek en literatuur als propaganda: pseudo-propagandistische tijdschriften op het breukvlak van oorlog en vrede' [Humour as propaganda in journalism and literature: pseudo-propaganda periodicals on the threshold of war and peace], in: *TS Tijdschrift voor Tijdschriftstudies*, 6 (2003), no. 13, pp. 15-23.

<sup>1</sup> Dick Verkijk, *Radio Hilversum 1940-1945: Broadcasting during the War* (Amsterdam [1974]), pp. 690-713.

<sup>2</sup> A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation; pluralism and democracy in The Netherlands* (Berkeley [etc.], University of California Press, 1968).

too strong for this social and mental separation of sections of the population, that is why the word pluralism (divided into sections) was introduced by Lijphart. Dutch society was subdivided into four sections, based on religion or *Weltanschauung*: catholic, protestant, socialist and in spite of itself, the liberal section of the population is considered as a 'leftover' section. This separation was visible as a differentiated mode of social organization. Thus for each section separate newspapers, schools and libraries were created, not only this but up into the sixties of the twentieth century, housing associations and sport clubs were designated in this fashion and subsidized by the government. Even up to the present day this system of pluralism can still be seen in the names of television broadcasting companies and universities. Some Dutch political parties eagerly try to convey that there is still a need for a pluralized society, but in so far as this mode of organization still exists it is a façade of empty receptacles for which most Dutch people feel no affinity.

The sections maintained very little contact with each other, interchange of ideas or confrontation between standpoints was avoided. In this climate it is hard for satire to flourish.

For this reason the Netherlands had practically no tradition of political satire since 1869 when pluralism was given a powerful boost by the abolition of newspaper tax.<sup>3</sup> Because from this year onwards the removal of this state taxation meant that newspapers could be sold more cheaply, this left the way free to supply a wider section of the public with journalistic reading matter. Very swiftly the catholic, protestant and socialist elites set up their own media thereby creating fruitful ground for intellectual isolationism and effectively blocking interchange of ideas on all levels. Humour had never been a weapon for the sections, the reigning climate in journalism was too serious for something as banal as laughter. At the very most a political cartoon could be placed, although this would not raise much more than a smile. Humour was associated with magazines to be found at the barber, like the light-hearted *De Lach* and some barbers stocked the slightly erotic *Paris Paris*. Thus, if only for this reason, it is remarkable that during the Second World War so many satirical periodicals suddenly appeared. One of the reasons for this could have been that during the occupation the pluralism that so typified the Netherlands was more or less eliminated. After all the sections were either not tolerated or barely tolerated by the occupiers, in favour of National Socialism.

<sup>3</sup> In the stencilled edition of *Satirische tijdschriften (1848-1940)* compiled by Renée Vegt in 1990 for the Netherlands Press Museum Foundation, it appears that in the course of almost a century there have been very few non-compartmentalized satirical periodicals in the Netherlands. See also: *Paljassen van de pers; Satirische tijdschriften 1848-1940*, comp. Susanne Gabriëls et al. (Amsterdam, Netherlands Press Museum, 1990).

## DE GIL

It must have been a strange realization for the Dutch readers. In the middle of the war they were presented with a new and confusing periodical, which although funny and subversive, was run by suspect staff. When the allies accidentally dropped a series of bombs on the Dutch town of Nijmegen, the periodical stated: 'It was not the Americans who bombed Nijmegen but the Germans. The Germans are flying around in fake American Flying Forts, especially made for this purpose.' In other words: the Germans always get the blame for everything, whilst it is obvious that the allies are causing more damage to the Netherlands than the Nazis.

The periodical circulating this type of mockery was *De Gil*, a magazine that had no complaints about readership. The average circulation was as much as 200,000 issues. The reason that *De Gil* had such a bad reputation after the war was mainly because of the shocking realization that this periodical, printed on newspaper, was in fact pseudo-propaganda issued under the auspices of the Nazis. Every effort had been made to convince the reader that *De Gil* was a propaganda publication supporting the allies, whilst in reality it had been commissioned by the occupiers. This treasonable task was chiefly accomplished by the journalist and writer W. van den Hout (1915-85), alias Willem W. Waterman.

## W.H.M. VAN DEN HOUT

W.H.M. van den Hout began his career in journalism by writing stories and crossword puzzles for small regional magazines and newspapers. In 1935 he left his parental home to which he would never return. In 1936 he began work at the Philips Press Agency in Eindhoven. At the age of twenty-two, after military service, van den Hout worked for the Philips advertising department, catering for their English-speaking marketing areas. In 1939 he published his first novel: *Een woestijn raakt zoek* [A desert gets lost]. Meanwhile he was working in Amsterdam with the Netherlands' Publicity Service N.V. Sellmore, a company which specialized in the promotion of English and American products. This very same year would see the appearance of his satirical novel *Amerika Filmt; Een visie op Hollywood en op Hollywood's wonderlijke werkwijze* [Filmmaking in America; a view of Hollywood and Hollywood's strange methods]. Van den Hout published this sturdy book of 346 pages, using his pen-name Willem W. Waterman, and the book was printed by a newspaper publisher in The Hague, N.V. Residentiebode. Later on Waterman was also to work for this newspaper.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Articles in *De Residentiebode* signed WWW: 4, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 17, 29 and 30 April 1942, 5, 6, 13, 15, 21, 28, and 29 May 1942, and 2 June 1942. Strangely enough there is no mention of the climate of collaboration in this newspaper in the unpublished: *Eenige herinneringen aan De Residentiebode* written by former journalist A.J. Oostdam, shortly after the Second World War.

When *Amerika Filmt* appeared in 1939, Waterman had been called up and put to work as a corporal with the motorcycle corps in the small town of Bilthoven, which in 1941 would result in his next novel *De kruistocht van generaal Taillehaeck* [General Taillehaeck's crusade], to be followed two years later by *Een strijd om Nederland* [A battle for the Netherlands]. In these two books Waterman criticized prewar Dutch political defeatism, culminating in weak military leadership. The Germans on the other hand, were well kitted out, they wouldn't give their own soldiers shoddy guns and let them die like dogs.

This wounded nationalism, which was given a voice by German Nazidom, was a European phenomenon. In France Jean de la Hire gave voice to similar sentiments in his book *Le Crime des Evacuations; Les Horreurs que nous avons vues*, published in 1941, in Germany these feelings were expressed by Martin Haller in his *Ein Mann sucht seine Heimat*. Waterman made his political stance clear in January 1941 when he joined the fascist organization the National Front led by Arnold Meijer. Waterman was also in communication with right-wing authoritarian movements in Flanders.<sup>5</sup> Meijer gave him the position of chief of propaganda for the National Front. From within this position he could also publish his books through De Residentiebode, the National Front's own publisher.

#### NATIONAL SOCIALIST PERIODICALS

It was Louis Thijssen, former editor of *De Residentiebode* and just like Waterman an all-round believer in America, who recruited Waterman in 1944 for the quasi-allied periodical *De Gil*. Thijssen had set up this periodical in tabloid format along American lines and under the auspices of the *Hauptabteilung für Volkaufklärung und Propaganda (Abteilung Aktivpropaganda)* and up to and including the third issue he had done all the editorial work alone. After the war van den Hout claimed that he collaborated in producing *De Gil* in collusion with several members of the resistance 'in order to thwart Thijssen's plan to pass on incoming letters to the S.D. [Sicherheitsdienst]'. According to him it was also his goal 'to steer the periodical in such a way that the interests of the Allies and Anglo-Saxon culture would be supported'. In other words: van den Hout claimed to have ventured into the lion's den in order to sabotage the Nazis. However, there are no grounds at all to take this claim of resistance work seriously.

On the contrary; *De Gil* was undoubtedly a pseudo-propaganda periodical commissioned by the occupiers.<sup>6</sup> Fourteen issues of *De Gil* appeared, the first

<sup>5</sup> Wilfried Hendrickx, 'Willy van der Heide: "Ik ben de Zwarte Turk hè". C.I.A. en wat al meer. Nou, opgejutte shit', in: *Humo*, 25-10-1979.

<sup>6</sup> During the public hearing by the Committee for Purging of the Press on 13 April 1948, *Gil* staff member H.A. Seyffardt admitted that the intention was that *De Gil* would also be published after the war. Witness Laerbuch, manager of the Press Guild, declared that *De Gil* was a periodical which supported the Germans. Furthermore Laerbuch relates that *De Gil* had to disappear because of the paper shortage. There were two motives for the appearance of *De Gil*, namely to

around January 1944, the last just after 'Dolle Dinsdag' [Crazy Tuesday] in September of that year (on Tuesday, 5 September 1944, Dutch people in the west of the country mistakenly thought that they had been liberated). Van den Hout was undoubtedly the pivot of the periodical. And he was vain enough to claim this role for himself during the post-war purging trials. And indeed, starting from the fourth issue, with the arrival of van den Hout, things got rolling.

On the German side there were also some doubts about *De Gil*, as can be seen in a post-war written deposition in which a member of the S.D. declares that the periodical did not entirely achieve its aims. 'It turned out to be impossible to maintain the pretence that the periodical was illegal. The fact that the periodical was obtainable everywhere in large quantities, meant to the public that it could not be appearing without German permission'.<sup>7</sup>

#### SATIRE IN *DE GIL*

Specific to *De Gil* was the satirical tone, the widespread use of English words and names, like teenager, magazine, BBC and *Esquire* and the American-style layout with lots of cartoons and concise columns. Whilst other newspapers and periodicals were strictly checked for the (forbidden) use of English words and references to BBC broadcasts, *De Gil* was full of them, with the permission of the *Abteilung Aktivpropaganda*. In short, at first sight *De Gil* was a supplier of refreshing journalistic satire amongst the dry-as-dust legal and illegal newspapers. In *De Gil* real names were never used. But there were signatures such as 'from our special correspondent', 'Professor Gil' and 'Corpse Diplomatique'. Under the influence of Waterman (himself in turn influenced by the American magazine *Esquire*) an end was put to the humourless propaganda of not only German but also Dutch signature. As a matter of fact, it was already provocative to label resistance papers such as *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland* as propaganda publications, although strictly speaking that was correct. By writing enthusiastically about things forbidden by the Nazis, American jazz, for example, Waterman gathered a large following among his readers. Letters sent in show that these were not naive and definitely had questions about *De Gil's* political standpoint.<sup>8</sup>

earn money and to make a cheerful publication; Seyffardt claims that paper shortage was merely a German excuse to liquidate *De Gil*, because in fact 'they didn't trust the periodical' (in van der Hout's written defence). Others testified that the periodical had aroused irritation or anger among the Germans or German-allied authorities, or that it had been seized by the NSB on several occasions; cf. van den Hout's written defence, Personal documentation files, NIOD [Netherlands Institute for War Documentation], Amsterdam.

<sup>7</sup> Affidavit H.J. Fahrenheit, 13 April 1948, CABR, NA, The Hague.

<sup>8</sup> After the war van den Hout invoked the witness F. Zadelhoff who said that *De Gil* received 200 to 300 letters a week. According to Zadelhoff on several occasions van den Hout burned letters which could have put the sender in danger because of the anti-German contents; cf. van den Hout's written defence in the Documentation on W. van der Hout, preserved in the NIOD, Amsterdam.

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Snippets of news cut out of the American papers constantly smuggled in via Lisbon and ironic stories not only about Dutch Nazis but also about the Germans, made sure that each issue was once again a sales success. Fake advertisements (issue number 7) in which hideout helmets, axes, umbrella organizations and gallows were offered for sale in the spot colour of choice, were greatly appreciated. The readers had a suspicion that this was a propaganda periodical under the auspices of the Nazis but one could not be completely certain and in this confusion Waterman could carry on his pseudo-propaganda work. Certainly when it concerned matters which already troubled the average Dutchman: such as the royal family. Many jokes were made about the Dutch House of Orange (symbol of resistance against foreign occupation since 1568 when the Eighty Years War began), the members of which had escaped to England. An article entitled 'Occupied Netherlands and London are growing apart' already appeared in the first issue.

The recorded experiences of the journalist and radio historian Dick Verkijk show that the confusion sometimes missed its target. In his study of radio broadcasting during the Second World War he writes that he remembers being a small boy listening to a radio program produced by Waterman and called 'Gilclub'. For the first time he heard jazz by Louis Armstrong, music from the country 'which we fervently hoped would finally liberate us'. Verkijk on the propaganda in this broadcast: 'When they spoke mockingly about "negro music", didn't they understand that they were making fools of themselves by subsequently playing those monumental jazz records? . . .'. He has forgotten the 'clever' propaganda, he didn't even let it get through to him but after thirty years he can still whistle the (American) signature tune to the Gilclub.<sup>9</sup> Issue number 12 of *De Gil* was a 'Special Swing Liberation issue'.

Even the post-war Committee for Purging the Press was confused about the goals sought after by Waterman in *De Gil*. The Committee did not dare to come to a clear verdict on this point. But this by no means exonerated Waterman from collaboration. On 27 April 1948 the Committee for Purging the Press banned him from working in journalism for a period of twenty years. On appeal the sentence was reduced by half. He had been remanded in custody for three years when his case was dropped. Confusion or not, as has been stated, *De Gil* reached a circulation of 200,000 issues,<sup>10</sup> which was fantastic for those days. It

<sup>9</sup> Dick Verkijk, *Radio Hilversum 1940-1945; De omroep in de oorlog* (Amsterdam 1974), p. 713. See for the introduction of jazz music into the Netherlands in the thirties: Kees C.A.T.M. Wouters, *Ongevenschte muziek: De bestrijding van jazz en moderne amusementsmuziek in Duitsland en Nederland 1920-1940* (Amersfoort 1999) and Hans Renders, *Zo meen ik dat ook jij bent; Biografie van Jan Hanlo* (Amsterdam 1998), in particular chapter 3. Christian Delporte, 'Humour as a strategy in propaganda film', in: *Journal of European Studies*, 213 (2001), pp. 367-78.

<sup>10</sup> As can be seen from a printing order for *De Gil*, inventory 194, box 223, CPZ, NIOD, Amsterdam.

was certainly because of this success that Waterman was able to sell his jocular book *Wie zei dat je in dezen tijd niet kon lachen?* [Who said you that you can't laugh these days?] to the Utrecht publishing house of Bruna in 1944.

It is undeniable that *De Gil* was innovative, especially where style was concerned. Waterman had an irrepressible penchant for alliteration. Sometimes that led to linguistic inventions that are still in use today. Thus it was Waterman who invented the name 'Dolle Dinsdag' [Crazy Tuesday] for the so-called liberation day on the 5 September 1944 (when so many people mistakenly thought that the Netherlands had been liberated) and used it for the first time in *De Gil*.<sup>11</sup> Many people have also attributed the (Dutch) word 'labbekakkers', denoting not so very brave Dutch people, to Waterman. And it is true: the tenth issue of *De Gil* was a special 'Labbekaknummer'. The following issue brought an announcement which was recognizable as satire even to those who were uncertain of the identity of *De Gil*, it was that the editorial staffs of *De Gil* and the resistance paper *Het Parool* would henceforth be working together.

Waterman had a skilful and sometimes even humorous pen, but when he wrote about Jews he was sometimes less subtle: 'On hot days our Dutch beaches will be filled with peanut gobbling, orange peel throwing, fat behinds-squeezed-into-white trousers blubbery Jewesses who scream like biblical steam whistles . . .'. Apart from this sort of crude anti-Semitic outburst, *De Gil* more often caused confusion by making snide remarks about American (meaning Jewish) capitalism. This caused confusion because surely the Americans were also the opponents of the Nazis.

Van den Hout's entire life was connected to propaganda, always with a dubious outcome and always accompanied by much lying and shouting in order to draw attention to himself. His dark wartime past is discussed in every documentary about him.

There were other pseudo periodicals, like *Criterion* and *Sic*, but there was only one other that was commissioned by the occupiers just like *De Gil*, namely *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij* edited by Wim Sassen, SS war correspondent and editor of the collaborating newspaper *De Telegraaf*.<sup>12</sup> As far as we know, fifteen issues appeared at irregular intervals from 13 December 1944 up to and including 6 April 1945.<sup>13</sup> Just like *De Gil*, *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij* was printed on newspaper in tabloid format.<sup>14</sup> There were more similarities which underlined

<sup>11</sup> Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 10b [scholarly edition] (The Hague 1981), p. 175. Waterman used the term in *De Gil* dated 15-9-1944.

<sup>12</sup> To be seen in the NIOD, Archives 199/Box 15. Gerard Groeneveld, 'De kille bureaucraat van de holocaust; De geschreven nalatenschap van "Judenreferent" Eichmann', in: *de Volkskrant* 14-12-1944.

<sup>13</sup> The NIOD is in possession of fourteen issues (from 20 December 1944).

<sup>14</sup> Loe de Jong, op. cit. (n. 11), p. 286, n. 1. Both van den Hout and Sassen were commissioned

the pseudo-propaganda character of *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij*. In his periodical *Sassen* began a column about jazz music illustrated by photos. And apart from a Christmas story by a certain Rie Wolters and some articles signed by initials, one author known to be a collaborator is listed with his full name in *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij*, namely Albert Kuyle. An article about Robert Brasillach, editor of the French weekly *Je suis partout* and condemned to death by the French, betrays the true identity of *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij*.<sup>15</sup> There is no mention of the fact that *Je suis partout* preached anti-Semitism and nor is it mentioned that Brasillach was a collaborator of the worst kind. Instead it is related with awe that this hero died in front of a firing squad, of course not wearing a blindfold. To make things even more complicated the edition of *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij* of 9 March 1945 contained as a supplement a fake number of the resistance paper *De Vliegende Hollander; dagblad verspreid door de geallieerde luchtmacht*, dated 16 March 1945.

#### THE FORGERIES

Whilst *De Gil* and *Het laatste nieuws van ver en dichtbij* were new periodicals which were rather different from what they pretended to be, there is also a category of publications which was based on already existing titles. Renowned resistance papers were turned around, that is to say copied and adjusted in such a way as to achieve an ideological effect opposite to the original. Up to now very little research has been done into this kind of propaganda.<sup>16</sup>

The practice of turning around fitted into the German strategy of undermining illegal newspapers. The goal was to cause confusion and to arouse anti-Allies sentiments among the Dutch population. Halfway through 1942 the *Hauptabteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* had already forged some issues of the illegal weekly *Vrij Nederland*. As the German policy of switching Dutch newspapers towards Nazi ideology became more successful, 'je einförmiger und eintöniger sie somit wurde, um so mehr nahm das Interesse an den illegalen Publikationen zu', stated *SD-Meldungen* of 28 January 1940.<sup>17</sup> In other words: in proportion to the degree in which the legal papers became more similar, so the interest in underground publications noticeably increased. However, these

by the *Rundfunkbetreuungstelle* to write texts for the pseudo-allied radio broadcaster *Het Vrije Zuiden* [The Liberated South].

<sup>15</sup> Alice Kaplan, *Intelligence avec l'ennemi; le procès Brasillach*, 2nd edn. (Paris 2003).

<sup>16</sup> In so far as there is any reference to these forgeries in print, the source is always one remark by Lydia Winkel in *De ondergrondse pers 1940-45* (The Hague 1954; reprint 1989). She names a few titles of illegal periodicals which are presumably forgeries, although excluding *De vliegende Hollander*. René Vos extended this passage to about a page in his study *Niet voor publicatie; De legale Nederlandse pers tijdens de Duitse bezetting* (Amsterdam 1988), p. 368.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from: Gabriele Hoffmann, *NS-Propaganda in den Niederlanden; Organisation und Lenkung der Publizistik unter deutscher Besatzung 1940-1945* (München-Pullach/Berlijn 1972), p. 262.

forgeries did not cause much confusion or damage. They were indeed imitations rather than forgeries. The data and published articles did not correspond with the originals. The confusion was also limited because in the 'German' issues a question mark was placed after the title. The real *Vrij Nederland*, so writes press historian René Vos in his standard work on the legal (thus Nazified) press *Niet voor publicatie* [Not for publication], could respond mockingly to this with the announcement: 'Just a little while. Then *Vrij Nederland* will appear with an exclamation mark'. At the end of 1943 everything became a bit more serious. By order of the Nazis a printing press was set up in the Vught concentration camp, not far from 's-Hertogenbosch. Under heavy threats of reprisals to family members and in the greatest secrecy, imprisoned printers were forced to make forgeries of illegal papers. In this way various issues of the illegal publications *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland*, *Paraat*, *Het Signalementsblad*, *Trouw*, *De Vonk*, *Ons Volk* and *De Waarheid* were produced.<sup>18</sup> They were distributed in modest circulations (at least in comparison with the 200,000 of *De Gil*) of between 10,000 and 20,000. Thus in contrast to the case of *De Gil*, existing titles and in particular existing issues were reprinted with small alterations here and there in order to turn the copy around. The effect, however, was minimal. The printers deliberately made the forgeries a little bit smarter than the authentic publications and besides in the illegal press there were constant warnings about forgeries.<sup>19</sup>

It was not just the occupiers who forged the opposition's propaganda or ordered this to be done. Illegal groups also copied legal papers and distributed them.<sup>20</sup> And to make things even more complicated, the editorial staff of the genuine resistance paper *Ons Volk* very successfully introduced a fake *Gil* to the market. The circulation of 2,500 issues was sold out within half an hour. A stunt like this not only fitted in with the political strategy of *Ons Volk* but also with their literary strategy. The aim of the editorial staff was namely to produce 'pure resistance literature' whilst using plenty of humour.<sup>21</sup> It became a game of cat and mouse between the occupiers and the underground, as was shown in December 1943 when an issue of the authentic *Ons Volk* was turned around,

<sup>18</sup> P.J. Ritmeester, 'Drukkers in Vught', in: *De Band; Orgaan voor het personeel van de Staatsdrukkerij- en Uitgeverijbedrijf*, 1948, no. 8, and René Vos, op. cit. (n. 16). We must not discount the fact that forged illegal periodicals were also distributed from other places besides Vught. During his hearing at the Bureau for National Security, Willem Waterman claimed that in the autumn of 1943 Thijssen began 'producing brochures, forged illegal periodicals, forged posters and suchlike', cf. statement of W.H.M. van den Hout, p. 7, CABR, NA, The Hague.

<sup>19</sup> From the record of the interrogation held after the war by the Political Investigations office, Doetinchem department, at which the typographer J.B. Bröker was questioned, we know how the forgeries took place in practice and how the forgers were threatened with reprisals against their families, NIOD, Amsterdam.

<sup>20</sup> See René Vos, op. cit. (n. 16), p. 368, Lydia Winkel, op. cit. (n. 16), nos. 731, 206, 220 and 181 and Loe de Jong, op. cit. (n. 11), vol. VII, [scholarly edition], p. 843.

<sup>21</sup> Lydia Winkel, op. cit. (n. 16), no. 581.

that is to say that in the concentration camp in Vught the Nazis forced imprisoned Dutch typographers to make a forgery of the underground *Ons Volk* by giving it a so-called *Deutschfreundlich* touch. The following sentence is to be seen on page 5 of the authentic resistance paper *Ons Volk*: ‘These are not just stories from some concentration camp, this is the way Germany treats its prisoners of war!’ In the Nazi forgery this became: ‘It is extremely instructive in relation to the way in which prisoners of war are treated in circumstances like those in which ours find themselves’. Not a lot is changed in the forgery made by the Nazis of the resistance periodical *De Vliegende Hollander*, but it is notified that the Americans are not worried about the damage caused by their bombings. Confusingly enough the forgeries also contain enough anti-German remarks to make it difficult to differentiate between real and false.<sup>22</sup>

In France the satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* was also confronted by these circumstances. During the occupation it had gained a resistance halo because in the course of the war no less than eleven pseudo-*Canards* appeared.<sup>23</sup> In the archives of *Le Canard Enchaîné* there are two variants of *Le Caneton déchaîné* to be found, only with great difficulty can the ideological differences be discerned. One of them (‘pirate londonienne’) was forged by the Germans. Nobody wondered what had been written in the authentic *Canard*. This would also have been impossible to find out because *Le Canard* did not appear at all between June 1940 and September 1944.

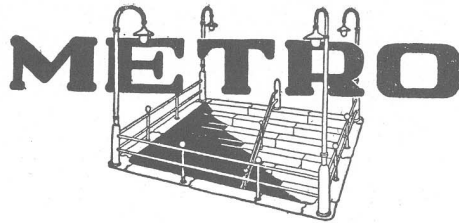
## METRO

During the first years of the occupation, however difficult it was to discern true from false, this was grosso modo parallel to the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’. As the war neared its end a schism progressively arose in the ranks of the ‘good’, between those who had actively taken part in the resistance and those who had not collaborated. The latter group became more and more irritated by the triumphant left-wing voice of the resistance. This irritation found release in mocking publications. Towards the end of the occupation there was a whole selection of semi-literary, semi-political periodicals making fun of the sanctimonious resolve of the Military Authority (organized from London) to tackle those Dutch

<sup>22</sup> Kim de Vries, “‘Zwarte’ propaganda in de strijd tegen de illegale pers”; ‘Onderzoek naar Duitse vervalsingen van verzetskranten tijdens WO II’, journalistic research lecture given by Hans Renders, State University of Groningen 2002. De Vries was the first to lay the real and the forged newspaper editions side by side in order to compare them. Her main conclusion was that the differences were so minimal that most readers probably did not even notice them.

<sup>23</sup> Laurent Martin, *Le Canard Enchaîné ou les Fortunes de la Vertu; Histoire d’un journal satirique 1915-2000* (Paris 2000), pp. 210-12. The forged *Canards* are in the archives of *Le Canard Enchaîné*, 173, rue Saint-Honoré in Paris. With thanks to Laurent Martin who gave me access to these archives.

Bevrijdings-  
nummer; meer  
sensatie dan de  
bevrijding-zelf!



Het blad,  
waarin  
illegalisten en  
collaborateurs  
elkaar vinden!

10 MEI 1945

1e JAARGANG NO. 7

### *Eerste daglicht-nummer*

Metro verschijnt voorlopig om de veertien dagen. — Uitgave: Uitgeversmij. „Metro“. — Druk: D. A. V. I. D. (De Algemeene Vrije Illegale Drukkerij). — Voorlopige abonnementsprijs: f 1.60 per kwartaal. — Voorlopig adres van directie, redactie en administratie: Keizersgracht 520, Amsterdam, Telefoon 35130. — Directeur: Dick van Veen (voorheen o.a. Douwes - Batenburg - Veenstra - Dekker) — Waarnemend Hoofdredactrice: De Metrolieten-Club



*Soms denk ik wel eens, dat het tóch niet zo'n goed idee was, korporaal*

who had not been entirely blameless during the occupation. Magazines were published filled with jokes, *Schadenfreude* and cynical reactions towards restored Dutch authority. Towards the end of the war Dutch people who had been largely uncritical or who had even collaborated with the Nazis were no longer sure how to behave. Many of them thought attack was the best defence. The periodicals *Metro*, *Criterium/Criterion* and *Sic* made jokes about so-called 'good patriots' who thought that there was a clear-cut line between resistance and collaboration.<sup>24</sup>

The satirical paper *Metro* was produced in Amsterdam from 15 November 1944 to 29 June 1946 with a circulation of 10,000 and many famous contributors. *Metro* was against the occupation but perhaps they were even more against the established resistance papers and after the liberation *Metro* turned against the dictatorship of the Military Authority and the purging committees connected to it. Apart from *Metro*, its publishers D.A.V.I.D. produced two other minor periodicals of which probably only one issue appeared: *Jeep*, an English-language periodical in two editions and *Nieuws*, of which the only known edition is that of 21 July 1945.

In *Metro* irritation about 'good' Dutch patriots ('politically correct', we would say these days) could be vented. Some of the expressions of post war dissatisfaction in *Metro* were to be seen in some rather demagogic polls and the Unified Front for the restoration of the rights of Dutch artists.<sup>25</sup> *Metro* published ambiguous jokes and comical drawings in which the occupiers were made to look ridiculous, at least this is the version given afterwards by the editorial staff. In his famous series of books about the Netherlands during the years of the occupation, war historian Loe de Jong was cautious. He cited *Metro* as a periodical with a humorous approach to events but to be on the safe side he also quoted the well known resistance journalist H.M. van Randwijk who described *Metro* as: 'a symptom of increasing degeneration of the mind, which cannot distinguish good taste from bad taste or humour from the drunkard's guffaw'.<sup>26</sup> Neither did the illegal *Vrij Nederland* know whether to place *Metro* with or against *De Gil*. When to cap it all, on 28 July 1945, the former resistance paper *De Vrije Kunstenaar*

<sup>24</sup> *Criterion* started with the title *Criterium* but it was rechristened *Criterion* after the 8th issue of 8 October 1945 because the Amsterdam publishing house of Meulenhoff had already published a literary periodical of that name before the war and they continued with it after the occupation.

<sup>25</sup> *Metro* was reprinted in facsimile in 1994: *Metro; Satirisch ondergronds tijdschrift van 15 november 1944 tot en met 29 juni 1946*, ed. Rob van der Nol, Jan Bruggemans & Hans Matla (The Hague 1994). For a review of this edition, see among others: Hans Renders, 'Metro bovengronds' in: *De Journalist* 8-7-1994. The same indignation can be found in Jan Gerhard Toonder's autobiographical book *De spin in de badkuip* (Amsterdam 1976) in which purging is mocked. Chapter XIV 'In front of the judge's chair', pp. 185-99, is particularly illustrative of this.

<sup>26</sup> Loe de Jong, op. cit. (n. 11), vol. 10 b, pt. 1: *Het laatste jaar II*, p. 473. The review by H.M. van Randwijk in *Vrij Nederland* appeared on 6-1-1945.

made a comparison between the 'jovial drumbeat' of *De Gil* and the supposed membership of the Nazi party of the famous brothers Marten (artist) and Gerhard (writer) Toonder, the Military Authority intervened and banned *Metro*, using the excuse of shortage of paper.<sup>27</sup> It was of course ironic that during the occupation the Nazis had used the same argument of paper shortage in order to enforce preventive censorship.

## CRITERION

*Criterion* also looked like a shameless copy of *De Gil*, which was even stranger when one realizes that the first issue probably only appeared after liberation. It was produced in Rotterdam but that's about all we know. Whilst *De Gil* called itself a 'Periodical Organ for the Sober Netherlands', *Criterion* referred to this by calling itself 'Fortnightly Organ for the New Sober Netherlands'. *Criterion* adhered to the adage that the hangover comes after the party. Restoration was becoming visible, the old parties were recovering, Military Authority was bossing everyone around and the Breakthrough, the movement which would end pluralism in Dutch society, had not yet appeared. In all ranks of Dutch society leaders could be found who wanted to move away from the segregated political structure, but mutual suspicion was too great to convert this aim into reality. In spite of the fact that during the occupation politicians and journalists had often expressed a desire to form a co-operative national broadcasting company modelled upon the English BBC, in the liberated Netherlands all the prewar (broadcasting) structures were rapidly restored.

The third issue of *Criterion* appeared on 15 July 1945 and in view of the fact that the first two issues have not been saved in any collection known to me, we must assume that the periodical was brought out immediately after liberation. However there is also a possibility that the first two issues, supposedly published during the war, never actually appeared. After all, by looking at the publication information in the so-called third issue we can see that we are dealing with a satirical publication: 'Gedrukt bij de C.D. [= Clandestiene Drukkerij]' [Printed by the S.P. (Secret Printing Office)], and on another occasion it states: 'Driemaal gezuiverd' [Thrice purged]. *Criterion* has the same flavour as *De Gil* and even the jokes are very similar to those of Waterman. Lots of sneers at the illegal press and 'Dictatorial Democracy' give rise to the suspicion that once again it actually was Waterman who was writing or translating the numerous columns, competitions and items on American humour. However there is no evidence for

<sup>27</sup> Antoon Coolen, 'Papierverknoeiing', in: *De Vrije Kunstenaar* 28-7-1945. In the reprint of *Metro*, mentioned in n. 25, Paul Koedijk in his contribution 'Drukkerij D.A.V.I.D.' writes without mentioning a source, that *Metro* was set up 'as a reaction to the German satirical periodical *De Gil*'.

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HANS RENDERS

**CRITERION**  
2 1/2 ct.

Postbox 359  
ROTTERDAM

Veertiendaags Orgaan voor Nieuw Nuchter Nederland

Verkoop uitsluitend  
aan volwassenen  
OPLAGE 20.000 EX.

1e Jaargang No.10  
15 Nov. 1945

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The image shows the front cover of a satirical magazine titled 'CRITICUM'. The title is printed in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. The cover is framed by a thin black border. At the top left, there is a box containing the text 'Postbox 359 ROTTERDAM'. At the top right, there is a box containing '1e Jaargang No. 8' and '8 Oct. 1945'. In the center, there is a box with the text 'Veertiendags Orgaan voor Nieuw Nuchter Nederland'. Below this, it says 'Drie maal gezuiverd' and 'Nu vrij onbeheerd'. At the bottom right, it says 'OPLAGE 20.000 EX.'. The background of the cover is light-colored with some faint, illegible text and a small circular logo in the center.

**CRITICUM**

Postbox 359  
ROTTERDAM

1e Jaargang No. 8  
8 Oct. 1945

Veertiendags Orgaan voor Nieuw Nuchter Nederland

Drie maal gezuiverd  
Nu vrij onbeheerd

OPLAGE 20.000 EX.

this. The thirteenth and last issue of 6 January 1946 was printed in a red spot colour and like all the previous issues it stated a post-office box number in Rotterdam. This New Year edition was published in the series 'Nederland en Kletsingstijd' [The Netherlands and Chatter Times] produced by means of the 'gracious co-operation of Dutch Democrats and Dictocrats'. According to their own announcement, circulation numbered 19,989, of which certain numbered specimens were at the disposal of the Political Investigation Service and the Economic Investigation Department. In short, *Criterion* was a satirical periodical that was very dissatisfied by postwar authority. In particular great annoyance was caused by the persecution of countrymen who had been collaborators.

## SIC

The first issue of the weekly *Sic* probably also only appeared after liberation; the second issue at any rate, is dated June 1945. Five issues appeared. The editorial staff claimed that they were being controlled by a *Verwalter* (an acting manager appointed by the Nazis), which was, of course, after the liberation a ridiculous claim. However, it gave them an excuse for every politically unpleasant opinion. Here also, just like in *De Gil*, readers' letters were printed which gave the impression of having been written by the editorial staff. The poetry is also full of satire and is critical of the old institutions that are supposed to restore order to the country. Mrs K. Anker-Pitt (in Dutch 'kankerpit' means a grouser) sent in a poem which begins as follows:

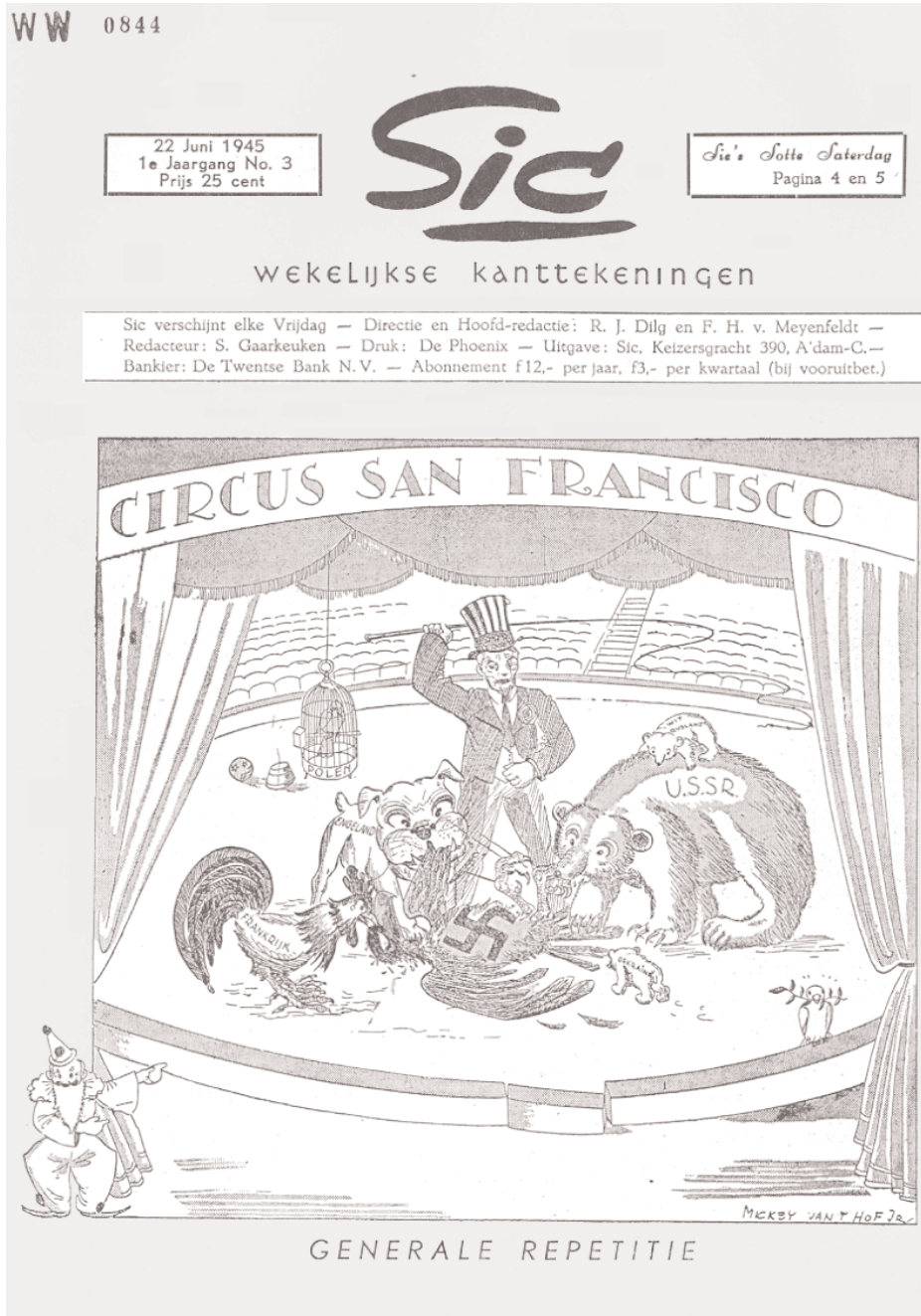
Biskwie

Eerst waren hier de moffen  
Die haalden alles weg  
Nu zijn hier de Canadezen  
Die brengen alles, zeg

[Biscuit

First we had the Jerries  
They took everything away  
Now here are the Canadians  
Bringing everything, hey].

In one cartoon the following words are seen in a text balloon escaping from an underground dungeon: 'I love Holland!'. In other words: the real patriotic fellow countrymen were being purged by idiots and thrown into prison. Tintin comes back from a concentration camp with a walking stick and huge rucksack. In a small frame Military Authority is thanked for providing the opportunity to invest illegally earned money in fixed assets and one of the signatures



is B v.d Weermacht. In the fourth issue (29 June 1945) this theme is elaborated on in the poem:

Illegalen genieten de voorkeur  
 Ik zoek een belastingconsulent  
 Al lijken mijn inkomsten schraal  
 Maar daar er veel zwarts te verbergen valt  
 Bij voorkeur illegaal

[Preferably illegals

I'm looking for a tax consultant  
 Even though it seems I don't earn much  
 But because I have plenty of undisclosed income to hide  
 I'd rather do it illegally]

The fact that according to *Sic* there was a lot wrong with the purges, can be seen in the many puns such as: 'this column has been purged' and 'purging salt' (bicarbonate of soda).

#### CONCLUSION

Upon further consideration what do all the periodicals that have been examined here – *De Gil*, *Metro*, *Criterion*, *Sic* – have in common? They were all periodicals which in the era of pluralism already represented a 'Breakthrough' ideal, even though they were not labelled as such. The steadily increasing desire to break free from the typically Dutch system of pluralism was expressed in journalistic and literary periodicals during and directly after the Second World War. In the periodicals discussed here the gut feeling was that pluralism was invented by the elite in order to keep the public under control. This is why Willem Waterman criticized the elite in his periodical. It also seems as though the fiercest criticism of pluralism came from that section of the public that felt restricted by it. In any case it can be seen that towards the end of the Second World War there was a need for a medium of national unity comparable to that which the United Kingdom had achieved with the BBC. Newspapers and periodicals, and not just the satirical ones, also had similar ideals.

No matter how strong these ideals were, immediately after liberation the sections were proudly back in place as if they had never been displaced by the circumstances of war. Thus it was that Catholics, Protestants and socialists began their own newspapers, which although this was less of an aim and more of an effect, resulted in Catholics, Protestants and socialists being organized by their own media and leaders into separate, isolated groups just like before the war.

It is certain that even before the Second World War ended in the Netherlands, neutral periodicals appeared which albeit against their better judgement,

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supported the Breakthrough ideal, or at any rate opposed pluralism. It was not until much later that this innovative movement took on the form of an opposition movement and then pluralism was soon eliminated.

*(Trans. Mary Bardon)*