

The Neutrality Dike depicted in this 1915 cartoon withstood "German contempt." The Netherlands stayed out of World War I, even though German submarines sank Dutch merchant ships. The Dutch could not have survived attack by the Kaiser's army. Holland, wrote historian Jost Adriaan van Hamel in 1918, was a flat country of "seaports and river-mouths, padded only by some hinterland."



# The Dutch

Over the past several years, the news from the Netherlands has caused many Americans to wonder: Whatever happened to the sturdy Dutch? At The Hague, thousands of citizens have demonstrated against their government's belated decision to allow its allies to deploy NATO cruise missiles on Dutch soil. In Amsterdam, squatters have tossed rocks and bottles at the police. In the capital, sex shops and cafés that openly sell marijuana do a brisk business. In Utrecht, demonstrators greeted John Paul II in May 1985 by shouting "Kill the pope, kill the pope." All this is evidence, some American pundits contend, that too much permissiveness can cause even the most civilized societies to decay. Here, Thomas R. Rochon analyzes the evolution of the Netherlands' generous welfare state, and Stanley R. Sloan examines the nation's role in the Atlantic alliance.

## BEYOND PERFECTION

*by Thomas R. Rochon*

When she was a little girl in the late 19th century, the future Queen Wilhelmina paid a visit to Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany in Berlin. "See," said the Kaiser to the Dutch princess, "my guards are seven feet tall and yours are only shoulder high to them." "Quite true, your Majesty," replied Wilhelmina. "Your guards are seven feet tall. But when we open our dikes the water is 10 feet deep."

The story is well worn, but today, a century later, the Dutch still take pride in their ever-expanding complex of dams, dikes, and sluices—without which half of their land would lie under water. The sea barriers reflect the Dutch conviction that much can be accomplished when everyone works together. British writer Anthony Bailey calls this the "shoulder-to-shoulder-on-the-dike tradition."

That tradition fostered one of the world's most civilized industrial societies. Rich or poor, the 14.5 million Dutch enjoy manicured public parks, efficient mass transportation, and excellent schools and

universities. And, since World War II, the central government at The Hague has created something truly special: a *verzorgingsstaat*, or welfare state,\* unequalled in the Western world.

The *verzorgingsstaat* consists of a wide array of subsidies that provide everything from benefits for the aged, disabled, and unemployed, to salaries for ballet dancers and oboe players, to handouts for sports and youth clubs. Indeed, the Dutch state is so openhanded that there are now three welfare *claimants* (including social security pension recipients) for every four active workers.

During the 1960s, surveys showed, the *verzorgingsstaat* ranked behind only the dike system as the greatest source of Dutch national pride. But during the 1980s, there have been second thoughts.

### Big Brother's Question

Whatever it once did for Dutch pride, the state's generosity has hobbled the Netherlands' economy. Public spending—which consumes over half of the country's gross national product (GNP)—has discouraged private investment and slowed expansion. During the 1960s, the annual GNP growth rate averaged a robust 5.1 percent, and unemployment was negligible. By 1983, the growth rate had sunk below one percent, and joblessness at 17 percent was a severe problem. The economic underpinnings of the *verzorgingsstaat* were being washed away like a failing sea wall.

As growth slowed, the welfare state became harder to finance—and its costs deepened the economic crisis. The government deficit reached 10.7 percent of national income in 1983. Such a high deficit, warned a committee of economists led by former Royal Dutch Petroleum president Gerrit A. Wagner, reduces the supply of investment funds and “creates a growing burden of interest payments.”

Partly as a result of such anxieties, in 1982 voters replaced the center-left government with a right-of-center coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals—who belong, despite the label, to the country's most conservative major party. The coalition, led by 47-year-old Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, was returned to power last year. By trimming some programs and eliminating others, it has cut spending

\*The term “welfare state” was probably first used in print by William Temple, archbishop of Canterbury and an ardent supporter of the British Labor Party. In *Citizen and Churchman* (1941), the archbishop asserted that “the state has a moral and spiritual function.” In place of “the Power State,” he argued, “we are led to that of the Welfare-State.”

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Shoppers throng "the Fifth Avenue of Europe"—Lijnbaan Square in Rotterdam, today the nation's largest city (population: 1.1 million).

and the deficit. The economy has improved. Unemployment has fallen to 14.4 percent; GNP growth rose to 2.1 percent in 1985.

But even in its trimmer version, the *verzorgingsstaat* bulks large. By the World Bank's reckoning, 59 percent of the Netherlands' GNP comes from government spending on goods and services—a far higher proportion than in Sweden and Denmark (47 percent), France (44), West Germany (31), and the United States (25).

U.S. policymakers debate the merits of food stamps and other components of a government "safety net" woven to aid the poor. The *verzorgingsstaat* offers much more.

Any Dutchman who loses his job, whether salesman, government bureaucrat, or Philips electrician, can count on receiving monthly unemployment checks that provide 70 percent of his previous wage or salary for a full year. If back spasms or some other officially sanctioned disability send him home, he receives 70 percent of his annual earnings in disability or retirement benefits for life. Small wonder that 796,500 Dutch workers are officially unemployed and, despite gains in health services, another 800,000 are classified as disabled.\* Thus, by official criteria, more than one-fourth of the entire labor force of 5.5 million is unfit for or out of work.

\*In the United States, by official count, seven percent of the work force was unemployed in November 1986, and some three percent was disabled.

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Not only does The Hague promise protection from financial stress, it guarantees the Good Life as well. In 1983, the Dutch Fine Arts Program supported 4,000 aspiring artists by purchasing their works, much as the U.S. government helps dairy farmers by buying surplus cheese. (Like the U.S. cheese, much of the Dutch art has collected dust in government warehouses.) To outlanders, as to many Dutch, such programs have seemed too generous by half. In a rather excited 1984 segment on CBS News's "60 Minutes," titled "Dutch Treat," correspondent Morley Safer intoned: "By the mid-1970s, the [Dutch] social welfare system had reached a crescendo of plans and programs, a reverse of 1984. Big Brother wasn't watching; he was asking: 'Can I do anything to help?'"

### Equal but Separate

The Dutch welfare state resembles the omnibus Scandinavian models. But it differs in a crucial respect. Sweden's and Norway's social programs grew out of a political compromise between socialism and capitalism—a "middle way," as U.S. columnist Marquis Childs called it. What spurred the architects of the *verzorgingsstaat* was not political necessity, but a perceived Christian imperative. Social policy had to deal with "two principles," wrote A. A. van Rhijn, the welfare state's draftsman, in 1944: "human worth and social solidarity. Both are, for me, anchored in religion."

Solidarity was the key word. The functions of the *verzorgingsstaat* had long been carried out by the various religious denominations, which had *no* shoulder-to-shoulder tradition. For nearly three centuries, Dutch society was riven by conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. The rival Christian strains became two of the country's four *stromingen* (traditions), along with socialist and conservative politics, commanding the allegiances of the Dutch.

The *stromingen* emerged from Holland's 80-year war of independence against Catholic Spain (1568–1648). The House of Orange expelled the Church hierarchy from the Netherlands and barred Dutch Catholics from public posts, from government minister to lantern lighter.\* They were also excluded from law, medicine, and other professions. From all this arose a pattern of group isolation. Catholics formed their own organizations. In 1881 they founded their own labor organization, the Roman Catholic People's Union, dedicated to shielding workers from "the social errors of our time." The union became the Catholic People's Party, formed in 1904 to seek government funds for parochial schools.

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\*Catholics won back the right to hold civil service jobs in 1795, but they still may not ascend the throne, occupied since 1980 by Queen Beatrix, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. When Beatrix's sister Irene converted to Catholicism and married a Spanish prince in 1964, she was removed from the line of succession.



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unions, employers' associations, insurance agencies, and even stamp collecting societies. Instead of one Red Cross organization, the Dutch had a White-Yellow Cross (Catholic), an Orange-Green Cross (Protestant), and a Green Cross (secular). Observed 19th-century Calvinist politician Abraham Kuyper: "Isolation Is Our Strength."

As historian L. J. Rogier noted, the Dutch raised separation to a "basic principle of life." They took pride in the saying, "One Dutchman a theologian, two Dutchmen a sect, three Dutchmen a schism."

Group allegiances were reinforced early in life. Sociologist I. Gadourek studied the schooling of young children during the 1940s and 1950s in the small tulip-bulb-growing village of Sassenheim. The Catholic school texts held that the 16th-century Inquisition was "a tribunal of the Church [whose members] were wise and pious bishops and priests," and that Martin Luther "rejected the Priesthood, the sacraments and the Holy Mass." Of Prince William of Orange, the Dutch Calvinist who led Holland's fight for independence against Spain, Catholic primers declared: "We must esteem [him] as the Founder of our independence, but we cannot approve all his deeds."

Dutch Reformed schoolbooks, by contrast, said that "the Inquisition was merciless," that Luther's 95 Theses summed up "the shortcomings and lies of the Roman Church," and that "the love we feel for our Queen now is like the love people felt for William of Orange, the Founder of our Dynasty."

### Goodbye to the Thrifty Housewife

Religious differences evoke less emotion today. Yet the notion of two nations persists. Some 40 percent of the citizens are Catholics; 34 percent belong to one of two Protestant branches, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Church. Protestants in the northern provinces often consider the southern Catholics too fun-loving. Catholics think of northern Protestants as too stern and serious. When I told northern friends that my work would take me to the southern provinces, several said that I should expect people to show up late or not at all for interviews. Southerners laughed at this prediction, but agreed with it (though, in fact, nobody was late). All this in a country that stretches a scant 180 miles from north to south.

To a great extent, the *verzorgingsstaat* has supplanted the churches as the financier of social services. The change occurred during and after Nazi Germany's May 1940–May 1945 occupation of the Netherlands. World War II exposed citizens of every religion and class to poverty and other miseries. From then on, the Dutch, like all Western Europeans, as British historian David Thomson has observed, began to expect more from governments than guarantees of "constitutional liberties and universal suffrage." The new state must secure "the well-being and full employment of its citizens."

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Even before the Nazis capitulated, European planners began thinking about how that might be done. In 1942, Sir William Beveridge, as chairman of Britain's Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, set out to revamp the British welfare system—"a complex of disconnected administrative organs." The comprehensive social insurance system he proposed provided for the unemployed, the sick or disabled, widows and orphans, the pregnant, and the retired. It was, the Beveridge report declared, "a time for revolutions, not for patching."

The Beveridge report became a blueprint for other Western European welfare planners. One was A. A. van Rhijn, the chairman of the Netherlands' Committee to Examine the Question of Social Security, who waited out the war in London with the Dutch government-in-exile. Van Rhijn essentially made Beveridge's plan his own. Moreover, he envisioned that the government would play a central role in the Dutch economy, using deficit spending when necessary to maintain high employment. "The ideal of the Minister of Finance," he wrote in 1944, "can no longer be that of the thrifty housewife."

The Dutch welfare state blossomed swiftly, and almost as Van Rhijn had planned it. Even before the Allies liberated the Netherlands in May 1945, Dutch officials in London moved to broaden future sickness and disability payments. After the war, the government enacted laws awarding the benefits that the Lubbers coalition would later have to trim. The Hague adopted the country's first general old-age pension (1957) and an unemployment act (1965) that originally granted jobless workers 80 percent of the last wage earned, for six months. Eventually the government extended child subsidies beyond the first two children (1963) and expanded the short-term sickness (1967) and long-term disability (1976) benefits. Disabled workers were promised 80 percent of their last wage, indefinitely.

### **The 45,000-Guilder Man**

The crowning achievement came in 1976. Sickness, disability, and retirement payments were tied to changes in the wages of all private-sector workers. As wages rose, so would the numbers on the checks flowing to people drawing unemployment and social security. Whether a Dutchman's income was high or low, whether it was earned or a granted benefit, it increased with everyone else's. This "coupling" would be, in the words of a government minister, "the mark of our civilization."

The Dutch, policymakers hoped, would move toward general prosperity like soldiers in a parade, with everyone marching in step.

The parade would turn out to be an expensive one. But for a time the Netherlands could afford it, thanks to several factors: the postwar demand for new homes and buildings, which put millions to



### MAKING ROOM

*In The Light in Holland (1970), British writer Anthony Bailey describes how the Dutch, living in Europe's second most densely populated nation (after Monaco), manage to preserve a sense of privacy, even in crowded Amsterdam:*

To me, being by myself means being in a room alone. The Dutch, like children in big families, can be by themselves in a room with six other people, or on a canal bank lined with people fishing almost shoulder to shoulder.

Stand on any street corner in Amsterdam at five-thirty in the evening and watch the phalanxes of bicycles go by—a sight not quite what it used to be, but still impressive enough. If you pick at random one serenely pedalling individual from the thick, staggered formation, you see that he isn't really looking at the city, the street, or the bicyclists around him. He seems aware only of a small portion of space, a bubble within which he and his bike exist, with a few spare inches outside his knuckles on the handlebars, his twirling feet, his steady shoulders. He is secure within this space, which encloses him and moves with him, the way energy moves through water, giving an appearance of fast forward motion to a wave. Then the traffic light has changed, he is gone, and others have whirled up to the junction, jousting with each other in a remote, impersonal way, ignoring an interloping car or . . . *brommer* [motorbike].

On any face—the face of a girl, the face of a dignified gentleman wearing a hat—you may glimpse the most private of smiles. Pedalling homeward, they have their own thoughts as their wheels revolve and as cars and trams and even *brommers* assail them from four, or even six directions, the man on the right, whatever his vehicle, having the right of way, which he—sometimes with more courage than sense—always takes, their reflexes operating splendidly though their minds are elsewhere.

These . . . rush-hour riders always fascinate me. They are a wonder, like salmon going upstream, demonstrating, as they do, that in the most crowded places a human being can go on being himself—can become even more himself.

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work; the labor unions' willingness to accept low wages; and the 1962 discovery of natural gas in the northern province of Groningen, which could be exploited to limit fuel imports at home and increase exports to Britain, West Germany, and other Common Market countries. Between 1945 and 1970 the Dutch, like the West Germans, would enjoy an "economic miracle." Annual growth rates climbed to an average of 4.8 percent. Some 1.5 million new homes went up.

Dutch firms competed worldwide for markets and resources, and prospered. By 1970, the "Big Three"—Philips (electronics), Unilever (chemicals and food), and Royal Dutch Shell (petroleum and natural gas)—employed 12 percent of the work force. Rotterdam, the world's busiest port, became the entry point for more than a

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fourth of all cargo shipped to the Common Market.\* The Dutch imported nearly all of their oil, iron ore, and other minerals, but their exports of gas, chemicals, and dairy products covered the costs.

The benefits of all this economic activity were not restricted to the rich. Even today, the typical Dutchman—let's call him "Jan van Dyck"—enjoys an enviable standard of living. All full-time employees age 23 and over must, by law, be paid at least 23,856 guilders (about \$10,735) a year. As a 40-year-old white-collar professional, Mr. Van Dyck earns some 45,000 guilders (\$20,250). He works some 38 hours per week for the government or one of the big corporations that power the Dutch economy. The Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reckons that more than half of all Dutch industrial workers are employed by the Big Three and 27 other firms.

### Not Climbing the Ladder

In a country that offers much to workers, and expects much from employers (who pay among the highest wages in Western Europe), Mr. Van Dyck has reason to want to be on a payroll, rather than be self-employed. He is guaranteed a 23-day annual vacation, and a holiday bonus equal to 7.5 percent of his salary.

Like all Dutch workers, Jan surrenders much of his income to the government. His income tax represents only about 40 percent of his total tax burden. The Dutch finance most of their welfare state in much the same way that Americans pay for Social Security: through employee and employer contributions to social insurance programs. Dutch workers contribute about 25 percent of their incomes to support the Old Age pension, the Widows and Orphans Fund, health insurance, employment insurance, and disability insurance.

Jan thus trades opportunity for security. As the OECD's 1986 profile of the Netherlands explains, the country's "labor market flexibility and mobility are probably affected by very high marginal taxes and generous income-related transfers." That is, Mr. Van Dyck is discouraged from climbing the economic ladder, because the government will take much of his added earnings. With The Hague taxing away about 34 percent of his salary, he has some 30,000 guilders (about \$13,500) to feed, clothe, and house his family each year.

But the rent on his two-bedroom apartment, 600 guilders (\$270) per month, absorbs less than a fourth of his take-home pay. And if the government taxes much away, it also gives plenty back, in the form of subsidies to various privately run social services.

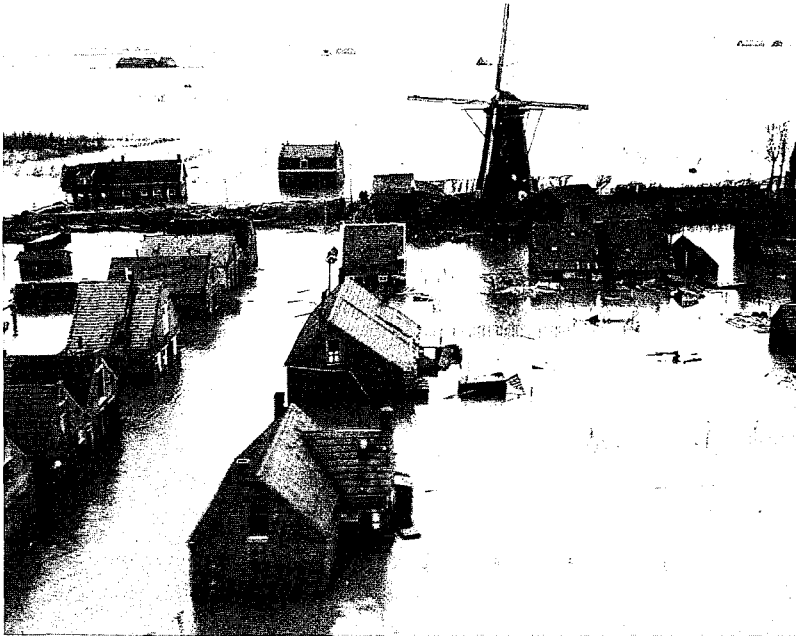
Van Dyck pays no bills when his dentist fills his wife's two cavities, or when the doctor gives his son Kees a tonsillectomy. Since

\*In 1984, Rotterdam handled some 250 million metric tons of goods—as much as the total tonnage moved through London, Bremen, Hamburg, Le Havre, and Antwerp.

gasoline costs about \$2.60 per gallon, Jan takes the train to work; he pays just 50 guilders (\$22) *a month* in train fare to commute, 24 miles each way every day, from Hilversum to Amsterdam. He pays only 15 guilders (\$6.75) a year for his membership in the local soccer club, 10 guilders (\$4.50) to attend a concert at The Hague's elegant Koninklijke Schouwburg theater, and 75 guilders (\$33.75) a year to belong to the Algemene Nederlandse Wielrijders Bond (ANWB), the Netherlands' private, government-subsidized automobile club.

The Dutch pride themselves on making such services work. The ANWB offers Europe-wide assistance to Dutch travelers. Jan need not panic if the engine of his only car explodes while he and his family are spending their month's vacation at the beach in sunny Alicante, Spain. If necessary, the ANWB office in Barcelona will have the Van Dycks flown back to the Netherlands, free of charge.

However efficient the Netherlands' bureaucracies may be, they can only provide slowly and at great expense (through land reclamation) what the Dutch covet most: space. Families like the Van Dycks live in boxlike rowhouses or apartments. Everywhere they go, they



*Some 1,800 people died in a February 1953 flood that inundated hundreds of coastal villages. The disaster spurred the Dutch to build the Delta Project—a recently completed two-mile barrier across the Eastern Scheldt.*

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encounter signs of their country's cramped condition. Stairways are narrow and steep. Those lucky enough to own yards rarely find them big enough to play *verstoppertje* (hide-and-peek) or kick a ball. In some areas, people garden or sunbathe on plots rented from the railroad—just a few square yards of turf adjacent to the tracks. Not even death brings freedom from overcrowding. Often two, three, or even four corpses share a cemetery grave. After 10 years or so, the deceased are exhumed and cremated to make way for new arrivals.

Although public aid has supplanted private charity, the religious pillars still provide the administrative structures through which the Dutch government delivers many services. That is why the government, despite its generosity, employs just 16 percent of the work force—compared with 38 percent in Sweden, 30 percent in Denmark, and 18 percent in West Germany. The Catholic and Protestant denominations still run schools, hospitals, and broadcast stations. But they now receive 90 percent of their operating expenses from the state. The Dutch *verzorgingsstaat*, says Berkeley professor of social welfare Ralph M. Kramer, is “based on the principle of *subsidiarity*, with the government [acting] almost exclusively as financier.”

The pillars, of course, are no longer as influential, or as divisive, as they were when Gadourek studied Dutch schools in the 1950s. The curricula in Catholic and Protestant schools, for example, differ little. Indeed, Dutch parents like to brag that they send their children to the *best* local school, regardless of its affiliation.

### An End to Celibacy

In many respects the Netherlands has become more like other Western countries, which is not surprising. As residents of a trading nation, the Dutch are well informed about—and influenced by—world events. Half of all political news in Amsterdam's respected *NRC Handelsblad* is international. Even before college (about half of all Dutch youths receive some higher education), students learn two or three foreign languages—English, German, and sometimes French—which they practice on vacations abroad. And while the Netherlanders produce their own television programs, and 15 (government-subsidized) films annually, much of their entertainment is imported. *Top Gun* and *Ruthless People* (in English, with Dutch subtitles) were big hits last year in the movie houses. French films and British soap operas are popular TV fare. Three U.S. series (“The Jetsons,” “Family Ties,” and “Dynasty”) head the Wednesday night lineup on Nederland One. “The Netherlands,” an old saying goes, “trades and breathes over its borders.”

Thus the Dutch have escaped few modern fads, movements, or trends, among them the secularization common to all Western societies. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Dutch Catholic church grew

### DUTCH MINORITIES: THE THREE WAVES

A diverse array of entrepreneurs sells its wares in the lively open-air market on Albert Cuypstraat, several blocks from the Rijksmuseum in downtown Amsterdam. Surinamer salesmen hawk their fine necklaces, earrings, and other jewelry. Antillean merchants display their colorful Caribbean garb. Chinese-Indonesian chefs offer *loempia* (spring rolls) and *rijsttafel* (ricetable) at one of the many nearby "Chin-Ind" restaurants.

These businessmen are among the Netherlands' roughly one million resident ethnics (seven percent of the population). Although they come from non-European stock, most are Dutch citizens. And many represent the legacy of the Netherlands' old colonial empire in Asia and Latin America. "They are here," the Dutch say, "because we were once there."

For centuries the Netherlands has accepted immigrants, whether they were Huguenots escaping French Catholic persecution or Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. But most Dutch *minderheden* (minorities) arrived in three waves after World War II.

Some 300,000 Eurasians migrated to the Netherlands after Indonesia won its independence from the Dutch in 1949. Though Dutch anthropologist Topaas de Boer-Lasschuyt described them as "melancholic, brown, big-eyed nowhere belongers," nearly all of these immigrants were, culturally and socially, quite Dutch. Among the Asians, only the 40,000 South Moluccans—who insist that the Dutch government help them recapture their homeland—resisted assimilation. To dramatize their quixotic cause, young South Moluccan extremists have resorted to terror, hijacking commuter trains (in 1975 and 1977) and on one occasion (in 1977) taking six teachers and 105 schoolchildren hostage.

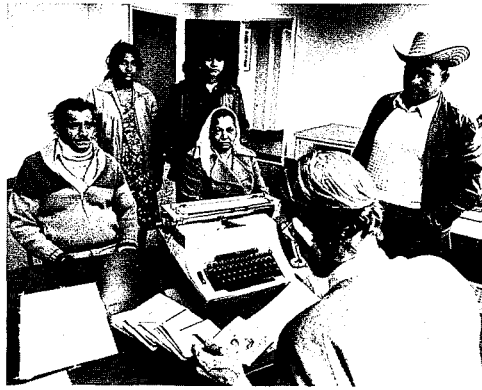
The second wave of immigrants arrived primarily for economic, not political, reasons. Lured by thousands of menial but relatively high-paying jobs in the factories of Amsterdam and Utrecht and on the docks of Rotterdam, some 300,000 Turks and Moroccans flocked to the Netherlands between 1960 and 1974. The Hague expected that many of the *gastarbeiders* (guest workers) would return to their homelands after several years. But as legal beneficiaries of the country's generous welfare state, the Muslim *gastarbeiders* found it hard to leave. Today, to reduce social outlays for non-Dutch minorities, the

more liberal. In 1966, some bishops published *De Nieuwe Katechismus* (A New Catechism), which cast doubt on church doctrine on the virgin birth of Christ and original sin, and suggested that the Last Supper was a symbolic myth. Churchmen advocated the use of contraceptives and an end to priestly celibacy; Catholic universities appointed Marxist professors to teach sociology, economics, and political science. TV networks once affiliated with the Dutch Reformed Church aired shows rife with religious satire, vulgar language, and scenes that many Americans would consider pornographic.

Despite such liberalization, or perhaps because of it, church at-

Lubbers government offers a *remigratie premie* (re-migration premium) of up to \$45,000 to foreign workers who waive their entitlements, leave the country, and agree not to settle in the Netherlands again.

The Netherlands' third wave comprises some 220,000 immigrants from the former Dutch American colonies of Suriname (which became independent in 1975) and the Netherlands



Antilles (which include the self-governing islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, Saba, and St. Eustatius) who came in the 1970s. Most are of black African descent. The Hague tried to disperse these newcomers, but most drifted into low-rent neighborhoods in the big cities. Some 35,000 Surinamers dwell in the high-rise apartment buildings of Amsterdam's Bijlmermeer district; fully half of the adults are unemployed.

The growing presence of so many non-European minority groups in the Netherlands has tested Dutch tolerance. "Netherlands for the Netherlands," cried members of the extreme right-wing, anti-foreigner Centrum Party during the election campaign of 1982. As elsewhere in Western Europe, many minority spokesmen have complained that their people suffer not only from (illegal) discrimination in housing and employment, but from age-old stereotypes as well. Some black Surinamers, for example, now find the popular Christmastime folk character, Black Peter (Sinterklaas's "Moorish" helper), offensive.

—Allison Blakely

*Allison Blakely, associate professor of European history at Howard University, spent a year (1985-86) in the Netherlands conducting research on the situation of blacks in the old Dutch empire.*

tendance, while still higher than in other Western European countries, has fallen. Some 27 percent of all Dutch adults attend services regularly (compared with 14 percent in Britain and 12 percent in France). Declining too is the churches' strength at the ballot box. In 1963, 83 percent of Catholics voted for Catholic Peoples' Party candidates; in 1972, only 38 percent did so. Many Catholics, and Protestants, have defected to the now more numerous secular parties.

No fewer than six new, nonreligious political parties and three leftist religious parties entered the Tweede Kamer, the lower house of the Dutch parliament, between 1959 and 1982. During the same

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period, the conservative Liberal Party doubled in size. The three major church-affiliated parties—the Catholic People's Party and two Protestant groups, the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian Historical Union—responded to the secular onslaught by merging into the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) in 1977. The alliance would have been unthinkable 20 years earlier. A Christian Historical Union leader told me in 1978: "I sometimes fear that our partners in the CDA will swamp us and submerge our identity."

### Free Rides

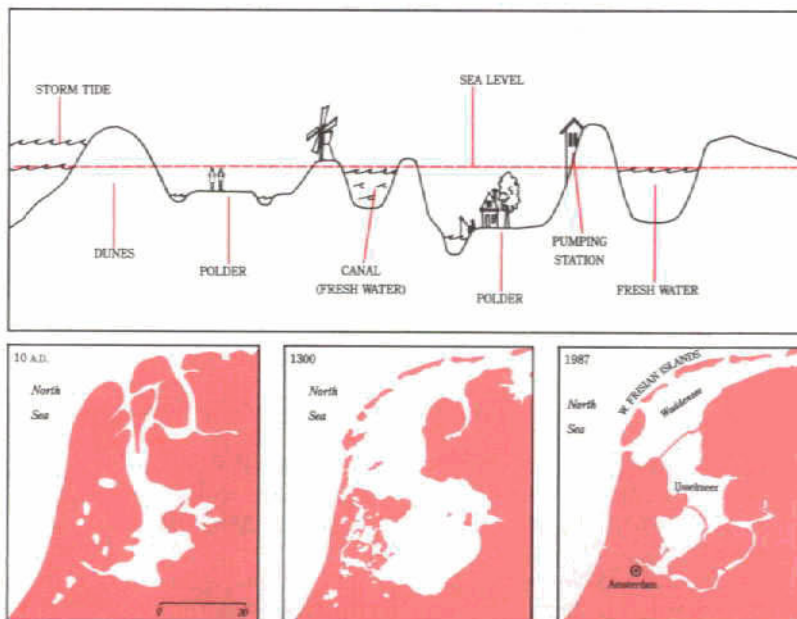
Over the last few decades, traditional Dutch morality has come under assault too. As elsewhere in the West, the prosperous 1960s saw the emergence of blue-jeaned advocates of "free sex," free drugs, and free rides in several senses. The Provos, a band of young anarchists who flourished in Amsterdam in 1964–67, championed an array of "White Plans" designed to improve everyday city life. Their White Chicken plan would have had the police distribute free bandages, medicine, and contraceptives on the streets. The Provos' White Bicycle initiative, which was experimented with for a time, called for Amsterdam to provide some 20,000 white-painted bicycles that would be strewn around the city like shopping carts for anyone's use. A small but radical youth movement still thrives in the Netherlands. Dutch authorities have tolerated the *krakers* (squatters) who occupy uninhabited buildings in several Dutch cities, in much the same way that Dutch Protestants and Catholics tolerated, for centuries, the practices of other groups. Amsterdam officials renovated some of the buildings and rented them, for about \$50 per month, to the *krakers*. "People needed houses and the government was failing to provide housing," explained a Socialist legislator, Klaas de Vries. "What else were [the squatters] to do?"

The *krakers* notwithstanding, the Netherlands is still, for the most part, a conservative society. Its rates of such social afflictions as divorce, juvenile crime, and unwed motherhood have remained lower than those in other Western European countries and the United States. Still, churchgoing rural folk are shocked by the drugs, pornography, and exhibitionism that they see during visits to the cities.

"Last week in Amsterdam I saw a bunch of kids, marching in the street, holding signs that profaned the name of God," a Calvinist farmer from the town of Ede told me. "Is this the result of too much freedom? Everywhere I looked I saw filth and decay. I could not believe I was in the Netherlands. I might as well have been in Paris."

Social change has affected social policy. The *verzorgingsstaat* was affordable as long as the Dutch nuclear family remained traditional and intact, and the economy remained robust. When the policy-makers crafted the various programs, they did so under the assump-

## PUSHING BACK THE NORTH SEA



Since the 17th century, the Dutch have reclaimed some 3,300 square miles (20 percent of the nation's land area) from lakes and the sea. The top sketch shows how the country's 1,200 miles of dikes and dunes enable canals, lakes, and polders (areas of reclaimed land) to exist below sea level.

tion—not unreasonable a generation ago—that there would be but one breadwinner per family if unemployment or disability were to strike. The government benefits needed to support only one household: the worker, his nonworking spouse, and their children.

But in the Netherlands, as elsewhere, many fathers, mothers, and offspring no longer share one dwelling, with a rent or mortgage bill that is paid by one wage earner. Divorces, though still low in number, have been increasing, rising from 5,600 in 1960 to some 34,000 last year. In 1960, some 20 percent of adult women worked outside the home; today over 40 percent hold a job, typically in an office or retail establishment. Although many working single and married women are part-timers, they are entitled to full benefits. In some families, husbands, wives, and young adult offspring are all receiving support from the government.

In all Western countries over the last 100 years, the state has, to varying degrees, taken over welfare functions once performed by families, parishes, guilds, and private voluntary organizations. In the



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Netherlands, which has a long tradition of private, church-based charity, this shift was particularly dramatic. But to an even greater extent than their Scandinavian counterparts, postwar Dutch regimes also have taken control of peoples' *incomes*. Now many citizens complain about a government that is "for you, but without you." Indeed, by levying high taxes and subsidizing virtually everything, the state in effect tells the people how to spend their money. When the Amsterdam council gave a subsidy to a motorcycle club to fix up its meeting house, a friend of mine referred to "the Hell's Angels subsidy."

Not surprisingly, abuse became endemic. The fastest-rising category of welfare claimant over the last 25 years has been the disabled. And the most-reported malady? Back pains. "People no longer see the system as a system," observed a 1985 Social Insurance Council Report, "but as something to be manipulated."

### Now, The 'Caring Society'

That this should happen in the Netherlands is ironic. The Dutch long stressed the value of hard work and looked to the family or to churches, not to the government, for succor in hard times.

In 1985, the Nederlandsche Bank conducted a study comparing economic trends in New England with those in the Netherlands. Why, the bank wanted to know, had the Northeastern United States fared so much better? One reason was that many of New England's temporarily unemployed helped themselves and the local economy by working as low-paid waiters, cashiers, and bellhops until better jobs came along. Seduced by generous unemployment benefits, their Dutch counterparts saw little reason to choose work over leisure. "There existed a kind of anti-private enterprise mentality in the 1970s," observes Finance Minister Ruding. "But we have learned our lesson, that the private sector is the root for real employment."

To ease the strain on the treasury, Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers's Christian Democratic-Liberal coalition has trimmed sickness, unemployment, and disability benefits. The government has also reduced the number of civil service jobs, lowered the minimum wage, and cut salaries in the public sector. Finally, it has broken the link between wage levels and benefits paid to welfare recipients. Between 1981 and 1986, the purchasing power of individual disability payments fell, on average, by more than 20 percent. The Dutch parade no longer marches in step.

Partly as a result, over the last three years the government has managed to cut public spending by nine percent and drive its annual deficit below eight percent of national income. The number of welfare claimants has continued to climb, due to a rise in the number of old-age pensioners. But the worst excesses seem to be over.

Not everyone, of course, is pleased. The opposition Labor Party

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protests that The Hague is destroying the welfare system under the guise of making it work. In 1983, civil servants struck against a proposed 3.5 percent wage reduction (they accepted 3.0 percent). That year, protesting cuts in the now-defunct Fine Arts Program, artists tossed a pie in the face of the minister of welfare, health, and culture at an exhibit. Gerard Veldkamp, a Catholic People's Party stalwart who created many *verzorgingsstaat* programs during the 1960s, has denounced the Christian Democrats for losing their "christian-social vision."

The Dutch would never return to an every-man-for-himself society. But they are rethinking the virtues and vices of their present programs. University of Amsterdam political scientist Kees van Kersbergen foresees a scaled-down, more production-oriented, and less regulation-entangled *zorgzame samenleving* (caring society) supplanting the welfare state. The "caring society" he envisions would try to help only those in need, not try to make everyone equal.

The Dutch experience has prompted foreign scholars to wonder about the future. Kent State University political scientist John Logue speculates that any omnibus welfare state may only work well as "a one-generational phenomenon, after which the values of individual responsibility and collective solidarity begin to weaken."

Heinrich Heine once said that if the world were about to end he would go to the Netherlands, where everything happens 50 years late. Having created what they once saw as the perfect welfare state, the Dutch today seem to be not behind the times, but slightly ahead in a more pragmatic effort to provide what all humane societies should provide: support for the truly needy, and opportunity for the willing and able.



## THE INDEPENDENT ALLY

by Stanley R. Sloan

Late in the evening of November 1, 1985, J. M. Bik, a reporter for the newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, paced back and forth outside Nieuwspoort, the press information office at The Hague. Inside the red brick building, in an upstairs chamber, the 14 members of the Dutch cabinet debated whether or not to allow the United States, under the terms of a 1979 decision by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to deploy 48 Tomahawk cruise missiles on Dutch soil. For the Netherlands, this was, in the words of *New York Times* correspondent James M. Markham, "the most momentous and tormenting national security decision in postwar history."

For professional rather than political reasons, Mr. Bik probably hoped the missiles would be approved. The edition of the *NRC Handelsblad* tucked under his arm carried his front page story reporting that the cabinet had *already* decided in favor of deployment. Meanwhile, hoping to prove Bik wrong, hundreds of young antimissile protesters pressed against the building, shouting slogans and banging their fists against the doors and windows.

Finally, after 12 hours of cabinet debate, Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers came downstairs to the press gallery, now jammed with weary and impatient reporters, to announce the decision. To Bik's relief, Lubbers announced that his center-right coalition government had, indeed, agreed to let the United States begin deploying the weapons in the Netherlands in 1988. "Further deferment," wrote Lubbers to the Speaker of the Tweede Kamer (the lower house of parliament), "would undermine the credibility of the Netherlands' policy and call into question its reliability as a NATO partner." To mollify the country's vociferous antimissile movement, the cabinet also decided that it would discontinue two other "nuclear tasks" that the Netherlands undertook for NATO.\*

Back in Washington, State Department spokesman Joseph W. Reap hailed the Netherlands' "adherence to the fundamental principles underlying the [NATO] alliance." But in the Netherlands, Lubbers's pronouncement drew a flurry of protests. Some 100,000 high school students across the country skipped classes for a day. A group of protesters calling themselves, appropriately, Operation Emergency Brake halted commuter trains by pulling their emergency stop levers. To suggest impending nuclear doom, one radio station in

\*In 1988, the Netherlands will no longer assign U.S.-supplied nuclear weapons to its 32 F-16 fighter bombers, or nuclear depth charges to its six P-3C Orion II antisubmarine planes.



*Queen Wilhelmina escaped to London when the Nazis invaded Holland in 1940. Here she joins FDR and a Navy aide at Mount Vernon in August 1942 to lay a wreath at George Washington's tomb.*

the city of Hilversum broadcast nothing all day but the sound of an airraid siren. Most importantly, Joop den Uyl, leader of the opposition Labor Party, pledged to reverse the decision to deploy. To Laborites, den Uyl said, November 1 represented "a black day for all those striving for an end to the nuclear arms race."

Such protests did not surprise Lubbers or the Christian Democratic and (conservative) Liberal ministers in his cabinet. The missile question had generated recurrent indignation among Netherlanders ever since December 12, 1979. On that day, NATO foreign and defense ministers, meeting at the alliance's Brussels headquarters, formally approved a plan for closing a perceived gap in the alliance's deterrent strategy: They would station 464 cruise and 108 Pershing II missiles in five NATO countries (West Germany, Italy, Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands). The so-called double track decision also called on the United States to negotiate cuts in the number of missiles that would be deployed, in return for Soviet reductions in the number of their new SS-20 missiles aimed at Western Europe.

Dutch antimissile protesters, many of whom were organized by the country's powerful church-led Interdenominational Peace Committee, soon grew restless. U.S.-Soviet arms control talks in Geneva had stalled, while the initial deployment of missiles in West Germany

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and Britain grew imminent. Some 555,000 Dutch citizens took to the streets of The Hague, protesting against the NATO missiles, in November 1983. One farmer, Leendert Plaisier of Dronten, even offered the Soviets his 109-acre farm as a site for their SS-20s. "A nuclear equilibrium," Plaisier explained, defending his unorthodox view, "will make our country a safer place to live in."

At any point during the six-year Dutch missile debate, a casual foreign visitor might have wondered: Why all the fuss about these particular weapons? Indeed, the Netherlands had, for many years, served as a depot for U.S. nuclear artillery shells, depth charges, and other nuclear arms, which NATO would use against Soviet-led Warsaw Pact forces in the case of an attack.

### Whales, Spices, Neutrality

For some American officials the missile protests raised fundamental questions about the Netherlands' loyalty to the Western alliance and, for that matter, about the character of the Dutch themselves. To some extent, the drama reflected the special political tensions that repeatedly have surfaced over nuclear weapons and NATO policies within most other Western European countries.

At the height of the missile controversy, American political commentator Walter Laqueur argued that the Netherlands had become "one of the weakest links in the Western alliance." The missile protests, he suggested, were symptomatic of a broader Dutch (and Northwestern European) phenomenon. The ranks of Dutch pacifism had been swelled by a variety of "confused but well-meaning 'troops.'" According to Laqueur, these included "idealists in search of a cause, ecologists fearful of irreversible changes on earth and in the atmosphere, churchmen in pursuit of a new faith, young people bored by the absence of genuine challenges and attracted by any movement promising action."

It is true, of course, that several Dutch politicians have ranked among the sharpest Western European critics of U.S. and NATO policies in recent years. But has the country really drifted away from its duty as a Western ally, as Laqueur and others suggest? Perhaps. But it may also be that the Dutch are simply reverting to their historic role as citizens of a small, highly independent country.

Throughout their history, the Dutch, for various reasons, have been wary of entanglements. Indeed, between 1648 (when the Neth-

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erlands won its independence by ousting Spain in the Eighty Years' War) and 1940 (when Nazi Germany occupied the country), the Dutch made a religion of neutrality. As Dutch scholar and parliamentarian Joris J. C. Voorhoeve wrote in *Peace, Profits and Principles* (1979), they sought "friendly relations and maritime and commercial treaties with all, but alignment with none."

Neutrality seemed a good choice for the Netherlands to protect its commercial and political interests. As Spain's overseas empire declined during the 16th century, the Dutch became Europe's great maritime power. During the 17th century, Holland's "Golden Age," as British historian G. V. Scammell observed in *The World Encompassed* (1981), "Dutch ships pursued whales in the Arctic, seals off South Africa, carried coal from England to Europe, grain from the Baltic to Iberia, slaves from West Africa to Brazil, silver from Europe to Asia, and spices from Asia to Europe."

Neutrality continued to serve the Dutch well as their maritime hegemony faded during the 18th and 19th centuries. A small nation hemmed in by military giants and traditional rivals—Germany, Britain, and France—the Dutch wanted to protect the flow of trade in and out of their ports, and to preserve access to their East Indian colonies. They did not want to upset the European balance of power. Nonalignment and nonparticipation became their creed.

### 'Island of Sanity'

Staying out of European conflicts, of course, was not always easy. Thanks to their geography—and their position as a major commercial crossroads—the Dutch would find themselves caught between Great Powers more than once. France's Napoleon III, for example, grew wary of German military power after Prussia crushed Austria in the Seven Weeks' War (1866). In an effort to extend French influence, he sought a bargain with Holland's King William III. The French emperor urged William to cede to France the adjacent Grand Duchy of Luxembourg—which then belonged to the Netherlands—in exchange for a monetary indemnity.

The Prussian prime minister, Otto von Bismarck, evinced no objection to the deal—until it was leaked to a soon-outraged German public. Then Bismarck had little choice but to threaten France with war. To stave off a European conflict, at least temporarily,\* the Dutch refused to cede Luxembourg to France. As prince lieutenant of Luxembourg, William's brother, Henry, granted the Grand Duchy's independence and neutrality at the Conference of London in 1867. "Dutch statecraft," as the 19th-century Dutch statesman, Johan Rudolf Thorbecke, rather confidently saw it, "itself free of the lust of power, is the fairest judge over the ambition of others."

\*The Franco-Prussian War erupted in 1870.

### DOING BUSINESS IN AMERICA

Practical, hard-working, and business-minded, the Dutch have loomed large in American life. Notable Americans of Dutch descent include three presidents (Martin Van Buren, Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt), empire builders (Cornelius Vanderbilt), writers (Herman Melville), actors (Humphrey Bogart, Audrey Hepburn), and journalists (Amy Vanderbilt, Walter Cronkite). But there are only six million Americans of Dutch ancestry today—compared with 40 million of Irish and 12 million of Italian descent.

The early Dutch ventured across the Atlantic mostly to explore and exploit—not to settle—the New World. “The nature of the Dutchman,” Sir Walter Raleigh said in 1593, “is to fly to no man but for his profit.”

The first Dutch foray to North America came in 1609, when the *Halve Maen* (Half Moon), commanded by an Englishman, Henry Hudson, sailed up the Hudson River in search of a Northwest Passage to the East Indies. Dutch explorers who followed, such as Adriaen Block, sought beaver skins from the Mohican Indians, who then inhabited the Hudson River Valley. In 1614 Dutchmen built Fort Nassau near present-day Albany, New York.

The Dutch also imported the first slaves to the New World. The Dutch ship that delivered 20 black Africans to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619 was the first of many to bring bondsmen to labor-short English colonists.

Attracted by the lucrative fur trade, 13 Dutch merchants established the Dutch West India Company in 1621, and gained exclusive rights to develop the colony of Nieuw Nederland (which encompassed parts of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York). A group of farmers founded Nieuw Amsterdam in 1625 at the mouth of the Hudson River. It was here, the following year, that Pieter Minuit, Nieuw Nederland’s director-general, concluded his famous pact with the Indians to purchase Manhattan Island for 60 guilders (\$24) worth of merchandise (including 80 pairs of hose, 30 kettles, and one frying pan.)

Dutch outposts such as Wiltwyck (today’s Kingston, New York) and Bergen (Jersey City, New Jersey) sprang up throughout the area. But only 10,000 Dutch inhabited Manhattan, Long Island, and the Hudson and Delaware River valleys in 1664, when a British force led by Colonel Richard Nicolls seized Nieuw Amsterdam and named it after the Duke of York.

Through no virtue of their own, the Dutch, unlike the neighboring Belgians, escaped the devastation of World War I. Germany’s famous Schlieffen Plan had originally called for Kaiser Wilhelm II’s troops to invade Belgium *and* the Netherlands on their way to France. But a neutral Holland, calculated General Helmuth von Moltke, would best serve the German war effort—by keeping the mouth of the Rhine River, at Rotterdam, open to German imports. A combination of “opportune Dutch timidity” and “considerable good fortune,” as Voorhoeve put it, “saved the Dutch.”

Through the 1920s and 1930s, the Dutch remained faithful to neutrality. Holland joined the League of Nations in 1920. But the League, as Foreign Minister H. A. van Karnebeek was quick to note,

Dutch immigration virtually ceased for 180 years. Then a fundamentalist revolt at home against the increasingly lax Dutch Reformed Church rekindled interest in the New World. Beginning in the mid-19th century, Dutch pastors led entire congregations of dogmatic Calvinist "Seceders" to America. Unlike their 17th-century predecessors, they came to establish their own isolated, God-fearing communities. In 1846, Dominie (Pastor) Henrick Pieter Scholte and his 900-person congregation from Amsterdam and Utrecht built the town of Pella on a prairie in central Iowa. The next year, Dominie Albertus C. van Raalte led his congregation from rural Drenthe and Overijssel to the forests of western Michigan. The new community, named Holland, he wrote, would be "a center for a united and spiritual life and labor for God's kingdom."

Today, Pella, Iowa (population: 8,300), and Holland, Michigan (10,400), are successful Dutch-American communities. Pella hosts two large companies—Rolscreen (windows) and Vermeer (farm equipment)—that maintain branches in the Netherlands. The town's 1985 median family income (\$30,945) lives up to the local motto: "A Nice Place to Live, and Make a Living."

Pellans, says Robert van Hemert, head of the local chamber of commerce, are more frugal, and more apt to vote Republican, than most Americans. He attributes Dutch-Americans' success to their ability to seize new opportunities while preserving Dutch values. Perhaps this is what Theodore Roosevelt was referring to when he spoke before the Holland Society of New York in 1890.

"Hollanders," said the future U.S. president, could never have won "re-nown had they remained Hollanders instead of becoming Americans." Had Cornelius Vanderbilt remained "alien in speech and habit of thought," TR went on, he "would have remained an unknown boatman instead of becoming one of the most potent architects of the marvelous American industrial fabric," and Martin Van Buren "would have been a country tavern-keeper, instead of the president of the mightiest republic the world has ever seen."



*Teddy Roosevelt*

did not represent a one-sided political agreement or a military partnership. Moreover, within the League, the Netherlands and other small European nations refused to align themselves with Britain and France. On July 1, 1936, three years after Hitler took power, the Netherlands and six others (Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway) declared themselves exempt from any future League decisions imposing economic sanctions against an aggressor. The likelier another war seemed during the 1930s, the more the Dutch clung to their faith.

To many Dutch politicians, neutrality seemed not only prudent, but also *morally* superior to military conflict. The Dutch, proclaimed P. J. S. Serrarens, a member of the parliament, after Germany in-



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vaded Poland, "have the duty in these days to guard the higher ethical values for mankind and in particular for Europe." Holland would remain, in the words of his colleague Rutgers van Rozenburg, an "island of sanity" amidst "the folly of peoples."

Even after the Germans invaded neutral Denmark and Norway in April 1940, the Dutch thought they could avoid the worst. Hitler had other plans. "The violation of Belgium's and Holland's neutrality is without importance," the Führer had told his leading military commanders at a November 23, 1939, meeting in Berlin. "Nobody will question that after we have conquered."

### Into the Attics

The Nazi attack began in the early morning hours of May 10, 1940. The Dutch spotted German planes penetrating Dutch air space at 1:30 A.M. But the aircraft did not attack; instead they proceeded out over the North Sea, on their way, it seemed, to England. At 4:00 A.M., the planes circled back toward the Netherlands, this time dropping bombs, then paratroopers, on Dutch airfields. Meanwhile, the Wehrmacht poured across the border. "The city is surrounded by strong German troops," warned Nazi leaflets dropped from the air on The Hague. "Any resistance is senseless."

As it happened, resistance *was* senseless. The Luftwaffe wiped out the Netherlands' meager air force within two days. The Germans delivered the final blow at 1:30 P.M. on May 14, when their aircraft began carpet bombing the city of Rotterdam. Gusts of wind whipped flames into a fury, as people poured into the streets. The city was devastated; there were some 1,000 dead. Within only a few hours of the attack, General Henri Gerard Winkelman, the commander-in-chief of the Dutch forces, called on his 300,000 poorly armed troops to lay down their weapons. To the Dutch people, Winkelman broadcast this stark explanation of the quick capitulation: "Our air force was too weak against the German air force and our anti-aircraft batteries also were not up to the might of the German power from the air . . . We were left to ourselves."

Neutrality, however noble in principle, had proved no guarantee of national survival. The Dutch forces had resisted only long enough to permit Queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch cabinet to flee to London aboard a British destroyer. Thousands of Dutch refugees soon followed. Their vessels, under frequent attack by Luftwaffe planes, steered zigzag courses as they steamed toward England.

The Dutch who stayed in Holland would live under Nazi occupation for the next five years. Berlin put Reichskommissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart, a Viennese Nazi, in charge of the Netherlands. On May 30, 1940, Seyss-Inquart delivered his "inaugural address" in the historic Ridderzaal at The Hague, where the queen had given her

traditional Speech from the Throne.\*

The Nazis would soon abolish the parliament, political parties, and the free press, set up German courts, and hand over much administrative authority to the Dutch National Socialists. They rationed the distribution of food, shoes, textiles, and soap, and confiscated foodstuffs and other valuables. Zinc tokens replaced Holland's copper, nickel, and silver coins. The Germans conducted *razzia*, or man-hunts—first for Jews, and later for other able-bodied men—to provide workers for war industries in Germany. Some 300,000 *onderduikers* (underdivers) resisted the *razzia* by hiding themselves in the attics or basements of sympathetic countrymen.

1944 began auspiciously for the Dutch. The Allies landed in Normandy on June 6, and went on to liberate Paris on August 24, Brussels on September 3, and parts of the Netherlands' southernmost province of Limburg by September 9. But Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's northward push into the Netherlands failed at the Battle of Arnhem (September 17–27).

### Van Kleffens's Vision

The Dutch would suffer two more major wartime disasters after the loss at Arnhem. To open up the seaward approaches to newly captured Antwerp, a key Allied supply port, the British routed the German garrison on the Dutch coastal island of Walcheren—a victory achieved only after the Royal Air Force bombed the sea dikes there. The resulting inundation, combined with heavy fighting, wreaked havoc on the island, drowning some residents, and sending others scurrying for higher ground. The last eight months of occupation also saw the Germans halting food shipments to western districts of the Netherlands. City dwellers in Amsterdam and The Hague survived Holland's "Hunger Winter" of 1944–45 by trading clothes, furniture, and jewelry for food. In rural areas, their starving countrymen ate the pulp of sugar beets and roasted tulip bulbs like chestnuts.

By the time Germany's General Johannes Blaskowitz surrendered on May 5, 1945, at the Hotel Wereld in Wageningen, 200,000 Dutch had lost their lives. Roughly half of these were Jews, who had been deported to Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Sobibor, Bergen-Belsen, and other Nazi concentration camps.†

\*The Dutch East Indies, meanwhile, fared no better. Following their December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese captured, in rapid succession, the islands of Borneo, Celebes, Timor, and Bali. After eight days of fighting Allied forces, the Japanese took the archipelago's chief island of Java on March 9, 1942. Japan's often-brutal occupation of the Dutch colonies lasted over three years.

†Among them was Anne Frank, who hid for two years with her family in the "Secret Annexe"—a hidden attic in her father's spice business—in Amsterdam. Acting on a tip from Dutch informers, the Gestapo discovered the Franks on August 4, 1944. Anne died, at age 15, of typhus at Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. Her father, Otto Frank, survived Auschwitz. He recovered Anne's now-famous wartime journal, which was published in 1947 as *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*.

The trauma of World War II forced the Dutch to reconsider the wisdom of neutrality. In London, officials of the Dutch government in exile reflected on the role in European politics that the Netherlands might play after the war. In 1943, Eelco N. van Kleffens, the Dutch minister of foreign affairs, had sketched the outlines of a future "Atlantic alliance" in a radio address to the still-occupied Netherlands. Van Kleffens envisioned that

there would emerge in the West a strong formation in which America with Canada and the other British dominions would function as an arsenal, Great Britain as a base (particularly for the air force) and the Western parts of the European continent—I refer to Holland, Belgium, and France—as a bridgehead. In this manner we would be dependent, it is true, on the Western powers; but these powers would, conversely, have a need of us. It is difficult to think of a stronger position for our country.

The Allied liberation of Holland, therefore, also set the stage for the end of Dutch neutrality.

World War II had demonstrated that an independent, neutral



*NATO commander Alexander M. Haig, Jr., chats with a Dutch conscript in West Germany (1976). The Hague allots 13 percent of the national budget to defense—less than Washington (27 percent), Paris (19), or Bonn (19).*

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Holland might be *more*, not less, vulnerable to a hostile Soviet Union or a resurgent Germany. The conflict, moreover, had left behind a Europe divided between Eastern totalitarianism and Western democracy. The Communist coup in Czechoslovakia (February 1948), the USSR's "mutual defense pacts" with Romania and Hungary (February 1948), and the ominous Soviet blockade of West Berlin (June 1948 to May 1949) solidified Western, and Dutch, resolve to stand up to the Russians. One 1948 Nederlands Instituut voor de Publieke Opinie poll showed that 71 percent of the Dutch expected another world war within their lifetimes. Another survey revealed that 76 percent had a "friendly" attitude toward the United States, versus only 27 percent with similar sentiments toward the Soviet Union.

### NATO's 'Conscience'

The Netherlands thus became an enthusiastic member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was formed in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 1949. Dutch diplomat and former NATO official S. I. P. van Campen has reflected that "the security factor dominated all other considerations." But the Dutch chose to join the alliance not only for practical but for ideological reasons as well. They believed that, through the alliance, they could gain what they had once enjoyed by remaining neutral: peace, independence, and free trade among nations whose actions would be governed by international law.

The Hague became one of Washington's most reliable partners. The Dutch actively supported plans for a European Defense Community during the early 1950s. In spite of their wartime ordeal, they endorsed U.S. efforts to rearm West Germany and bring Bonn into the alliance. The Dutch generally supported NATO's defense goals, and accepted the deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in 1957. The Hague thus welcomed America's presence in Europe as a deterrent to the Soviet threat and as insurance against a hostile Germany. The Dutch preferred, as Voorhoeve put it, "the gentle hegemony of a remote Atlantic superpower" to potential subordination to Britain or France.

The Dutch, almost automatically, assumed the role of NATO's "conscience." They were always prepared to remind other allies, including the United States, of the North Atlantic Treaty's principles, such as the promise to "live in peace with all peoples and all governments." The Netherlands supported NATO's adoption of a 1968 report, drafted by Belgian foreign minister Pierre Harmel, that urged the alliance to provide a strong deterrent *and* seek better relations with the Soviet bloc. "Military security and a policy of detente," the Harmel Report said, "are not contradictory, but complementary." The Dutch thus sought to mediate and mitigate East-West tensions, much as they had done during the 19th century, when they avoided,

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at all costs, upsetting the balance of power.

The Netherlands also became NATO's self-appointed interlocutor with the Third World. Under pressure from the United States and Britain, the Dutch reluctantly ended their colonial rule over the East Indies in December 1949 [see box p. 64]. They lost a fortune when the Indonesians expropriated their assets. But with the fervor of a converted colonialist power, the Netherlands became a generous source of aid to the Third World.\*

All in all, the Netherlands found it easy, during the early days of the alliance, to be a "loyal" ally. But a series of world events, beginning in the 1960s, changed the Dutch view of the United States, just as the Soviet threat appeared to be receding.

### **Bashing the *Neutronenbom***

Following the U.S. lead, the Dutch became increasingly convinced of the Harmel Report's wisdom. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (1971), the SALT I Treaty (1972), and the Helsinki Final Act (1975) appeared to demonstrate that East and West could differ profoundly and still not go to war. Moreover, the Dutch, along with many other West Europeans, saw little chance of a Warsaw Pact attack—as long as the NATO alliance maintained a strong military deterrent, and kept up good relations with the East.

At the same time, the Dutch became distressed by what Washington was doing around the world. Perhaps more than anything, U.S. involvement in Vietnam tarnished Washington's reputation in the Netherlands and across Western Europe. President Lyndon B. Johnson sought European support for America's costly effort against communism in Southeast Asia. "Send us some men and send us some folks to deal with these guerrillas," the president asked Britain's Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1965. But the British, Dutch, and other Europeans balked, on several grounds. First, some were unhappy that Washington had to withdraw U.S. troops from Europe to fight a war in faraway Asia. Second, many opposed the conflict on moral grounds; and third, most believed that, against Hanoi's tenacity, the United States could not succeed. Many Dutch, like many Americans, winced at news photos of American GIs laying waste to seemingly innocent villages in Southeast Asia. In Holland, such sights may have stirred up bad memories of Dutch oppression in their own East Indian colonies.

The fall of Saigon in 1975 did not mean the end of Dutch, or

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\*According to the World Bank, in 1985 only Norway gave more aid to underdeveloped countries—measured as a percentage of gross national product (GNP)—than did the Netherlands. The Norwegians donated one percent (\$555 million) of their GNP to Third World countries; the Dutch gave 0.9 percent, or \$1.123 billion. The U.S. contribution: \$9.5 billion, or 0.24 percent of its GNP.



*Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers (front center) meets with peace activists (October 1985). Some 3.7 million citizens signed petitions demanding a ban on NATO deployment of 48 cruise missiles on Dutch soil.*

Western European, distress over U.S. policies. Peace activists seized on another cause for outrage when Jimmy Carter contemplated (only later to “defer”) the production and deployment of the neutron bomb in 1978. In contrast to existing nuclear weapons, the “enhanced radiation” nuclear artillery shell, its proponents argued, would enable NATO to counter a Soviet armored thrust into Western Europe while causing relatively little blast damage to nearby towns and villages. European and American journalists dashed off stories about the bomb that would “kill people, but not buildings.” Egon Bahr, secretary general of West Germany’s Social Democratic Party, called it “a perversion in human thinking.”

Many in Holland agreed. A Dutch political action group, Stop de Neutronenbom, circulated anti-neutron bomb petitions and sponsored large street demonstrations in Amsterdam. There, during the spring of 1978, roughly one in 10 homes sported a yellow “Stop the Neutron Bomb” poster, which hung on the front door or in a window. When his fellow cabinet ministers refused to denounce the weapon, Defense Minister Roelof Kruisinga resigned in protest. The *New Statesman*, a leftish British magazine, observed that “although [the Netherlands] is a loyal member of the Western alliance, it has not lost

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the habit of thinking for itself.”

Thus, the alliance-shaking cruise missile controversy of 1979–85 was only one signal of Dutch anxiety. The Reagan administration’s fiery early anti-Soviet rhetoric, its support for the *contra* rebels in Nicaragua, and the U.S. invasion of tiny Grenada added to the Dutch impression that Washington was losing the moral judgment and political acumen to lead the alliance properly. Moreover, some Dutch politicians began to doubt whether the United States, as President Reagan insisted, considered NATO “our first line of defense.” Would Washington actually defend Rotterdam, as American politicians had long promised, at the risk of endangering New York? European politicians were stunned when the president himself rashly remarked in 1981 that he “could see where you could have the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing The Button.”

### Such Good Friends

Yet, despite all the trans-Atlantic bickering, Prime Minister Lubbers’s government values the alliance and, along with other Western European governments, cherishes Washington’s nuclear guarantee. The possibility that President Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev would actually eliminate all strategic ballistic missiles—as proposed by President Reagan in Reykjavik last October—gave Dutch leaders the jitters. They rely, after all, on America’s “nuclear umbrella” to compensate for the Warsaw Pact’s superiority in conventional forces, especially tanks and artillery.

“Drastic changes in the nuclear [weapons] field,” said Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek, understating the Dutch government’s worries, “could, beyond a certain point, have the effect of emphasizing the significance of the present conventional disparities.”

Dutch politicians are like most political leaders within the alliance: They want it all. On the one hand, as Dutch journalist Maarten Huygen has written, “the Netherlands wants American influence as a balance against Britain, France, and West Germany as the ultimate guarantor of peace on the European continent.” But the Dutch also feel that Washington exercises too much power over Dutch and European security interests. Says Dutch socialist Klaas de Vries, “We [Europeans] want to control our own destiny.”

Polls have shown that the Dutch, like other Western European citizens, seem to suffer from an apparent mild case of schizophrenia: Sizable majorities have opposed certain NATO initiatives, such as the deployment of the cruise missiles, yet remain firmly committed to membership in the alliance.

The Netherlands, it should be remembered, shoulders modest but important nonnuclear tasks within NATO. While the Dutch, un-

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like the West Germans, do not play host to many U.S. personnel, they have taken on responsibilities beyond their own borders. The Dutch are assigned to defend a crucial sector of the North German plain, and their navy joins in NATO antisubmarine and sea-control efforts in the North Sea and in the North Atlantic. Dutch ground units perform well in NATO field competitions, despite the fact that their unionized conscripts are allowed to wear beards and long hair. Senior Dutch military men claim that they could, in time of war, mobilize some two million reservists within 24 hours.

But the Netherlands' record is far from perfect. Although NATO would like to see two Dutch combat-ready brigades stationed in West Germany during peacetime, only one is deployed there. And the Netherlands, along with most allies, has fallen short of the NATO-wide goal of increasing defense expenditures by three percent, in real terms, each year.

The Dutch know that they have, in recent years, gained a reputation abroad as one of the sharpest critics of U.S. policies. But, as they see it, their criticism expresses what is needed within the alliance: more European self-assertion to uphold the principles on which NATO was founded. They reject the notion that complaints and disagreement equal disloyalty.

In 1982, Leopold Quarles van Ufford, the former Dutch consul-general in New York, was invited to the University of Pennsylvania to address the topic: "Are the Dutch Good Friends?" Van Ufford was apologetic. The Dutch, he explained, possess "an undeniable degree of self-sufficiency, which motivates us to correct others and at times makes us rather unliked." But "this urge to point a finger at others," he added, "does not make us less good friends, just less jolly."

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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### THE DUTCH

"The People of Holland may be divided into several Classes: The Clowns or Boors (as they call them), who cultivate the Land. The Mariners or Schippers, who supply their Ships and Inland-Boats, The Merchants or Traders, who fill their Towns. The Renteneers, or men that live in all their chief Cities upon the Rents or Interest of Estates formerly acquired in the Families. And the Gentlemen and Officers of the Armies."

So wrote Sir William Temple, Britain's ambassador to The Hague from 1668 to 1670, in his lively and highly opinionated **Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands** (1673; Oxford, 1972). Although Temple penned a 17th-century "map of state and government," his views of Dutch society have enduring interest.

"All appetites and Passions seem to run lower and cooler here, than in other Countreys," he noted. "Tempers are not aieri enough for Joy, or any unusual strains of pleasant Humour; nor warm enough for Love."

Current general works on the Netherlands, such as Frank E. Huggett's comprehensive **Modern Netherlands** (Praeger, 1971), are usually more dispassionate. Because of its location on the North Sea, the Netherlands was destined to become an early commercial and trading leader. But its political future was less clear.

Indeed, the Low Countries—the region that now encompasses Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands—remained a patchwork of principalities until the mid-15th century, when the ducal House of Burgundy brought them together in a single realm. Through marriage, the Burgundian lands passed to the Hapsburg family. In 1549, Spain's Charles I (1500–58) incorporated all 17 provinces into the Holy Roman Empire's Burgundian District.

Problems began after Charles's son, Philip II, acceded to the throne in 1555. Philip believed—as Bernard H. M. Vlekke writes in **Evolution of the Dutch Nation** (Roy, 1945)—that "the Spanish monarchy as well as the Catholic Church represented Absolute Truth." In the Netherlands, he levied a general sales tax, promoted Spanish noblemen to high offices, and persecuted Protestants.

Eventually, the Netherlanders rebelled against what they saw as a distant, "popish" government, intent on suppressing their liberties. Led by aristocrats, merchants, and churchmen, the uprising—as Charles Wilson stresses in his concise **Dutch Republic** (McGraw-Hill, 1968)—"was not a single movement, [but] *congeries* of revolts by different classes and groups with many, often conflicting motives." Nevertheless, the rebellion soon evolved into the Netherlands' Eighty Years' War against Spain. The rebels triumphed in the territories that lay above the Rhine, Maas, and Waal rivers—roughly dividing the provinces into an independent Dutch republic in the north and the Spanish Netherlands (which would become Belgium) in the south. The seven northern provinces (Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel, Gelderland, and Utrecht) that would eventually join in the Union of Utrecht (1579) pledged to remain "sovereign allies."

Even before the Eighty Years' War ended in 1648, an economically vigorous Dutch society had begun to emerge. "It was an age rich in material gold and in the cultural treasures [of] art and science," writes Adriaan Barnouw in "The Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age"—one of 27 essays by Dutch and American scholars appearing in **The Netherlands** (Univ. of Calif., 1943), edited by Bartholomew Landheer.

To the Golden Age belong rationalist

philosopher Benedict de Spinoza, poet and dramatist Joost van den Vondel, Hugo Grotius, the father of modern international law, admiral Michiel Adriaanszoon de Ruyter, and painters Jan Vermeer, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, and Rembrandt van Rijn.

Prosperity touched not only Holland's aristocrats and wealthy merchants, but the professional classes as well. "Rembrandt and Frans Hals did not merely paint mayors and leading dignitaries," as Johan H. Huizinga notes in **Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century** (Ungar, 1968), "but also writing-masters, preachers, Jewish physicians, engravers, and goldsmiths."

The prosperous years could not last forever. The 18th century saw Holland's maritime dominance fade; Britain's navy prevailed almost everywhere. At home, an increasingly corrupt upper class, Hendrick Riemens observes in **The Netherlands** (Eagle, 1944), "was rapidly becoming a hereditary caste to which even great merchants with new fortunes were denied access."

In January 1795, a French republican army marched into Holland, where it encountered little resistance. Stadholder (governor) William V and his family fled to England as the French declared a new Batavian Republic. French rule survived until November 1813, when an uprising led by Amsterdam shipyard workers forced the French to withdraw to their homeland.

As Johan Goudsblom points out in **Dutch Society** (Random, 1967), the Industrial Revolution came late to the Netherlands. Holland, he says, was still a country whose "leading classes cultivated a disdain of 'progress.'" Only one

factory boasted more than 1000 employees in 1850. But there was rapid progress in health and sanitation. Between 1850 and 1940, life expectancy at birth increased from 30 to 67 years.

Netherlanders made no progress of any kind during the Nazi occupation. Walter B. Maass's **Netherlands at War: 1940-1945** (Abelard-Schuman, 1970) recounts the invasion. Allard Martens's **Silent War** (Allard Martens, 1961) and Werner Warmbrunn's **Dutch under German Occupation, 1940-1945** (Stanford, 1963) chronicle the Dutch experience. Among other acts of "symbolic resistance," Dutch patriots wore pins bearing a picture of the queen, and greeted friends with the word *Ozo*—for *Oranje zal Overwinnen* (Orange Shall Conquer).

Several good books describe postwar life. Like Sir William Temple, the authors are intrigued by the Dutch personality. In **The Dutch Plural Society** (Oxford, 1973), Christopher Bagley is struck by "the degree to which social life is the subject of orderliness and regulation." **The Dutch Puzzle** (Boucher, 1966) by the Duke de Baena, a Spaniard, ruminates on how the Dutch can be, at once, both thrifty and generous, both "passionately fond of freedom" and "terrified of personal liberty."

There is no question that Netherlands society still allows ordinary people to live in dignity. "If I were an old man of slender means and no longer of much energy," writes Anthony Bailey in **The Light in Holland** (Knopf, 1970), "Holland I know is the country in which I would be treated with respect while I sat on a canal bank and fished and dreamed and watched the boats go by."