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Nazis in the Netherlands: A social history of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945
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2. Political organization and participation

Introduction

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

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

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

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

³⁵⁰ “Kom, kruipt uit de NSB-leunstoel en zet u aan het werk, wordt een Nationaal-Socialistisch Strijder”; NIOD, 123, file 220 e.
³⁵³ Breton et al., eds, *Political Extremism and Rationality*, XVI.
may lead to an increase in solidarity within the group. According to the economist Ron Wintrobe, social solidarity is essential in extremist organizations.\(^\text{354}\) People who participate actively feel more attached to the organization and also heavily invest in participating. Therefore, the fact that NSB leaders demanded a high degree of members’ participation corresponds with findings in the international literature on the sociology of extremist political organizations in general.

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

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


\(^{356}\) Van der Heijden, Grijs Verleden, 187.
In this chapter I will discuss political organization and individual participation in the NSB in order to explore a connection with international theories of fascist and National Socialist organizations. In order to examine the fundamental elements of the NSB as a political organization, I will focus first on efforts by local NSB leaders to mobilize party members. This issue is related to the structure of the NSB. The hierarchical structure was designed to be an organizational framework for the individual activities of party members. I will also examine sub-organizations of the NSB because the NSB tried to include both the political and social spheres. Therefore these sub-organizations created more platforms in which members could participate. Finally, I will analyze the political participation of individual NSB members based on new archival research. Judicial records of former NSB members reveal new information on the individual participation of local members.

Members, organization and mobilizing methods

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

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

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358 NA, DGBR, file 2.09.08, 587.
359 *De Daad*, May 31st, 1940. Members were also encouraged to buy at shops of other NSB members instead of nonmembers; NIOD, access number 123, file 221b.
machine, respecting their political hierarchy. To facilitate such activation of full-time participation, the organization set up a well-oiled, internal propaganda machine.

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

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

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

³⁶⁰ “Komt U niet vrijwillig, dan zult U op een of andere manier door uw kameraden, die hard werken, niet voor vol worden aangezien, want een Nationaal-Socialist is een man van de Daad.”; De Daad, October 25th, 1940.
³⁶¹ “Kom, kruipt uit de NSB-leunstoel en zet u aan het werk, wordt een Nationaal-Socialistisch Strijder”; NIOD, access number, file, 220 e.
³⁶² Several figures are given: for example 102,467 and 99,614; NIOD, access number, file, 1948.
number of members was 114,559 members of the Social Democratic party, only slightly higher than the NSB in its heyday.363

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


364 NIOD, access number, files 1957, 1941, 1948.
In order to elaborate on the composition of the group of NSB members, I will focus on the city of Utrecht, where the NSB collected much data about its members. Table 2 presents an overview of the ratio of men and women and of different age groups of NSB members in Utrecht. The high percentage of young people could be explained because a large part of this particular age group lived in these places. However, this is not the case: only one third of the inhabitants belonged to that age group. Approximately two thirds of the NSB members were male, whereas more than half of the population of Utrecht was female. The overrepresentation of male NSB members corresponds with political participation rates in non-fascist organizations because men were always more likely to participate in politics than women. In addition, men were more likely to become party officials.\(^{366}\)

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

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

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\(^{366}\) Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (1965) 54.


\(^{368}\) NA, CABR-files, 44 out of 322.
difference. Most of the divorces occurred before May 1940.\textsuperscript{369} Perhaps this is due to the fact that some NSB members were people who challenged prevailing norms and values or who were ostracized anyway and did not need to keep up appearances. Thus, NSB members were generally less conformist than was common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Utrecht</th>
<th>men %</th>
<th>women %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<td>45-49</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 +</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

\textsuperscript{369} CABR-files; at least 24 out of 327: amply 7 percent compared with approximately 1.5 percent nationally; www.volksstellingen.nl.

\textsuperscript{370} NIOD, file 123, 1957, file 123, 1941 and file 123, 1948.

1943, overall membership decreased by 756, from 100,370 to 99,614. However, the headquarters of the NSB was eager to explain that this decrease was not caused by changes in the political and/or military situation but by the death of 993 of its members.\footnote{Ledenstatistiek 1943; NIOD, file 123, 1498.}

After 1943 regional variances within the movement became more visible. From the summer of 1943 onwards, the number of NSB members continued to increase in the north-eastern part of the Netherlands, whereas it declined in the western part.\footnote{Ledenstatistiek 1943; NIOD, file 123, 1498.} This divergence might be explained by the evacuation of coastal areas in the western part of the Netherlands as a result of the German military construction in the coastal areas in the building of the Atlantic wall.

Throughout the final period of the occupation, membership rates kept fluctuating. Even in 1944, the NSB still welcomed new members: 10 in Utrecht; 77 in Amsterdam; 5 in Leiden and 17 in het Gooi.\footnote{NIOD, file 123, 1953.} In February 1944, in the southern quarters of Amsterdam 41 members joined the NSB (and 37 resigned their membership).\footnote{NIOD, file 123, 1954.} However, it is important to analyze these numbers critically. Since the NSB decided to abolish the category of “sympathizing membership” in that same month, the increase was in all probability due to sympathizing members who were automatically promoted to the status of full members.\footnote{Abolition of symp. membership; NIOD file 123, 1954.}

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

The NSB recorded and catalogued the reasons for withdrawal. One of the reasons for resignation was the July 1941 Roman Catholic Episcopal letter, denouncing the NSB.
Until 1943, within the movement this was assessed as a legitimate reason; after this year it was criticized. Another motivation was having a foreign nationality. Throughout the entire occupation foreigners were not allowed to become NSB members. The recorded reasons given for resignation included personal, financial, religious reasons, “losing interest,” situation at home, sympathy for the opposing organization the Nederlandse Unie, and just simply “change of mind.” After 1943, new categories were added to include the members who feared a German defeat. The tone of the form became increasingly irritated from 1943 onwards. It was obvious that the future of National Socialism did not look as hopeful as it once had.

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

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

religious organizations. Michael Mann argues that fascist movements used techniques of religious and social movements.\textsuperscript{378}

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

\textsuperscript{378} Mann, \textit{Fascists}, 87.
\textsuperscript{379} NIOD, file 123, 220a.
\textsuperscript{380} De Jonge, \textit{Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland}, 77-79.
Blocs played a significant role within the NSB organization. The lower-ranked NSB officials of these blocs were encouraged to work hard. In NSB propaganda their function was proclaimed as a “pillar” of the National Socialist organization. Pointing out the importance of the bloc-leader function was meant to increase the self-esteem of these lower-ranked NSB officials. In an extensive instruction the NSB explained the tasks that NSB “bloc leaders” were expected to fulfill, such as recruiting possible NSB officials, maintaining contacts with other bloc leaders, attending a monthly mandatory meeting, and keeping in touch with the leader of the youth organization. Besides these duties, the bloc leader had to gather

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381 NSVO, March 10th, 1943; NIOD, file 123, 1194.
intelligence about new members and any potential spies, collect contributions, supervise the
distribution of newspapers and tactfully visit every member of his bloc once every two
months. These instructions were designed to increase the activities of every bloc leader
and through his activities, the active participation of every NSB member.

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

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

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

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382 Organization Amsterdam; NIOD, file 123, 220a.
384 “Het is van het allerhoogste belang dat NSB'ers zich zo correct mogelijk gedragen en geen wraaknemingen
uitoefenen of terreurplegen op Joden zonder directe aanleiding, enz. Wij behoeven ons natuurlijk niet te laten
slaan en beleedigen. Dan is het noodig terug te slaan en hard ook! Maar het ingooien van ruiten en de afpersing
en andere terreurdaden der NSNAP lieden hier hebben een zeer slechten indruk gemaakt bij de Duitsche
overheid. Onze discipline en orde moeten daar tegenoverstaan. Dit is voor ons van het hoogste belang!!
Ofschoon het uiteraard onnodig is onze functionarissen hierop te wijzen, is het toch wel goed dat men in de
kleinere plaatsen op de hoogte blijft van de richtlijnen die de overheid aangeeft. Dat is het doel van dezen brief.
Wij moeten erop toezien, dat impulsieve leden niet onze zaak bederven door uit den band te springen. Met
Nederlandschen groet Houzee’; ‘Correspondentie van de onder de afdeling Propaganda ressorterende Film-
en Fotodienst ....’ 17 July 1940; NIOD, file 123, file 453.
385 Dagrapport November 13nd 1942, Politie Haarlem, file 848; and Heemstede gemeente politie April 22nd
1942. NIOD, acces number 123, file 1473-1476, 10-8-1941, letter of Group leader in Utrecht.
The latter provision is connected with the pattern, mentioned in the previous chapter, of blaming the Jews for starting fights and claiming the “underdog” position.

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

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

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

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

386 NIOD, access number 123, file 1484, kring Zeist, 1935.
387 NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.
388 NIOD, access number, 123, files 2048, 2049.
389 NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.
letters about the so-called reprehensible behavior of her fellow members, who were drunk, sang and danced till the following morning; according to the woman it was a “Bacchanalia.” She was afraid of the negative effects such behavior would have on the image of the NSB. It is unclear whether the NSB took measures against these undisciplined members. One of the partying NSB members, a butcher, had already been reprimanded before but continued to deliver his meat to an NSB institution.390

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

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

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

390 NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.
391 NIOD, Utrecht, 1484, April 29th 1942.
392 NIOD, access number 123, files 2048, 2049.
393 De Daad, June 7th, 1940.
Confronted with the malfunctioning of the NSB as a mass party, local leaders opted for a different approach by trying to cast the NSB as a vanguard movement. This shift toward working towards a vanguard party was the main mobilizing modification. From 1941 onwards, NSB propaganda focused on increasing the activity of members instead of reaching out to the masses. The NSB presented this position in a positive manner. The De Werker (The Worker), the NSB paper from the Utrecht area, stated that “in world history it always has been a small minority, who has accomplished great things and never the masses. The mass always opposes.”

An internal NSB report stated: “the movement will always be a small minority in the state, an ‘elite troop’.” The local NSB leaders increasingly proclaimed the image of a movement filled with brave warriors, who strove, as vanguards, towards a revolutionary new society and were met with harsh opposition. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this culture of sacrifice is consistent with the self-image of other fascist movements. The NSB officials came to see that portraying the NSB as a vanguard movement was, in fact, the only option that matched reality.

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

394 “[…]dat het in de wereldgeschiedenis steeds een kleine minderheid geweest is, die de groote dingen tot stand gebracht heeft en nooit de massa. Van de massa komt steeds de tegenwerking.”; De Werker, March 1st, 1941.
395 “De beweging zal in de staat altijd een kleine minderheid zijn, een ‘keurtroep’”; NIOD, file 123, 220e, 1942.
397 Het Nationale Dagblad, June 21st, 1941.
398 “Het doel van deze maatregel is, om te voorkomen, dat de beweging door een massa-toeloop zou ontstaan, daar de N.S.B. vóór alles een corps van strijders dient te zijn”; Utrechts dagblad, June 26th 1941.
Regardless of the shifting strategy towards a vanguard party, NSB leaders pushed members to participate in increasingly structured activities. NSB leaders possessed several methods to enhance the activity of NSB members. One way of increasing the participation of members in National Socialist activities was by stimulating local and individual competition. In *De Daad* (The Action) different Amsterdam district organizations were encouraged to sell more NSB newspapers by presenting the reports of sales like a sporting competition. As in a sports game or marketing meeting, there were “runners up,” “winning” and “tail-ender” neighborhoods. The competition between neighborhoods in Amsterdam was thus closely followed by local NSB leaders. The local NSB paper described the competition in Amsterdam East as follows: “Bali is still on top, but needs to continue its efforts to increase its sales, because Makasar is coming up.”399 In this competitive manner, groups and individuals were incessantly pushed to improve their participation. In Utrecht the NSB used the competitive element as well.400

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

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

399 “Bali staat nog steeds bovenaan, maar moet zich blijven inspannen om den verkoop op te voeren, daar ook Makassar steeds stijgt.” “Andreas Bonn voert nog steeds het gemiddelde op en heeft bijna het kringgemiddelde te pakken.”; *De Daad*, February 18th, 1944.
400 *De Werker*, February 13th, 1942, April 17th, 1942, September 3rd, 1943, March 10th, 1944, April 14th, 1944, June 23rd, 1944.
401 *De Daad*, June 7th, 1940, July 31st, 1942.
402 J.D. Gerritsen, Groote deelneming is gewencht en noodzakelijk. *De NSB op lokaal niveau. 1932-1940* (Leiden 2004) 64.
403 NIOD, access number 123, file 316c; NA, CABR, file 20109.
NSB members and leaders did debate the policy of expulsions and raised the issue of whether these policies were harsh enough. As early as June 1940, a local NSB leader in Utrecht complained about the general permissiveness. He wondered why the NSB was tolerant of its unworthy members. According to him, all lazy members should be immediately expelled. Utterly unhappy with this situation, he resigned his office.404

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

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

**Sub-organizations**

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

404 Letter to leader of the Zeist circle, June 1st, 1940, NIOD, access number 123, file 1472.
405 NIOD, access number 123, file 1498, Hilversum, September 23rd 1942.
organizations.\textsuperscript{406} For almost every social group specific organizations were established: for men, women, children, and professional groups. There were also associations for culture and genealogy. Students, actors, teachers, and technicians: they all could join specific separate National Socialist organizations.\textsuperscript{407} All this was part of the general effort supported by the German rulers to nazify social life in the Netherlands; this nazification required the active commitment of Dutch National Socialists and had the impact of pushing them politically and strengthening the bonds between them.

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{406} Kooy, \textit{Echec}, 125.
\textsuperscript{407} NA, CABR, file 104155.
\textsuperscript{408} De Jonge, \textit{Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland}, 172-173; Damsma and Schumacher, \textit{Hier woont een NSB'er}, 30-45; Romijn, \textit{Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd}, 223-224.
\textsuperscript{409} ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.
\textsuperscript{410} Vos, \textit{Ledenverloop}, 35, 64.
\textsuperscript{411} NIOD, access number 123, 1957, 1941, 1948.
suggest that a minority of the eligible NSB men joined the WA. This low number is also due to the fact that many NSB members could claim exemption from joining the WA. For example, all NSB officials were exempted from WA duty. Because of the high number of NSB officials this rule caused a significant decrease in the number of potential WA members.

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

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

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

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

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412 ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155; NIOD access number 123, files 1082-1100.
413 ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.
414 For example noticeable in the high number of WA men who signed up for the SS; see chapter 3.
415 NIOD, WA, file 1088, Utrecht, January 16th, 1942.
members who were absent were immediately expelled and given eight days to appeal. Many did appeal, but the hundreds who did not lost their membership.\textsuperscript{416}

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{416} NIOD, WA, Utrecht, April 8th -13nd, 1942.
\textsuperscript{417} NIOD, WA, file 1089, Utrecht, April 1942; file 1083, Leiden, February 1941; Haarlem politie archief, file 849, March 1941; file 626, July 1941; De Jong, Het Koninkrijk VI, 388.
\textsuperscript{418} NIOD, WA, file 1089, Utrecht, April 1942.
\textsuperscript{419} NIOD, WA, file 1092, Leiden, May 1944.
\textsuperscript{420} NIOD, WA, file 1089, Utrecht, April 21st, 1942.
\textsuperscript{421} Idem.
\textsuperscript{422} NA, Ocotober 28th, 1943 and April 4th, 1944; De Jonge, Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland, 180.
whose husband was leader of the district Noord-Holland, and subsequently by Louise Mary Couzy. Membership in the NSVO was also very strong in het Gooi, the region around Hilversum, which was inhabited by more upper-class families.

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

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

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

423 NA, CABR, files 20083, 20139.
426 Vos, Ledenverloop, 64.
427 NIOD, NSVO 1192-1198, 29 Nov 1942.
428 NA, DGBR, file 2.09.08, 581.
429 De Daad, August 2nd, September 13th, 1940 and January 9th, 1942.
430 NA, DGBR, file 2.09.08, 581.
431 “Wij willen in ons volk staan, en niet er naast”, March 10th 1943 NSVO, NIOD, file 123, 1194.
432 Notes of the NSVO meeting, 25 July 1940, NIOD, file 123, 1498; Matthée, Voor volk en vaderland, 128.
worries of housewives, so they could stay home and enjoy their family lives. Women should not have to work outside the home. As was stated in a meeting in March 1941, “the time of over emancipation is over”; now “the married woman will take back her place at the hearth and as educator of the youth”. The NSB views of women correspond with National Socialist ideas in general. The National Socialist vision of women and family is, as Mosse puts it “amazingly conservative.”

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

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

433 Notes of the NSVO meeting, 25 July 1940, NIOD, file 123, 1498.
434 “De getrouwde vrouw zal haar plaats weer innemen aan den huiselijken haard als opvoedster van de jeugd.”, Notes of the NSVO meeting, March 24th 1941, NIOD, file 123, 1498.
435 Mosse, Nazi culture , XXV, 39-47; Claudia Koonz, Moeder in het vaderland. De vrouw en het gezin in Nazi-Duitsland (Amsterdam 1989).
436 NIOD, file 123, 1192, May 31th, 1943, Utrecht.
437 Notulen van de vergadering der NSVO, June 23th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1498.
438 NIOD, file 123, 1188.
439 Notes of the NSVO meeting, July 25th, 1940, October 28th, 1940, November 1940, January 20th, 1941, April 28th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1498.
440 “Zijn dans ‘het Weefgetouw’was zeer fijn weergegeven. Het vroolijke slot van zijn optreden, waaraan zelfs de Kringleider niet ontkwam, verwekte groote hilariteit onder de toeschouwers.”; NIOD, file 123, 1498.
assemble in “cozy environments.” An NSVO woman stated in her trial, that she experienced the NSVO as something one would nowadays describe as a Tupperware party.\footnote{NIOD, file 123, 1194, March 10th, 1943.}

No doubt was expressed, however, about the necessity for discipline, as follows from the emphasis on an extensive organization and the system for controlling members. Furthermore, latecomers were urged to take a seat in the back of the meeting room. In other words: all members had to arrive precisely on time.\footnote{“soort naaikransje”; NA, CABR, file 95061, Noordwijk.} NSVO women had to be well mannered and disciplined. When a quick-tempered NSVO woman, who had been a member from the beginning, started a fight at a meeting in the late spring of 1940, she was expelled from the organization.\footnote{NIOD, file 123, 1194, March 10th, 1943.} NSVO membership was by no means a loose or free association. NSVO women had to actively express the propagated National Socialist female virtues. Therefore, denunciations of members by others were seriously evaluated. On the other hand, women should not be cut loose too easily. Whenever a woman discontinued her membership, she had to be approached and tried to be convinced of the value of NSVO membership.\footnote{NA, CABR, 94817, Noordwijk aan Zee.}

Although NSVO members were urged to participate actively in establishing a new National Socialist order, it was not intended that they should join German National Socialist organizations as well. In 1941 Mrs Monsees, one of the leading NSVO members, explained to attending NSVO members that “no NSVO member is allowed to be a member of a German organization.” She expressed her discontent about the low attendance at an NSVO meeting. She said that this was perhaps due to a party of the German Wehrmacht the same night, which the women wanted to attend.\footnote{Notes of the NSVO meeting, June 23th 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1498.}

The main task of National Socialist Women was considered taking care of children. In July 1942, the sub-organization “Family and Youth Care” (\emph{Gezins- en Jeugdzorg}) was established which was led by the same woman who was director of “Comrades’ care” (\emph{Kamerraadzorg}). The first organization had to take care of vacation homes where women and children could rest and recover. This organization also supported families in need.\footnote{‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’; NA, file 104155.} In
the final stage of the occupation, during the period of evacuation of NSB women and children in September 1944, NSVO women took the lead in providing care for NSB children. The leading lady of the NSVO, Louise Mary Couzy, personally nurtured NSB members who had found refuge in the former Jewish internment camp Westerbork.448

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

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

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

448 NIOD, file 123, 1192, September 5th 1944; NA, CAGR, file 20083.
450 NIOD, Knipselarchief II 1611, 4-8-1941.
451 ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’; NA, file 104155.
were encouraged, although the discipline had to prevail. A leader of the national-socialist youth orchestra created a closely connected group of young boys. His leaders warned him about a lack of discipline; in their eyes their companionship had become a little bit too cozy and led to a complaint of sexual harassment.

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

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

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

454 Staafraad, June 10th, 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1160.
455 NIOD, file 1484, kring Zeist, 1935.
456 NIOD, file 123, 1134.
458 “een met het geheel”; NIOD, file 123, 1134.
girls were separated from each other. Boys in NJS uniform were not allowed to walk next to an NJS girl in uniform.\textsuperscript{459} The main task of girls was to “create beauty and atmosphere.”\textsuperscript{460}

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

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

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{459} NIOD, file 123, 1134.
\textsuperscript{460} Kat and van Hoek, \textit{Op marsch met de NSB}, 74.
\textsuperscript{461} Stafraad, June 10th 1941; NIOD, file 123, 1160.
\textsuperscript{462} ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’; NA, file 104155; NIOD, file, WAJ.
own words, he was a “born collector.” Initially the museum’s collection coincided with Schuilenburg’s own collection. From 1939 small exhibitions were held in local NSB offices. Later on, these exhibitions were extended with material from the NSB headquarters, and in October 1942 the National Socialist Museum got its own separate organization led by Schuilenburg. The collection contained early NSB propaganda and material from Dutch and foreign National Socialist precursors. This included propaganda from all over Europe as well as outside Europe. Schuilenburg traveled with the museum through the Netherlands in order to spread National Socialist history and propaganda. The National Socialist Museum was clearly linked with the image of National Socialism that NSB propagandists wanted to spread.

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

The NSB had many organizations for professions, including the National Socialist organization Medical Front (Medisch Front), which was established on October 12th 1940. From an internal report, it becomes clear that not all members of this organization were NSB members. As shown in Table 3, a majority, but not everyone, belonged to both organizations. Therefore, this professional sub-organization was not completely a sub-organization but rather a partly broader and overlapping organization.

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<th>Member Medisch Front</th>
<th>NSB as well</th>
<th>Unknown NSB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total (doctors, dentists, nurses, students of medicine)</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>53</td>
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Table 3. Members of Medical Front and NSB.

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463 NA, CABR, file 64233.
464 ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.
465 ‘Handleiding ten behoeve van de bijzondere rechtspleging vierde aflevering, 16 okt 1946’, NA, file 104155.
466 Utrechts Archief, Archief aartsbisdom, access number 449, file 150, October 27th, 1941.
The NSB organized many cultural activities as well. It used theater and radio as means to educate NSB members and enhance community spirit and as a source of entertainment.\textsuperscript{467} Actors performed both at local NSB meetings and in theatres.\textsuperscript{468} More than half of the plays were politicized; others were performed just for amusement.\textsuperscript{469} As was the case for other propaganda and NSB organizations, theatre was meant to promote the mobilization of members and to attract new members.\textsuperscript{470}

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

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

\textsuperscript{467} Ad van der Logt, \textit{Theater van de Nieuwe Orde} (Amsterdam 2008) 440.
\textsuperscript{468} Van der Logt, \textit{Theater van de Nieuwe Orde}, 296
\textsuperscript{469} Van der Logt, \textit{Theater van de Nieuwe Orde}, 342, 361.
\textsuperscript{470} Van der Logt, \textit{Theater van de Nieuwe Orde}, 440.
\textsuperscript{471} Gerritsen, \textit{Groote deelneming is gewenacht en noodzakelijk}, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{472} Romijn, \textit{Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd}, 203, 210.
\textsuperscript{473} NIOD, 123, 1511; letter J.W. de Ruyter, February 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1942; NIOD, file 123, 220a.
noticed that Winterhulp could not work without the help of NSVO women. The NSVO women were also the most important organizers of the lotteries of the Winterhulp.

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

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

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

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474 NA, CABR, file 11089.
475 NH Archief, file 223, 12-19.
476 NIOD, Utrecht, file 1484, April 29th, 1942.
477 NIOD, file 123, 2048 and 2049.
478 NIOD, Utrecht, file 1484, April 29th, 1942.
was supposed to win the support of large parts of the population for the new order. There was an eternal tension between mass movement and avant-garde organization.

**Numbers of newspapers**

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

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

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

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

**Figure 3.** (above) Number of papers ordered by the local NSB leaders in Haarlem (above) and in Zandvoort and Bloemendaal (below).  
**Figure 4.** (Below) Number of papers ordered by the local NSB leaders in Zandvoort (dark grey) and Bloemendaal (light grey).

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

482 NIOD, file 123, 145-158.
In Figure 5, the differences in the average number of sold NSB papers are shown per member in Utrecht and Amsterdam. In both cities the average number of sold papers increased during the war. While in January 1943 an average of 0.8 papers per member were sold; by June 1944 the number had doubled in Amsterdam and almost tripled in Utrecht.

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

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

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

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483 NIOD, file 123, 145-158.  
484 NIOD, file 123, 145-158.  
485 NIOD, file 123, 145-158.
the higher number of NSB officials living in Utrecht than in Amsterdam. Of the NSB population in Utrecht, a high percentage held office within the movement.486

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

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

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

**Individual participation**

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

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486 The NSB members in Leiden sold in June 1944 approximately 9000 papers, which is per member significantly higher than in Utrecht; NIOD, file 123, 1957, 1941, 1948.
487 NIOD, file 123, 2048, 2049, June 1942.
activity within the NSB, hoping to mitigate their punishment. They made their statements
during a trial where the punishment depended on the level of active NSB involvement.
Therefore, they would have had reason to lie about wearing a badge or taking part in other
party activities. Taking this into account, the actual levels of participation may have been
even higher than the numbers that are stated below.

Wearing a party badge was one way of identifying oneself as a National Socialist.
Local leaders tried to promote this practice; the district leader of Northern Holland Joost
Wieger de Ruyter stated just after the German invasion: “Each of us has the duty to wear
our badge anytime and everywhere.”

How did members fulfill this duty? As in other modes of participation, many NSB members and leaders complained about the lack of
enthusiasm of some members: too few badges were worn. This could give the impression
that NSB badges were kept safely in a closet at home. However, out of the CABR sample,
approximately half of the members wore their badge at some moment. Neighbors,
colleagues and friends noticed their badges, and in many cases the members themselves
admitted to have worn their NSB badge. Many NSB members may not have worn their
badges every day but just on certain occasions. Sometimes, they attached the badge on the
inside lapel of their jacket, to hide it in the street but to be able to show their badge when
they entered a meeting.

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

489 De Daad, May 31st, 1940: “Ieder heeft de plicht ons insigne altijd en overal te dragen.”
490 NA, CABR, 158 for sure out of 327.
491 NA, CABR, 125 out of 327 and even more than 40 percent of all the male members.
492 NA, CABR, file 94134.
493 NA, CABR, file 89035.
The final public manifestation of belonging to National Socialism is celebrating National Socialist special days by hanging an NSB flag outside one’s home or putting an NSB poster in the window. More than one out of three members demonstrated their affiliation with the NSB by doing so. Consequently, the neighbors could notice his or her political choice. Not all members were able to express their membership openly. Some NSB members had non-NSB family members and were therefore reluctant to display an NSB flag or poster. A female doctor still lived at her mother’s place and was therefore not able to express her NSB affiliation by hanging a flag. And in other cases, anti-National Socialist wives prohibited their husbands from displaying an NSB flag or poster. However, it seems that in most households political agreement prevailed.

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

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

494 NA, CABR, 116 out of 327.
495 NA, CABR, file 18731.
496 NA, CABR, file 55380.
497 Notes of the NSVO and the ’t Gooi circle meetings, 1940-1942; NIOD, NSB Archive, file 1498.
498 167 out of 327.
499 Note of the NSVO and ’t Gooi circle meetings, 1940-1942; NIOD, NSB Archive, 1498.
500 NA, CABR, file 106402.
501 NA, CABR, 132 out of 327.
502 NA, CABR, 225 out of 327.
with him in his briefcase. Not all members were as helpful; one member in Amsterdam secretly stoked his stove with the NSB-newspapers.

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

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

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

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503 NA, CABR, file 18037.  
504 NA, CABR, file 105075.  
505 NA, CABR, 155 out of 327.  
506 NA, CABR, file 89300.  
507 NA, CABR, file 11089.  
508 NA, CABR, file 95935.  
The Dutch historian Henk te Velde points to the general pleasant feeling that Dutch participants experienced when they attended political meetings in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{511} This aspect of political participation is consistent with arguments used in political science theories.\textsuperscript{512} Therefore, NSB meetings were probably attractive for its members, as the meetings of the NSB were filled with speeches, entertainment and communal singing. That feeling of entertainment and joy of participation was expressed by some NSB members and in several internal NSB-reports.

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

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

**Active Dutch National Socialists**

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{511} Gerritsen, \textit{Grote deelneming is gewenst en noodzakelijk}; Henk te Velde, \textit{De natiestaat.Politiek in Nederland sinds 1815. Stijlen van leiderschap} (Amsterdam 2002) 133.
  \item \textsuperscript{512} Long, \textit{The Handbook of Political Behavior}, 213-220.; Pennock and Chapman, eds,\textit{Participation in Politics}, XV.
  \item \textsuperscript{513} NIOD, file 22a, kring Oost and West, May and June 1944; Damsma and Schumacher, \textit{Hier woont een NSB’er}, 129-134.
\end{itemize}
findings correspond with literature on the NSB in presenting the high level of organization on every level, whereas it refutes the established image of NSB members as generally inactive opportunists.

The NSB organization constantly urged its members to be full-time National Socialists. Local NSB leaders employed various mobilizing techniques to get the members to participate in the required activities. These techniques changed in keeping with changed opportunities and circumstances. The shifting opportunities forced the NSB to shift from being a party that tried to reach out to the masses to an increasingly inward-looking, elitist movement. This shift to a vanguard party was also reflected in the local NSB organizations. It became more difficult to become an NSB member. As a result, the conclusion could be drawn that the NSB was a demanding and dynamic instead of a static party.

The NSB was an outsider and an “anti-system party.” In the party’s struggle against pillarization, only those outside the pillars were available to respond to their appeal. In the end the NSB came increasingly to resemble pre-war religious and social organizations. Paradoxically, while the NSB organization increasingly resembled the pillarized organizations they had fought against in the 1930s, those organizations disappeared as a result of the harsh German policies.

The self-directed behavior of NSB members conflicted with the fascist ideals of hierarchy and discipline. Dutch National Socialists did not submit to the party hierarchy. Even the WA, which should have been the most disciplined unit of the NSB, acted autonomously. The NSB members set up local actions and had their own ideas about how the NSB organization should function. Perhaps this behavior is less a reflection of the querulous nature of all these members than of the fact that NSB members were both fascist and Dutch.

Another interesting phenomenon is the high participation rate of NSB members, even when membership rates dropped. NSB members did in fact participate actively in the building up of the New Order. Moreover, they remained active throughout the occupation period. In contrast to the findings of earlier research, NSB members were quite active. They were active in all sorts of sub-organizations of the NSB. Local NSB leaders did in fact succeed in the political mobilization of the masses.

\[514\] Morgan, Fascism in Europe, 101.
Thus, NSB members were both committed to National Socialist ideology and to action, perhaps not surprisingly, because ideology and action were closely connected with each other in National Socialism.\textsuperscript{515}

National Socialists manifested themselves very clearly within Dutch society. They were active in many NSB- and NSB-related organizations where they were further socialized in National Socialist ideology and political culture. Within the NSB, the inability to reach out to the masses encouraged a process of internal integration within the party. The focus was increasingly on internal mobilization of NSB members rather than on mobilization of outsiders. Therefore, their organizational structure and activities led to a rising gap between National Socialists and their environment.

A small minority of the Dutch belonged to the National Socialist movement. While politically losing touch with the non-NSB majority they became a “fringe” culture within Dutch society. More than a political group and opposing many mainstream thoughts (a “counterculture”), they developed into a subculture on the border of society holding political power through illegitimate means. Whereas the political mobilization of NSB members was a success, the communication with outsiders was a failure. The NSB had become political insiders as a result of their political orientation and their leaning towards the occupier. At the same time, they were cultural and social outsiders. Their peripheral position was exacerbated by the central place of violence in their ideology and practice, a phenomenon which will be addressed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{515} Mosse, \textit{Nazi culture}, xxxvii.