

*From Helpless Victim
to Heroic Mass Resistance*

THE EVOLUTION OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF
DENMARK IN THE NEW YORK TIMES DURING
GERMAN OCCUPATION, 1940-1945

BY

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The question posed in this article is, »How did a leading daily American newspaper outside Denmark report and comment on the country's evolving situation during German occupation 1940-1945 with regard to the political/diplomatic relations with Germany and the nation's external reputation?« The *New York Times* (NYT), as the newspaper of record in the U. S., was examined from the time period April 9, 1940 to the end of May 1945, first using a simple search for the mention of Denmark, followed by examination of the headlines of the following number of articles:

1940 (from April 9)	:	1493
1941	:	1018
1942	:	680
1943	:	761
1944	:	664
1945 (until end of May):		427
Total	:	5043

Much of the material unearthed was found to be unrelated to war/occupation coverage, among these stock quotes, stamp collecting information, wedding and death announcements, advertisements etc. Some of the war-related material was *not* directly pertinent to the question

posed, including coverage of the Allied seizures of Danish ships, the status of Iceland, mine-laying, and ferry interruptions. The pertinent material, 456 articles, covered domestic Danish politics, mention of the King, friction with German occupiers, resistance, German policy toward Denmark, sabotage, general strikes, and editorial commentary on Denmark's plight.

Helpless

The tone of coverage about the German occupation of Denmark in April 1940 emphasized the helplessness and defencelessness of a little country on Germany's border. The lack of resistance was noted, as was the King and Premier's calls for passive acceptance of occupation in such articles as »Denmark Protests But Yields to Nazis«¹ on April 10, 1940, and subsequent articles and letters to the editor that used expressions such as »Danes Are Helpless«², »Little Denmark«³ was »taken by such complete surprise that one wonders what else they could have done«⁴, and »defenceless Danes«⁵.

Some writers during the first years of occupation consciously omitted Denmark from their discussion of occupied Europe. In a 1941 article on the Scandinavian experience of war, Denmark's exclusion was rationalized because it was an »unfortunate country [that] is at present just an appendage which even negatively does not and can not influence events to any great extent.«⁶ Another writer alleged that there were plans for »a concerted uprising in each of the ten European countries conquered by the Germans, with the exception of Denmark, which is not represented at the Inter-Allied Conference in London.«⁷ Denmark usually did not merit more than passing mention, if that, in general articles about European resistance to occupation before 1943 and when it was mentioned in passing, descriptors such as »docile, gentle«⁸ were used. As late as early summer 1943 Denmark was slighted by omission when the U. S. Post Office neglected to include it in a series of stamps

1 »Denmark Protests But Yields to Nazis«, NYT, April 10, 1940, p. 4.

2 »Eliot Says British Must Aid Norway«, NYT, April 10, 1940, p. 31.

3 Peters, C. Brooks. »Reich Buttressed by Subject States«, NYT, May 12, 1940, p. 74.

4 De Koven, Seymour. »Europe By No Means Dying«, NYT, April 4, 1941, p. 31.

5 »Nazis Slay 9 More in Norway Terror«, NYT, October 9, 1942, p. 8.

6 Valery, Bernard. »War Ends Unity of Scandinavians«, NYT, September 21, 1941, p. E4.

7 »Revolt Signal Delayed«, NYT, September 28, 1941, p. 24.

8 Axelsson, George. »Germans Reveal Worry Over Unrest in Europe«, NYT, June 21, 1942, p. E4.

being issued to honour countries overrun by Germany,⁹ an oversight that was corrected after protests by Danish-Americans.¹⁰

The NYT directed much of its early occupation attention to the issue of Denmark's economic integration into a greater German empire. A May 9, 1940 article entitled »Denmark's Economy Linked to Germany's« set the tone about the dependent position Denmark found itself in. Quoting Danish Cabinet member Christmas Møller at length, the article presented the economic realities of Denmark's loss of exports to England and concluded with Møller's statement that, »Everyone knows that the occupation of April 9 means revision of our country's economic condition. We have to realize that large quantities of goods hitherto received from abroad will be unobtainable and we shall have to augment our increasing exports and imports to Germany.«¹¹ Denmark's provisioning of Germany with agricultural products and rationing within Denmark were frequent topics in the NYT for the first two years of occupation, as was the general view that as Germany gained, Denmark lost. Trade-related stories with headlines like »Reich Buttressed by Subject States«, »Danes to Adjust Trade to Reich's«, and »Nazis Tie Denmark to War Machine«,¹² told American readers that »German reserves are unquestionably profiting from Danish foodstuffs«,¹³ and that »Denmark's entire economy, which was based on world trade, has been undergoing reorientation under the new order of the Axis.«¹⁴ That the Danes paid a price for this trade was also recorded. The imbalances in the clearing account between Denmark and Germany were emphasized and much was made of the Danish population's privations (»Tea Smoked in Denmark«¹⁵) and the imposition of rationing (»Dane's Butter Dishes Go«¹⁶). Curiously, the most potent illustrations of privation

9 Stiles, Kent. »Denmark Added to Honor Roll«, NYT, July 4, 1943, p. X12.

10 Stiles, Kent. »Fourth of Honor Stamps«, NYT, July 18, 1943, p. X9.

11 »Denmark's Economy Linked to Germany's«, NYT, May 9, 1940, p. 10.

12 Peters, C. Brooks. »Reich Buttressed by Subject States«, NYT, May 12, 1940, p. 74; »Danes Off to Reich Jobs«, NYT, June 16, 1940, p. 24; »The Wolf in Denmark«, NYT, July 25, 1940, p. 14; »Europe is Turning Inward for Trade«, NYT, August 5, 1940, p. 21; »U. S. Study Shows Nazis' Trade Rule«, NYT, February 2, 1941, p. 12; »British See Food Relief as Direct Aid to Nazis«, NYT, February 23, 1941, p. E5; »Danes to Adjust Trade to Reich's«, NYT, March 10, 1941, p. 4; »Occupied Denmark is Heavily in Debt«, NYT, March 16, 1941, p. 13; »New Order in Denmark«, NYT, March 20, 1941, p. 20; »50,000 Danes in Reich Spur War Industries«, NYT, March 12, 1942, p. 13; »Nazis Tie Denmark to War Machine«, NYT, November 18, 1942, p. 3.

13 Peters, C. Brooks. »Reich Buttressed by Subject States«, NYT, May 12, 1940, p. 74.

14 »New Order in Denmark«, NYT, March 20, 1941, p. 20.

15 »Tea Smoked in Denmark«, NYT, March 25, 1941, p. 7.

16 »Danes' Butter Dishes to Go«, NYT, April 27, 1941, p. 7.

were prominent photographs showing Danes using bicycles for transportation. To the car-centered American reader, the bicycle as chief means of transportation no doubt came across as real deprivation and few would know that the bicycle had also been the primary travel mode before the occupation.¹⁷

Danish-German Relations

The unique character of the German occupation policy in Denmark was noted from the beginning of the NYT's coverage. The first commander of German occupation troops, General Leonard Kaupisch, gave wide-ranging assurances in an April 12th, 1940, article that his duties »concern only the protection of Denmark from invasion by the Allies and as such they are purely military in nature . . . The status of the Danish Kingdom, the general said, will remain that of a 'sovereign State'.«¹⁸ The newspaper reported the widespread acceptance of the new realities in several articles in April, 1940 by noting, »the Danish population is submitting fully to the Danish authorities' recommendations concerning the observance of laws and orders imposed as a result of the German occupation.«¹⁹ Sven Carstensen, the newspaper's Danish stringer, included a more detailed description of the passive acceptance of occupation in a May 20, 1940 article entitled »Danes 'Carry On' Under Occupation«. The author recounts the German assertions that the invasion was for »the protection of Denmark's neutrality, giving a promise not to interfere in Denmark's civil administration . . . The correspondent must admit the promises have so far been kept. Besides the military aspect, the economic necessities of the situation have subsequently led to close cooperation.«²⁰ After travelling 750 miles by car through Denmark and interviewing 46 Danes »in responsible positions«, the Danish journalist concluded that »Town executives, police officers, civil administration officials, workingmen, all confirm the picture the writer formed of Denmark as an occupied country, but not as a subdued, foreign-dominated country.«²¹

17 »The Machine Age Suffers a Setback in Nazi-Occupied Denmark«, NYT, August 30, 1940, p. 4; »The Chief Means of Transportation in Nazi-Occupied Denmark«, NYT, August 20, 1941, p. 5.

18 »General explains Conquest of Danes«, NYT, April 12, 1940, p. 10.

19 »Copenhagen Active on Defense Plans«, NYT, April 26, 1940, p. 10.

20 Carstensen, Sven. »Danes 'Carry On' Under Occupation«, NYT, May 20, 1940, p. 4.

21 Ibid.

This picture of an occupied country exercising its executive powers and political institutions was echoed in many articles that followed. In a broad survey of German rule in occupied countries, Denmark was, in October, 1940, described as unique in having »formal maintenance of the sovereignty of the local dynasty and government« in the Reich's »kaleidoscopic variety of administrative forms.«²² In an article a month later, Frederick Birchall characterized Denmark's situation in similar terms:

The country is now in a situation hardly comparable with any other of the German-occupied countries. King Christian and his government perform their duties as before, with certain limitations imposed by the invaders, and exercise an influence by no means negligible in internal affairs.

There are two reasons. A minor one is perhaps the Germans would like to keep Denmark as far as possible as a show piece to demonstrate to other little countries that life may be quite tolerable within the German 'Lebensraum'. But the second and more important one is the Danish agricultural system . . . The Germans need the Danish produce and they know without the cooperation of the farmers there will be no eggs, butter, cheese, fat cattle or poultry.²³

The tension between Germany's interest in political stability and their increasing economic, military, and judicial demands upon Denmark was the focus of the NYT's coverage in 1941. The surrender of 10 torpedo boats to the Germans in February,²⁴ the Danish government's crackdown and jailing of members of the Danish Communist Party in June,²⁵ and especially the Danish signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in November all signalled that Denmark was being forced into more active support of the Nazi project. The Pact was seen as »evolving into one of the main instruments for the molding of the 'New Europe.' The spearhead of this alliance is directed not so much against Moscow—the seat of the Comintern—as against the Anglo-Saxon powers—the

22 »'Pan-Teutonic Europe' Shapes in Reich Plan«, NYT, October 20, 1940, p. 75.

23 Birchall, Frederick T. »Nazis Face Unrest Among the Conquered«, NYT, December 8, 1940, p. 54.

24 »Danes surrender Warships to Nazis«, NYT, February 9, 1941, p. 111.

25 »Danish Reds are Seized«, NYT, June 29, 1941, p. 4, »Learned in Denmark Languish in Prison«, NYT, March 31, 1942, p. 10.

allies and supporters of bolshevism.«²⁶ The Danish government, given its quasi-independence, was seen as actively choosing the German side. This point was driven home by the attendance at the Pact's signing ceremonies in Berlin of Foreign Minister Eric Scavenius, whom the paper described as having »always shown his pro-Nazi sympathies.«²⁷ Denmark was lumped together in »the dance of the marionettes« of »slave governments whose Quislings have been tasting the dust at Hitler's feet«,²⁸ and the newspaper predicted that »After this 'ideological' alliance with Germany, it is to be expected that German penetration into internal affairs will become increasingly more pronounced.«²⁹ A front-page story on November 27, 1941 noted popular opposition to Denmark's participation in the Anti-Comintern Pact,³⁰ but the country's official position was confirmed in a subsequent story quoting the Danish coalition government's declaration that the pact »was entered into by the Danish Foreign Minister after authorization by the King and on the responsibility of the government, with the approval of Parliament through its Committee of Collaboration«³¹

In early 1942, an analytical article about possible shifts in German policy toward occupied Europe speculated that Germany was considering pursuing a strategy that »would be designed to enable political leaders of the [domestic] 'opposition' to prove their ability to 'carry out their politico-economic rehabilitation constructively' without 'interference' from Nazi sympathizers of the Quisling, Pavelitch and Musser type.«³² In addition to freeing up German occupation troops for the Eastern Front, the policy »would have an added advantage in that its proponents insist that more 'loyal' collaboration could be expected from the native populations under their own leaders, who would be directly responsible to German 'observers' for the maintenance of internal order.« While this article did not point to Denmark as a model of this policy, other references to Denmark as a »'show window' demonstrating the blessings of National Socialism«³³ implied that Denmark had been a laboratory for just such an approach.

26 »Anti-Red Treaty a Spur for Axis«, NYT, November 30, 1941, p. E4.

27 »Berlin Widens Anti-Red Front«, NYT, November 25, 1941, p. 1; »13 Regimes Sign Anti-Red Pact«, November 26, 1940, p. 12; »Secret Deal Put Danes in Nazi Pact«, NYT, November 28, 1941, p. 5.

28 »Dance of the Marionettes«, NYT, November 30, 1941, p. E8.

29 »Secret Deal Put Danes in Nazi Pact«, NYT, November 28, 1941, p. 5.

30 »Riots in Copenhagen Over Pact Reported«, NYT, November 27, 1941, p. 1.

31 »Danes Assured on Pact«, NYT, November 29, 1941, p. 4.

32 »Nazis Weigh Truce in Unified Europe«, NYT, January 27, 1942, p. 13.

33 »Nazi-Danish Break of Week Reported«, NYT, October 6, 1942, p. 6.

The limits of this approach and the continuing ambiguity of Danish-German relations was at the center of the coverage of the Telegram Crisis, a German-initiated war of nerves that arose over the curt thank-you reply by the Danish King to Hitler's birthday greetings in late September, 1942.³⁴ The context for the crisis included friction between Danish Eastern Front volunteers on September leave in Denmark and the Danish population, Hitler's dissatisfaction with the level of official Danish cooperation, the appearance of a nascent active Danish resistance movement, and increasing German brutality in Norway. The upshot of a month of diplomatic and internal wrangling over how to resolve the situation without the disruption of Denmark's provisioning of Germany or the abandonment of the fiction of Danish sovereignty resulted in the naming of a new government, headed up by Foreign Minister Eric Scavenius.

Up until Scavenius' appointment there continued to be some sympathy for Denmark's position. George Axelsson wrote in an analytical article that Germany was trying »to intimidate Denmark into abandoning some of her privileges as a sovereign state«,³⁵ and wrote in a later news article that the Danish attitude »seems to be one of passive resistance—there is evidently little sabotage . . .« but that there was »an undercurrent of determination, born of sheer desperation to go to any length within the range of a virtually disarmed people rather than to submit.«³⁶

The tone of news coverage sharpened noticeably with Scavenius' appointment, which was announced in a November 10, 1942, headline as »Pro-Nazi is Named as Danish Premier«.³⁷ A more collective responsibility for the expected pro-German Danish policy was telegraphed in the next day's paper that included a headline »New Danish Cabinet Pledges Aid to Hitler« and in the body of the text which asserted the new Cabinet »considers its most important task is to strengthen friendly

34 The King's reply was, »Spreche meinen besten Dank aus«, *Gads Leksikon om Dansk Besættelsestid 1940-1945*, eds. Hans Kirchhoff, John T. Lauridsen, and Aage Trommer. Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2002, p. 459. The NYT coverage of the crisis included: »Nazi-Danish Break of Week Reported«, October 5, 1942, p. 6, »Rebellion Spirit Spreads«, Oct. 7, 1942, p. 5, »German Demands Studies by Danes«, Oct. 8, 1942, p. 9, »Nazis Slay 9 More in Norway Terror . . . Denmark's Status Vague«, October 9, 1942, p. 8, »Policy of Despair«, Oct. 9, 1942, p. 20, »Danish Showdown Averted«, Oct. 11, 1942, p. 29, »Scandinavia Faces Grim Nazi Tactic«, Oct. 11, 1942, p. E5, »Nazi Terror Fails as Curb in Norway«, Oct. 13, 1942, p. 10, »Denmark's Nazis Celebrate Today«, Nov. 1, 1942, p. 8.

35 Axelsson, George. »Scandinavia Faces Grim Nazi Tactic«, NYT, Oct. 11, 1942, p. E5.

36 Axelsson, George. »Denmark's Nazis Celebrate«, NYT, November 1, 1942, p. 8.

37 »Pro-Nazi is Named as Danish Premier; Scavenius Succeeds Buhl. Forced Out by Berlin«, NYT, Nov. 10, 1942, p. 8.

relations between Denmark and Germany.«³⁸ A month later, the arrest of illegal press participants in the newspaper *Frit Danmark* was laid at the doorstep of »the new pro-Nazi regime of Premier Erik Scavenius«.³⁹

Sympathetic View of Denmark as Passively Resisting German Occupation

From early on, and throughout the occupation, the NYT held up the Danish King as emblematic of Danish sovereignty, unity, and a symbol of passive resistance to Germany's gravitational pull. Celebrations of the King's first birthday under occupation were hailed as a display of nationalistic feelings and the paper claimed that »Nearly everyone is wearing« a Royal emblem [Kongemærke].⁴⁰ In March of 1941, the newspaper used a Swedish source stipulating the meaning and power of the King:

The writer believes most of the moral strength of the Danish people derives from their absolute union around King Christian, who is said to resist German demands as much as possible and is respected by the invaders. The article continues: »Denmark is the King and the King is Denmark. In its patriotic royalism, Denmark is one of the most united nations in the world.«⁴¹

A burst of news coverage occurred around the King's horse-riding accident and ill health beginning on October 20th, 1942. In a front-page story, the King's significance was described this way: »It is impossible to overestimate what King Christian means to Denmark at present. He is the most indisputable center of the country, the only man in whom Danes have unlimited confidence because they know he mounts guard over what remains of Danish independence, and that any change in the status quo would be opposed by him to the utmost.«⁴² Progress reports on the King's health appeared in 11 of the next 13 issues of the NYT,⁴³

38 »New Danish Cabinet Pledges Aid to Hitler; Promises to Wipe out Sabotage Against Occupation Troops«, NYT, November 11, 1942, p. 6.

39 »Danish Leaders Reportedly Seized«, NYT, December 12, 1942, p. 4.

40 Carstensen, Sven. »Danes to Hail King on Birthday Today«, NYT, September 26, 1940, p. 7.

41 »Nazis Find Danes Nation of Icicles«, NYT, March 2, 1941, p. 28.

42 Valery, Bernard. »Danish King Injured in Fall From Horse«, NYT, October 20, 1942, p. 2.

43 »King's Condition Satisfactory«, NYT, October 21, 1942, p. 7; »Danish King Uncomfortable«, NYT, October 22, 1942, p. 5; »Danish King Improves«, NYT, October 23, 1942, p. 3; »King Christian Recovering«, NYT, October 24, 1942, p. 7; »Danish King Suf-

representing the most sustained period of attention to Denmark during the war.⁴⁴

During the King's recovery period, Anne O'Hare McCormick in the regular column »Abroad«, painted a glowing picture of the demure King living in a »modest house in the center of town«, and Danish royalty never getting »served ahead of their turn« in restaurants.⁴⁵ McCormick lauded the King's April 9th, 1940 proclamation to the Danish people to maintain law and order, ascribing untoward incidents to Danish Nazis! »The Danes have followed the King's counsel to ignore the invaders and refrain from sabotage. The only violence has been attacks against Danes who work for the Nazis and acts proved under investigation to have been committed by Danish Nazis under German orders. The Nazis punish disorder, but where there is none they create it as an excuse for moving in.«⁴⁶

The Danish King operated in the NYT as somewhat desperate proof that Danish independence and sovereignty survived, modified, but intact. The more complex and problematic role the King as symbol had under German occupation bore neither mention nor discussion. The King as symbol lent unfortunate credence to the political fiction that enabled German efforts to establish and maintain a pacified »model protectorate« out of Denmark. Fealty and obedience to King Christian's request for law, order, and correct behaviour toward the occupation power, arguably, helped delay the appearance of a popular, active resistance movement in Denmark.

Resistance: Passive and Active

The picture of Denmark as a cog in Germany's war machine and slowly being forced into a pro-Nazi orbit in coverage of trade and diplomacy issues was also challenged somewhat by concurrently published articles and commentary. Beginning in 1941, the NYT contained occasional articles covering the broad expression of resistance in German-occupation Europe. The nine articles published before August 1943 that

fers Attack of Pneumonia«, NYT, October 26, 1942, p. 3; »Danish King is Resting Easier«, NYT, October 27, 1942, p. 4; »Danish King Names His Son as Regent«, NYT, October 28, 1942, p. 11; »King Christian Improves«, NYT, October 28, 1942, p. 12; »Danish King Rallies Slightly«, NYT, October 30, 1942, p. 4; »Denmark's Nazis Celebrate Today«, [long paragraph devoted to King] NYT, November 1, 1942, p. 8; »Christian Continues to Gain«, NYT, November 2, 1942, p. 3.

44 »Cheers for a King in a Nazi-Occupied Country,« NYT, May 14, 1941, p. 7.

45 McCormick, Anne O'Hare. »Abroad: King Christian and the Sovereignty of Denmark«, NYT, October 21, 1942, p. 20.

46 Ibid.

mention Denmark do so only in passing.⁴⁷ Denmark is included in general lists of countries where indignation over occupation had been reported, but only two examples of passive Danish resistance were reported: the cold shoulder⁴⁸ and a poster appearing exhorting Danes to withhold metal in a recycling campaign.⁴⁹ In the NYT' coverage of the larger picture of European resistance during this period, Denmark hardly existed.⁵⁰

A slightly different image was projected in the coverage specific to Denmark that ran during the same period. Danes outside Denmark engaged in a public relations campaign to paint Denmark as being a bulwark of democracy. On April 14, 1940, the NYT reported on Rev. Dr. A. Theodore Dorf of Our Saviour's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brooklyn saying in his Sunday sermon that, »The occupation of Denmark by Germany was expected. Denmark's only weapon of defence was non-resistance; that was also expected. It could not be otherwise. Denmark's history of a thousand years of national entity gives it a prominence and unique place among the nations of the world. It cannot perish. It will come out of the conflict again, renewed in spirit and solidarity.«⁵¹ Henrik Kauffman, Denmark's Ambassador in Washington D. C. who declared his independence from any government in German-occupied Denmark, asserted that »every Dane of every party . . . is hoping and praying that the cause of justice will win and free and independent Denmark will be re-established.«⁵² A book reviewer in December 1940 noted that »Given adult men and women accustomed to freedom, add to that the general run of toughness and patience and tenacity of Danes, and you will understand why Mr. Hackett [author of *I Chose Denmark*] can argue so convincingly that Denmark is

47 »Anti-Nazi Revolt Widens in Europe«, NYT, September 14, 1941, p. 1; James, Edwin L. »Can Hitler Ever Make Europe Bow to Nazis?«, NYT, September 14, 1941, p. E3; Birchall, Frederik T. »Across Nazi-Conquered Europe the Tide of Revolt is Rising«, NYT, October 2, 1941, p. W5; »Lands Under Nazis Seem More Restive«, NYT, April 9, 1942, p. 3; Stone, Shepard. »The Hidden War Against the Nazis«, NYT, April 9, 1942, p. BR4; Archambault, G. H. »Unrest Stirs Europe's 'Third Front'«, NYT, May 31, 1942, p. E4; Axelsson, George. »Germans Reveal Worry Over Unrest in Europe«, NYT, June 21, 1942, p. E4; »Women Fight Nazis in Occupied Lands«, NYT, December 21, 1942, p. 18; Long, London. »The Free Press of Enslaved Europe«, NYT, May 16, 1943, p. SM20.

48 Birchall, Frederik T. »Across Nazi-Conquered Europe the Tide of Revolt is Rising«, October 2, 1941, p. W5.

49 »Women Fight Nazis in Occupied Lands«, December 21, 1942, p. 18.

50 This slight was no doubt deserved up until mid-1942. Resistance sabotage, beginning with the Danish Communist Party's (DKP) arson attacks that summer ramped up to a concerted campaign with explosives in 1943.

51 »New Faith in View in Wake of Nazis«, NYT, April 15, 1940, p. 19.

52 Bracker, Milton. »Denmark's Faith Voiced by Envoy«, NYT, June 6, 1940, p. 28.

unconquerable.«⁵³ In late 1940, a group called the American Friends of Danish Freedom and Democracy pointed out that Danes were passively resisting German domination with »huge patriotic songfests« of up to 800,000 people.⁵⁴ In an April 1941 letter to the editor, Aage Nielsen assured readers that »all Danes heartily desire the destruction of the Nazi tyranny.«⁵⁵

Several short stories about incidents of passive resistance, some reprinted from the American Friends of Danish Freedom and Democracy news releases, provided evidence of Danish dissatisfaction with occupation. The widely told tale in Denmark of newsboys hawking the censored legal press with shouts of »Papers! Eight ore's [sic] worth of lies, four ore's[sic] worth of advertisements«, showed up on page 2 on July 10, 1941.⁵⁶ The articles went on to offer the highly exaggerated claim in the American Friends of Danish Freedom and Democracy news release that »Nobody bothers to read the papers any more. They are bursting with German propaganda. It nauseates you to read them.«⁵⁷ Danes did have a very critical approach to the legal papers, »reading between the lines« analytically to assess what was happening in the world. Scrapbooks kept during the occupation clearly show both intense interest in and scepticism of the legal Danish press. Danish news consumers also listened to the Danish language BBC broadcasts and later on read the domestic illegal press.⁵⁸

Hints of a more actively hostile attitude towards the German occupiers, one clearly marked unacceptable to the Danish authorities, leaked slowly through in the back pages of the NYT starting in August, 1940. The first article, headlined »Danish Youths Jailed for 'Molesting the Nazis', Premier Stauning Warns Nation on 'Loyal Attitude' to Reich« described a court case in Frederikshavn, Jutland that made an example of young people receiving »heavy prison penalties« in altercations with German troops.⁵⁹ In addition to the occasional article highlighting

53 Olson, Alma Luise. »Homage to Denmark«, NYT, December 8, 1940, p. 118.

54 »Danes are Resisting Pressure From Nazis«, NYT, December 15, 1940, p. 5. Other examples of cultural manifestations as passive resistance were »Danes Stirred by Contest for New National Poem«, NYT, July 30, 1940, p. 4, and »Denmark Singing«, NYT, December 25, 1940, p. 26.

55 Nielsen, Aage Christian. »Danish Character Analyzed«, NYT, April 5, 1941, p. 16.

56 »Danish Newsboys Jeer Nazi-Censored Press«, NYT, July 10, 1941, p. 2. The more common rendition of the story in Denmark had newsboys shouting, »Four pages of lies! Four pages of advertisements!«

57 Ibid.

58 Hong, Nathaniel. *Sparks of Resistance: The Illegal Press in German-Occupied Denmark 1940-August, 1943*, Odense: Odense University Press, 1996.

59 »Danish Youths Jailed for 'Molesting' Nazis«, NYT, August 16, 1940, p. 5.

friction between Danes and occupation troops,⁶⁰ the NYT repeated invented stories of Danish intransigence that depended more on wishful thinking than reality. For example, the newspaper reprinted a *Detroit News* cartoon of a Dane taunting a German soldier with the news that the head of war production in the U. S. was a Dane.⁶¹

An article celebrating the »Cold Shoulder« campaign of freezing German occupiers out of Danish society relied on a florid, exaggerated Swedish journalistic account that purported to show »that the hatred and resistance of the Danes, although taking different forms, are no weaker than those of Poles and Norwegians.«⁶² German soldiers, it was claimed, were so demoralized by the polite unfriendliness of Danes that they preferred service in Poland and Norway where they would be »risking a knife in the back.«⁶³

Sabotage, as an active contribution to the Allied cause, was slow in coming to Denmark. The first three years saw 2, 12, and 59 reported sabotage acts. The year 1943 was a breakthrough year, with 816 sabotage actions, 1944 with 988, and the first 5 months of 1945, 924.⁶⁴ The NYT's coverage essentially mirrored this trajectory of the rise of sabotage in Denmark. Aside from an item on a Communist sabotage cell⁶⁵ and brief mention of multiple cases of arson in one unnamed Danish town on January 13, 1942, sabotage did not appear in the NYT's Danish coverage until August 23, 1942. The 11-paragraph article, »Nazis Warn Danes to Curb Sabotage«, covered the Danish Communist Party's arson campaign of the summer of 1942, SOE parachute agents being hunted, and a description of an inventive anonymous gravity distribution system used by the illegal press.⁶⁶ Sabotage in Denmark began to receive more regular attention in 1943. There were 20 articles, or an average of four per month, about sabotage in Denmark from February 21, 1943

60 »Germans Sentence Danes, Penalties Dealt for Insulting and Molesting German Troops«, NYT, July 13, 1941, p. 16. A 40-day jail sentence for graffiti »Victoire« was reported.

61 »Fun in Denmark«, NYT, January 26, 1941, p. E10.

62 »Nazis Find Danes 'Nation of Icicles'«, NYT, March 2, 1941, p. 28.

63 Ibid.

64 *Gads Leksikon om Dansk Besættelsestid 1940-1945*, Gads Forlag: København, 2002, p. 238.

65 »'Terrorist' Danes Jailed, 7 are Convicted of Sabotage Attempt on Reich-Bound Ships«, NYT, July 8, 1941, p. 6.

66 »Nazis Warn Danes to Curb Sabotage,« NYT, August 23, 1942, p. 25. The distribution device depended on a seesaw device set up in an attic window with newspapers balanced at an open window and a bag of sand on the other end. After cutting a small hole in the bag, the perpetrator could escape and be long gone when the sand ran out enough to tip a cascade of illegal literature down to the street below.

until mid-August.⁶⁷ The Churchill Club, a pioneering sabotage group of young boys in Aalborg, merited a March 8, 1943 Reuter's story, using the »Danish Council of Information Office« as its source. They were reported to have been venturing out of their prison cells to continue sabotage, an action that the newspaper called »one of the most audacious plots in occupied Europe.«⁶⁸

Three short articles in March and early April reported »Burmeister and Wayn [sic]« wharves wrecked,⁶⁹ that a growing wave of sabotage was producing »a 'critical' situation in Denmark«⁷⁰, and that a »committee of the coalition government parties issued a public statement warning Danes that unless sabotage ceases, everything which the puppet regime preserved since the invasion in the way of self-government would be lost.«⁷¹ A substantially longer story ran on April 6, 1943 about five sabotage attacks in Hillerød. The NYT received more timely information due to the change in German policy that now allowed Danish newspapers to publicize acts of sabotage.⁷² In the rest of April and early May five very short items appeared on railway sabotage, illegal newspaper distribution, and a large arson fire in Frederikssund.⁷³

Sabotage as a tactic had two primary political goals: to persuade those outside Denmark that the country supported the Allied cause

67 »Danish Saboteurs Wreck Nazi Plants«, NYT, February 21, 1943, p. 20; »4 Nazi Women Hurt by Bomb in Denmark«, NYT, March 1, 1943, p. 6; »Danish Youths Sallied Forth Nightly from Prison to Commit Sabotage Against German Army«, NYT, March 8, 1943, p. 6; »Copenhagen Wharves Wrecked«, NYT, March 12, 1943, p. 5; »Lithuanian Revolt Said to Have Begun«, NYT, March 31, 1943, p. 6; »Danes are Warned«, NYT, April 5, 1943, p. 3; »Saboteurs Smash Frankfort Bridge«, NYT, April 5, 1943, p. 1; »Danish Saboteurs Burn 5 Factories«, NYT, April 6, 1943, p. 3; »Danish Railroad Bombed«, NYT, April 11, 1943, p. 37; »Plot to Kill Nazi Fails«, NYT, April 18, 1943, p. 24; »Danish Underground Tricks Foes«, NYT, April 20, 1943, p. 7; »4 Danes Imprisoned«, NYT, May 1, 1943, p. 5; »Big Fire in Denmark«, NYT, May 10, 1943, p. 6; »2 Norwegian Ports Shut«, NYT, May 11, 1943, p. 4; »King Urges Danes to Halt Sabotage«, NYT, May 16, 1943, p. 25; »German Shipyards Blown Up By Danes«, NYT, May 23, 1943, p. 23; »Danish Ceramic Factory Burns«, NYT, June 6, 1943, p. 2; »German Garrisons Set Up in Jutland«, NYT, June 20, 1943, p. 28; »Sabotage in Denmark Aims at Nazi Troops«, NYT, June 21, 1943, p. 3; »Danes Sabotage Factory, Transformer of Aarhus Motor Works Wrecked by Blast«, NYT, July 1, 1943, p. 5.

68 »Danish Youths Sallied Nightly From Prison to Commit Sabotage Against German Army;« NYT, March 8, 1943, p. 6.

69 »Copenhagen Wharves Wrecked«, NYT, March 12, 1943, p. 5

70 »Lithuanian Revolt Said to Have Begun«, NYT, March 31, 1943, p. 6.

71 »Danes are Warned«, April 5, 1943, NYT, p. 3.

72 »Danish Saboteurs Burn 5 Factories«, NYT, April 2, 1943, p. 3.

73 »Danish Railroad Bombed«, NYT, April 11, 1943, p. 37; »Plot to Kill Nazi Fails«, NYT, April 18, 1943, p. 24; »Danish Underground Tricks Foes«, NYT, April 20, 1943, p. 7; »4 Danes Imprisoned«, NYT, May 1, 1943, p. 5; »Big Fire in Denmark«, NYT, May 10, 1943, p. 6.

and inside Denmark to highlight the government's accommodation to Nazi Germany. Active resistance and the tension over judicial control of Danish subjects arrested carrying it out, put considerable pressure on the Coalition government's policy of attempting to carry on under German occupation. In the spring and summer of 1943 the rising wave of sabotage contributed to increasing German demands for official Denmark to suppress it with increasingly brutal tactics, including applying the death penalty. The King again appealed for acquiescence to German power on May 16, 1943, saying, »that 'condemnable acts' committed by 'irresponsible' persons could have the most serious results for Denmark.«⁷⁴ Saboteurs, in addition to trying to push Denmark into more open opposition to German occupation, were intent on laying the foundation for international recognition of Denmark's membership in the Allied cause by showing »that the Danes would do their best to help the Allied forces if they invaded Denmark.«⁷⁵

The first goal of burying the fiction of sovereignty and independence under German rule won significant ground from the August 1943 popular rebellion that the Danish government was powerless to put down. The August struggle against the German and official Danish policy of acquiescent cooperation received significant attention in the NYT. The newspaper published twenty-two articles (an average of 1.4 per day) containing 164 paragraphs relating to the situation between August 17th's »Crisis in Danish Cabinet« through August 31st's »Denmark the Victorious«.⁷⁶

The main cause of the August rebellion was, according to the NYT, increases in sabotage and German pressure on the Danish government

74 »King Urges Danes to Halt Sabotage«, NYT, May 16, 1943, p. 25.

75 »German Shipyards Blown Up by Danes«, NYT, May 23, 1943, p. 23.

76 »Crisis in Danish Cabinet«, NYT, August 17, 1943, p. 7; »Danish Sabotage Spreads«, NYT, August 18, 1942, p. 4; »Nazi Grip Norway in Frantic Curbs: Danes' Sabotage Widens«, NYT, August 18, 1943, p. 4; »Danes Fight Nazis in Odense Streets«, NYT, August 20, 1943, p. 4; »Defiance of Nazis Weighed by Danes«, NYT, August 21, 1943, p. 4; »Clashes Anger Germans«, NYT, August 22, 1943, p. 17; »Danes Warned of Perils«, NYT, August 22, 1943, p. 17; »Danish Soldiers Fight Germans, Premiere Warns of Nazi Revenge«, NYT, August 22, 1943, p. 1; »The Next Blow«, NYT, August 22, 1943, p. E1; »Sabotage Increases After Danish Plea«, NYT, August 23, 1943, p. 3; »Nazi Machine Guns Cover Copenhagen«, NYT, August 26, 1943, p. 8; »Nazi Volley Fired in Denmark Crowd«, NYT, August 27, 1943, p. 3; »Mass Arrests Reported«, NYT, August 28, 1943, p. 6; »Nazis Call Envoy on Danish Crisis«, NYT, August 28, 1943, p. 6; »Abroad: Trouble in Denmark«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. E2; Axelsson, George. »Danes Reject Reich Terms, German Army Rule Feared«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. 1; »Military Rule Held Certain«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. 9; »War News Summarized«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. 1; »Best's Fate Unknown«, NYT, August 30, 1943, p. 3; »Hours of Heavy Fighting«, NYT, August 30, 1943, p. 3; »Trouble in Denmark for the Germans, Martial Law Set«, NYT, August 30, 1943, p. 1; »Danish Refugees Drowned as Planes Sink Their Boats«, NYT, August 31, 1943, p. 1; and »Denmark the Victorious«, NYT, August 31, 1943, p. 16.

to suppress it. The sabotage campaign was described as extraordinarily effective:

The sabotage wave has now reached such gigantic proportions that on the night of Wednesday-Thursday no fewer than sixty factories were blown up by dynamite . . . Reports state that the daily sabotage is wrecking factories working for the Reich war industry more thoroughly and more extensively than if they had been bombed by the Allies.⁷⁷

On August 22, the newspaper reported that the Danish government »asked Danes today to halt a wave of sabotage against the German overlords, warning that its continuation would have ‘a devastating result on Danish life’ with the Nazis cutting off food and coal supplies.«⁷⁸ Despite the warning, the next day’s paper included a story »Sabotage Increases After Danish Plea«, that described Odense as the center of resistance, where the »dynamiting of a German rail supply line and the killing of fifteen Germans in rioting on Fyn« occurred.⁷⁹

The mass character of the rebellion was acknowledged in the NYT’s coverage. It was called an »open rebellion of the people against the Nazi occupation and war services« on August 21st and on August 26th the paper settled on naming the August events »a people’s revolt against German occupation and war use of Denmark«.⁸⁰ Stories in the next several days repeated the phrase »people’s revolt«.⁸¹ Yet sabotage remained a primary explanation for the events of August and the sabotage action against Forum, a Copenhagen area building about to be occupied for German use, was mentioned on August 26, then featured in a large photograph on August 27th. The British Special Operations Executive (SOE) was given most of the credit for the jump in sabotage, and Communist and ultra-nationalists were named as active participants.⁸²

The Germans made politically impossible demands on the Danish coalition government on August 28th that included introducing the death penalty for sabotage and possession of weapons. As the formal

77 »Danes Fight Nazis in Odense Streets«, NYT, August 20, 1943, p. 4.

78 »Danes Warned of Perils«, NYT, August 22, 1943, p. 17.

79 »Sabotage Increases After Danish Plea«, NYT, August 23, 1943, p. 3.

80 »Nazi Machine Guns Cover Copenhagen«, NYT, August 26, 1943, p. 8.

81 »Nazi Volley Fired in Denmark Crowd«, NYT, August 27, 1943, p. 3; »Mass Arrests Reported«, NYT, August 28, 1943, p. 6.

82 »Nazi Volley Fired in Denmark Crowd«, NYT, August 27, 1943, p. 3.

collaborative arrangements between official Denmark and the German occupiers collapsed, the NYT set about explaining the turn of events and in so doing began a revision of the Danish resistance. The August 28, 1943 column »Abroad« announced that »Little Denmark«, whose »people were to have been won over« by the Germans, had gone into open rebellion. This open rebellion, according to the column, was part of a continuous campaign of resistance from the very beginning of occupation:

From the first Copenhagen's great star-shaped prison was filled with dissident Danes. From time to time Danish feelings were expressed in explosions and great fires in such plants as the Riffel arms concern and the Burmeister and Wain diesel engine works. As food became scarce because of German demands, opposition spread. It reached its most startling point, perhaps, when the Germans permitted the Danes to hold their elections last March and the country turned down the Nazis, voted in the more democratic parties.⁸³

The withdrawal of the Danish government created the expectation that Denmark would be treated as a hostile occupied nation. An August 29th page-one story speculated that, »Denmark seemed to be finally joining the ranks of Norway and the Low Countries tonight.«⁸⁴ A day later the paper noted recent events as »apparently ending Denmark's role among the German-occupied countries as 'the show window of the blessings of Nazism'.«⁸⁵ The column »Abroad« devoted substantial attention to the events of August under the headline »Revolt of the Danes« and noted that »The nation was to have been a 'showcase' of friendly collaboration«, but that »[l]ast week the 'showcase' was ripped by violent explosions. The window display came to an abrupt end.«⁸⁶ Official Denmark was given considerable credit for resisting German demands. The King, and the Scavenius government, refused German requests for yet another Danish government to be formed and George

83 »Abroad: Trouble in Denmark«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. E2.

84 Axelsson, George. »Danes Reject Reich Terms, German Army Rule Feared«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. 1.

85 »Trouble in Denmark for the Germans, Martial Law Set«, NYT, August 30, 1943, p. 1.

86 »Abroad, Revolt of the Danes«, NYT, September 5, 1943, p. E1. This articulation of the situation was repeated in »Nazis Drop the Mask in Dealing With Danes«, NYT, September 5, 1943, p. E5: » . . . exasperated by the resistance of Denmark to the Nazi 'new order,' [they] chose to smash the 'show window of the blessings of Nazism.'«

Axelsson reported that this was due to »the proudly cold attitude of the King and the flat refusal of members of the late Cabinet to form this sham facade . . .«⁸⁷ Denmark's continuing desire for holding direct German administration at bay and Germany's desire for provisioning with the least direct military subjugation possible found a solution in the government's Department Heads continuing to run the civil administration of the country under the occupier's rule.⁸⁸

The rest of 1943 coverage of Denmark included ongoing attempts to fashion a political solution to Denmark's relationship with Germany, the rescue of the Danish Jews, and many items about sabotage. Sixteen articles about sabotage actions were published between September 4th and December 31st.⁸⁹ With headlines like »Danes Keep Up Fight on Nazis by Sabotage«, »New Danish Sabotage«, »Danes Wreck Nazi Headquarter«, and »Danes Blow Up Plant Making German Arms« the last four months of 1943 were presented as busy ones, with seemingly the whole population of Denmark participating. The final article of the year shed some light on the intended public relations role that Danish sabotage was to have to the outside world. Comparing Norwegian and Danish sabotage, George Axelsson asserted that:

While obstruction is the principal aim of sabotage everywhere, its nature and underlying causes vary in the cases of Denmark and Norway as much as the temperament of the inhabitants and the positions in which the Nazi occupation has placed them. The Danes have made a science of sabotage, which they practice with a fervor to save the Allies the expense of precision bombing of military objectives. The enthusiasm and exaltation they devote to this task reveals, incidentally, their anxiety to convince the Allies their hearts always have been in the right place, even though

87 »Nazis Drop the Mask in Dealing With Danes«, NYT, September 5, 1943, p. E5.

88 »Germans Seek End to Denmark Crisis«, NYT, September 3, 1943, p. 4.

89 »Danes Keep Up Fight on Nazis by Sabotage«, NYT, September 4 1943, p. 4; »Danes Blow Ship as Sabotage Mounts«, NYT, September 7, 1943, p. 13; »New Danish Sabotage«, NYT, September 15, 1943, p. 3; »Copenhagen Shoe Factory Burns«, NYT, September 18, 1943, p. 6; »German Proposal Refused by Danes«, September 21, 1943, p. 10; »Jutland Railroad Cut«, NYT, September 27, 1943, p. 10; »Danish Patriots Renew Sabotage«, NYT, October 5, 1943, p. 6; »Tension Reported Rising in Denmark«, NYT, October 17, 1943, p. 19; »Nazis Pick Holstein for Danish Puppet«, NYT, October 19, 1943, p. 8; »Danes Wreck Nazi Headquarters«, NYT, October 20, 1943, p. 6; »Guerilla Action Grows in Europe«, NYT, November 11, 1943, p. 6; »Danes Cut Jutland Lines«, NYT, November 22, 1943, p. 3; »Danes Mourn Five Shot by Germans«, NYT, December 5, 1943, p. 6; »Danes Blow Up Plant Making German Arms«, December 13, 1943, p. 3; and Axelsson, George. »Sabotage Mounts in Scandinavia«, NYT, December 26, 1943, p. E5.

organized sabotage did not assume »business proportions« until late in 1941.

Hate Prompts Norwegians

The Norwegians have had no such considerations. They were in war from the very first day of the invasion, fighting the invader tooth and nail, so that they need not worry that the rest of the world would misinterpret their attitude.⁹⁰

The conception of sabotage as propaganda directed to convincing the outside world of Denmark's membership in the Allied cause was clearly articulated in an internal assessment of Dansk Pressetjeneste (DPT), a Danish resistance-connected news bureau established in Stockholm, Sweden to help burnish Denmark's image after the August Rebellion. In becoming »a visible news and propaganda organization«,⁹¹ one of its primary goals was to create »goodwill« toward Denmark in the British, American, and Soviet media. Danish sabotage had, according to DPT's own description, »extraordinary importance in creating [Allied] goodwill.«⁹² In the period between the August Rebellion and the Copenhagen People's Strike (September 1943 to late June 1944), the NYT printed at least 15 stories that named the DPT as its source.⁹³ Additional stories based on Swedish newspapers and radio may also have had DPT as their original sources.

Two general overviews of the European resistance movements appearing in November 1943 and May 1944 paid equal attention to Denmark's contributions. In »Guerrilla Action Grows in Europe« Denmark merited a detailed paragraph in line with the amount of attention other

90 »Sabotage Mounts in Scandinavia«, NYT, December 26, 1943, p. E5.

91 »Mundtlig redegørelse 'Nyhedsformidlingen for Danmark til Omverden med særligt henblik på Dansk Pressetjeneste', Stockholm, November 1944«, in The Archive of The Museum of Danish Resistance, register # 14 C – 6, p. 4.

92 Ibid. p. 14.

93 »Danes Blow Up Ship as Sabotage Mounts«, NYT, September 7, 1943, p. 13; »Danes Fined in Reprisal«, NYT, September 11, 1943, p. 4; »Germans Fine Copenhagen«, NYT, September 12, 1943, p. 12; »German Proposal Refused by Danes«, NYT, September 21, 1943, p. 10; »Deportations Underway«, NYT, October 4, 1943, p. 7; »Danish Patriots Renew Sabotage«, NYT, October 5, 1943, p. 6; »Germans Disarm Denmark Police«, NYT, October 6, 1943, p. 9; »Tension Reported Rising in Denmark«, NYT, October 17, 1943, p. 19; »Nazi Alert in Denmark«, NYT, November 25, 1943, p. 3; »Denmark to get Nazi Ministries«, NYT, March 31, 1944, p. 4; Daniell, Raymond. »British Minimize Swedes' Nazi Fears«, NYT, April 28, 1944, p. 1; »Forged Leaflets Dropped to Sow Strife in Denmark«, NYT, April 28, 1944, p. 4; »Nazi Deserters Executed«, NYT, May 1, 1944, p. 4; »Saboteurs Sink Four Ships«, NYT, June 14, 1944, p. 3.

countries, such as France, Norway, and the Netherlands, received.⁹⁴ The May 1944 »Germans Fail in Trickery to Dig Out Underground« ran 17 paragraphs, of which 5 were devoted to reporting on Schalburtag, black propaganda, and Nazi counter-terror in Denmark.⁹⁵ The inclusion of Denmark in the ranks of European resistance in these articles was a recognition that the country was for the first time viewed as actively working against the Germans, but it did not signify Allied status yet. Danish sabotage actions appeared frequently in April and May issues of the NYT (9 articles) after a lull the first three months (1 article) of 1944 corresponding to an SOE-ordered sabotage stop.⁹⁶ Yet in an extraordinarily long (38 paragraphs) overview of European resistance around the time of D-Day, Denmark again is mentioned only once, buried in a list in the middle of the story's introduction.⁹⁷

The Copenhagen People's Strike, a series of strikes and street battles that occurred from June 26 to July 4, 1944 received significant coverage and enthusiastic praise from the NYT. The coverage lagged behind events, and the first mention of unrest came in a June 29th article in which the Danish news service (DPT) reported »continued restlessness«, 7 dead and 50 wounded, and German imposition of an onerous curfew.⁹⁸ In a two-week period, June 29 to July 13, the Times printed 14 articles (1 per day) comprising 100 paragraphs about Denmark and the People's strike in Copenhagen. The use of DPT wire service material (named in 9 of the 14 articles⁹⁹) may have helped provide a more comprehensive and accurate picture of events playing out in Denmark than

94 »Guerrilla Action Grows in Europe«, NYT, November 8, 1943, p. 6.

95 Waggoner, Walter H. »Germans Fail in Trickery to Dig Out Underground«, NYT, May 8, 1944, p. 1.

96 « Danes Blow Up Plant«, NYT, January 31, 1944, p. 3 »New Danish Outbursts«, NYT, April 26, 1944, p. 5; »Nazis Rush Troops, Cut Off Denmark«, NYT, April 27, 1944, p. 1; »Terror in Denmark«, NYT, April 29, 1944, p. 14; »Germans Kill Two More Danes«, NYT, May 3, 1944, p. 3; Waggoner, Walter H. »Germans Fail in Trickery to Dig Out Underground«, NYT, May 8, 1944, p. 1; »More Danish Sabotage«, NYT, May 9, 1944, p. 4; »Danes Blow Up Airfield«, NYT, May 15, 1944, p. 7; »Germans Execute Danes«, NYT, May 22, 1944; »2 in Denmark Shot as Sabotage Mounts«, NYT, May 23, 1944, p. 3; »Saboteurs Sink Four Ships«, NYT, June 14, 1944, p. 3.

97 Daniel, E. C. »Our Allies Inside Hitler's Fortress«, NYT, June 18, 1944, p. SM5.

98 The mention came at the end of an article mainly about Norway: »160 Patriots Battle 3,000 Nazis in Norway«, NYT, June 29, 1944, p. 7.

99 »160 Patriots Battle 3,000 Nazis in Norway«, NYT, June 29, 1944, p. 7; Axelsson, George. »15,000 Armed Danes Defy Nazi Tanks in Copenhagen« (DPT used only for 700 killed/wounded statistic), NYT, July 2, 1944, p. 1; »Armoured Cars Patrol City«, NYT, July 3, 1944, p. 5; Axelsson, George. »Foe Starves Danes into Ending Strike« (again DPT used only for dead/wounded statistic), NYT, July 3, 1944, p. 1; »Danes Push Strike, Defy Bomb Threat«, NYT, July 4, 1944, p. 1; »Germans Yield to Danish Strike, Patriots Wreck Port of Aarhus«, NYT, July 5, 1944, p. 1.

the previous summer during the August Rebellion,¹⁰⁰ but problems remained. The availability of what Reuters called »the usually reliable Danish Press Service«¹⁰¹ did not, for example, prevent George Axelsson, himself based in Stockholm, from filing two consecutive page-1 stories that erroneously claimed 15,000 Danish resistance fighters were battling German tanks in the streets,¹⁰² and that the Nazis had starved Copenhagen into submission,¹⁰³ a stirring story and a defeat that never happened. Axelsson's mistaken end of the strike report was echoed by Anne O'Hare McCormick in her column »Abroad« the same day.¹⁰⁴

100 A short article, »Sabotage in Denmark Aims at Nazi Troops«, NYT, June 21, 1943, p. 3 is illustrative of the newspaper's accuracy problems in the summer of 1943. In a three paragraph story the following inaccuracies found their way into the text:

1. The headline and text asserting that sabotage was aimed at German troops is misleading, as the Resistance movement policy throughout the war was to refrain from direct attacks upon Germans.
2. The paper seemed to describe the sabotage campaign as primarily carried out by the youth wing of the Conservative Party: »Out of 100 men arrested for recent sabotage, seventy-five were members of the Young Conservatives organization.«
3. Paragraph 2 is devoted to making the claim that after the Danish Cabinet dropped the law prohibiting Danish military members from enlisting in foreign armies, only 10 did so, and 5 went into the Finnish Army. In 1941 the Danish government gave their blessing to the creation of a Danish military unit, *Frikorps Danmark* [Danish Legion], for the German war effort and allowed active duty and reserve military personnel to join and serve their terms of duty in it. The first contingent of 420 volunteers left July 19, 1941 and included 7 Danish military officers (See »Samarbejdsudvalgets Protokol« 23.7.1941, The Archive of The Museum of Danish Resistance).
4. Paragraph 3 alleges a *daily* circulation of 120,000 illegal newspapers, when the total *monthly* output that month was just over 200,000. See Nathaniel Hong, *Sparks of Resistance*, Odense University Press, Odense 1996, p. 217.

The NYT's Danish casualty figures were quite bad until DPT went into service, starting with overstating the number killed in the initial invasion (700 reported killed when 16 died). By contrast, the June 29th 1944 NYT casualty figures are very close to accurate for the events of Monday, June 26th's casualties of 10 killed and 46 wounded and the July 2nd figure of 700 killed and wounded as reported by DPT ended up close to the best historical estimate of 75 killed and 439 wounded. An erroneous figure of 700 actually appeared in Swedish newspaper on Friday, June 30 and became a source of friction between *Information*, the underground Danish news service in Copenhagen, and DPT, which depended on the former for most of the news it disseminated to the world press. See Erik Lund, *Fire millioner frie ord. Det illegale nyhedsbureau »Information« august 1943-maj 1945*, Institut for Presseforskning og Samtidshistorie: Århus, 1970, p. 73 and pp. 287-307.

101 »Forged Leaflets Dropped to Sow Strife in Denmark«, NYT, April 28, 1944, p. 4.

102 Axelsson, George. »15,000 Armed Danes Defy Nazi Tanks in Copenhagen«, NYT, July 2, 1944, p. 1.

103 Axelsson, George. »Foe Starves Danes Into Ending Strike«, NYT, July 3, 1944, p. 1.

104 McCormick, Anne O'Hare. »Abroad: Even Denmark Takes the Offensive«, NYT, July 3, 1943, p. 10.

The July 4th's Associated Press page-1 story set a much different tone, trumpeting the continuation of the strike and this story included much DPT sourced material, a large page 1 photograph of Danes manning barricades in the Nørrebro neighborhood of Copenhagen, and a page 7 continuation of the story also included a dramatic photo of a German sympathizer's store going up in flames.¹⁰⁵ These were the only contemporary photos out of occupied Denmark to be used in a front-page story about Denmark during the entire occupation.¹⁰⁶

The dramatic news stories and pictures of the People's Strike created a strong positive resonance in the Time's opinion pieces. The Swedish newspaper, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, was quoted as hailing Denmark for subjecting Germany to the »'most effective nerve war'« they had ever faced in an occupied country and that »'the Danes, instead, have taken the offensive.'«¹⁰⁷ McCormick described the perception that the Strike had come out of nowhere: »Reports of trouble have been so few that the outside world assumed that all was comparatively quiet in Denmark. The news of a full-sized revolt among the Danes is therefore all the more startling.«¹⁰⁸ By July 5th, the paper was announcing victory to the Danes¹⁰⁹ and Denmark was held up to the world as »a model of mass resistance, and successful resistance at that«, while Germany was mocked as having »surrendered«, »lost«, and being »a master race in defeat.«¹¹⁰ The American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, lauded the Danish population and extended membership in the Allied cause: »Their stand, inspired by leaders within and without Denmark, associates them with the people of the other countries who firmly resist the German oppressors and whose conduct sets an example to the people of other lands whose craven leaders succumbed to the false promises of the Nazis.«¹¹¹

Front-Page Coverage of Denmark

Another way to measure the importance of the August Rebellion and

105 »Danish Patriots in Demonstration Against Nazi Rule« and »The Citizens of Copenhagen Show Their Hatred for the Germans«, NYT, July 4, 1944, pp. 1 and 7.

106 »Danish Patriots in Demonstration Against Nazi Rule« and »The Citizens of Copenhagen Show Their Hatred for the Germans«, NYT, July 4, 1944, pp. 1 and 7.

107 Ibid. p. 6.

108 McCormick, Anne O'Hare. »Abroad: Even Denmark Takes the Offensive«, NYT, July 3, 1943, p. 10.

109 »Germans Yield in Danish Strike«, NYT, July 5, 1944, p. 1.

110 Daniels, E. C. »Danes Have Risen Against Nazi Yoke«, NYT, July 9, 1944, p. E5.

111 »Hull Hails Denmark for Combating Nazis«, NYT, July 13, 1944, p. 3.

the People's Strike in a *New York Times*' reading audience is to assess front-page coverage of Denmark during occupation. There were 27 stories that mentioned Denmark, but Denmark was not always the focus of the story. Five of the stories have very minimal copy about Denmark. For example, in the July 20, 1941 »British open 'V' Nerve War, Churchill Spurs Resistance« story about the V campaign in occupied countries the only mention of Denmark came in a German quote about the V-sign standing for Viktoria: »In Prague the sign appears on walls, on street cars and buses. The same thing has happened in Cracow, Warsaw, and other Polish towns, and in Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium—in short, everywhere where German troops are to be found.« The 21 remaining front-page stories were:

1. April 9, 1940: »Germans Occupy Denmark, Attack Oslo«, lead story, banner headline, 24 paragraphs.
2. Nov. 27, 1941: »Riots in Copenhagen Over Pact Reported«, 4 paragraph story.
3. Oct. 20, 1942: »Danish King Injured in Fall From Horse«, 15 paragraph story.
4. Jan. 22, 1943: »Reich Forbids Folketing Election in Denmark on Democratic Basis«, 9-paragraph story.
5. March 4, 1943: »German Soldiers Bar Invasion Song«, 3 paragraph story on German troops refusing to sing »Wir fahren gegen Engeland« in Viborg.
6. Aug. 22, 1943: »Danish Soldiers Fight Germans, Premier Warns of Nazi Revenge«, 6 paragraphs.
7. August 29, 1943: »Danes Reject Reich Terms; German Army Rule Feared«, 11 paragraphs.
8. August 29, 1943: »War News Summarized«, 1 paragraph.
9. August 30, 1943: »Trouble in Denmark for the Germans, Martial Law Set, Germans Depose Cabinet—King Believed Held in Summer Palace, Fighting Copenhagen, Troops, Sailors and Civilians Battle Reich Soldiers—300 Tanks Patrol the City«, Map, 2 photos, 17 paragraphs.
10. August 31, 1943: »Danish Refugees Drowned as Planes Sink Their Boat«, 14 paragraphs.
11. April 18, 1944: »German Invasion Alarm Growing, Jutland Coast is Reported Mined«, 9 paragraphs, only 2 pars. about Denmark.

12. April 27, 1944: »Nazi Rush Troops, Cut Off Denmark«, 13 paragraphs.
13. April 28, 1944: »British Minimize Swedes' Fears«, 4 paragraphs about Denmark in 11-paragraph story.
14. May 8, 1944: »Germans Fail in Trickery to Dig Out Underground«, 15 paragraph story with 6 paragraphs about *Schalburgtage*, *Clearingmord* (both terms signifying German means of retaliation in order to dampen popular enthusiasm for the Resistance), and black propaganda in Denmark.
15. July 1, 1944: »Copenhagen Paralyzed by Strike, Nazi Patrols Machine-Gun Crowd«, 8 paragraphs.
16. July 2, 1944: »15,000 Armed Danes Defy Nazi Tanks in Copenhagen«, 13 paragraphs.
17. July 3, 1944: »Foe Starves Danes into Ending Strike«, 11 paragraphs.
18. July 4, 1944: »Danes Push Strike, Defy Bomb Threat«. Big photo of barricade in Vesterbro on p. 1, second big photo of burning store on p. 7 continuance of story. 8 paragraphs.
19. July 5, 1944, »Germans Yield in Danish Strike, Patriots Wreck Port of Aarhus«, 10 paragraphs.
20. September 20, 1944: »Danish Police Fight Germans, Force of 12,000 is Imprisoned«, 8 paragraphs.
21. May 1, 1945: »Nazis in Denmark Seen Capitulating«, 8 paragraphs.

These front-page stories can be characterized several ways:

1. Ten of the stories were one-shot stories on the front page. The remaining 11 are grouped around 3 events: August rebellion reported for 3 days from August 29-August 31, 1943; German troop movement scare for two days from April 27-28, 1944; and the Copenhagen People's Strike for 5 days from July 1-5, 1944.
2. The total number of paragraphs in the 21 stories (including the content of stories that continued to back pages) was 196. Over half of the coverage (103 paragraphs) was devoted to mass movements of defiance (Anti-Comintern Pact [4], August Rebellion [49], and the Copenhagen People's Strike [50]). A further eight [8] covered the

roundup of Danish police. The rest of front-page coverage focused on the German military in Denmark [30]; German policies [15]; the King falling off his horse [15]; and the April 9, 1940 occupation [24].

3. The chronology of front-page coverage is as follows:

Year	# of Stories	# of Paragraphs
1940	1	24
1941	1	4
1942	1	15
1943	7	61
1944	10	83
1945	1	8

The front-page coverage was heavily weighted towards the popular manifestations of resistance to German occupation, events that were not characterized by the NYT as unpopular and opposed by official Denmark. This view of a united Danish front against the Germans could only be reinforced incrementally by the headlines of smaller stories buried in the inside pages where it was »Danes«, not a few hundred Danes, carrying out the campaign of sabotage.

The Copenhagen People's Strike was the defining moment in the NYT's coverage of Denmark in its shifting reputation from a helpless, servile country provisioning Nazi Germany to »Fighting Denmark«,¹¹² a country which in this revised view had always hated and actively resisted the Nazis. This simplification of an extraordinarily complex occupation dynamic in Denmark and the conflation of bitterly opposed conceptions of appropriate Danish policy between the official Danish system and the Resistance had its roots in stoic King stories, the passive »cold shoulder« stories, and the portrayal of any mildly grudging tone to Danish submission as resistance. The August Rebellion—a successful popular revolt against the Danish system's self-seeking accommodation

112 »Countryman Hails Danish Aid in War«, NYT, January 7, 1945, p. 12; »News Again from Denmark«, NYT, May 3, 1945, p. 22; and »Underground War Speeded Foe's Fall«, NYT, May 8, 1945, p. 10.

to Germany—and the NYT’s analysis of the watershed event, illustrates this simplistic conflation with clarity and brevity. A column, entitled »Denmark the Victorious«, explained the situation as »Over night a peaceful population became ferocious. In form the Danish Government collapsed under Nazi violence. In spirit it took on immortality.«¹¹³ Has a failed government and popularly repudiated government policy ever gotten better press?!

After August 1943, the back-dated continuity of active resistance all the way to the start of the occupation became the standard NYT version of history. A late August 1943 »Abroad« column asserted that »From the very first Copenhagen’s great star-shaped prison was filled with dissident Danes.«¹¹⁴ The same column on July 3 1944 said »The truth is that there has been only surface quiet in Denmark. The Copenhagen rising, far from being sudden, was the climax of an unreported but methodical campaign of sabotage and resistance.«¹¹⁵ Another columnist falsely claimed that »The underground Danish Freedom Council . . . has met regularly since the German occupation.«¹¹⁶ An historical round-up in a September 20, 1944 column headlined »Insurgent Denmark«, began with, »The history of relations between the Danes and their ‘protectors’ has been a story of stubborn Danish resistance. Sabotage of German plans has continued year after year.«¹¹⁷ In early 1945 the moniker »Fighting Denmark«, with its all-encompassing ring to it, was introduced into the newspaper,¹¹⁸ a name that became the shorthand for Denmark’s occupation experience and history.¹¹⁹ An account of General Eisenhower’s praise for the Danish Resistance in March of 1945 ended with the newspaper’s assessment that »Through its seething underground the whole nation is in revolt.«¹²⁰ On the eve of final liberation the NYT hailed Denmark, saying, »The Danes are a courageous people, they did not cringe or submit. By last June they were in open revolt.«¹²¹

113 »Denmark the Victorious«, NYT, August 31, 1943, p. 16.

114 »Abroad, Trouble in Denmark«, NYT, August 29, 1943, p. E2.

115 »Abroad, Even Denmark Takes the Offensive«, NYT, July 3, 1944, p. 10.

116 Daniels, E. C. »Danes Have Risen Against Nazi Yoke«, NYT, July 9, 1944, p. E5. The Freedom Council was the Resistance Movement’s leadership body, first organized on September 16, 1943.

117 »Insurgent Denmark«, NYT, September 20, 1940, p. 22. The phrasing here is intriguing and only a very careful, knowledgeable reader would catch that »sabotage of German plans has continued year after year« is a quite different thing than sabotage of Danish war industry working for Germany.

118 »Countryman Hails Danish Aid in War«, NYT, January 7, 1945, p. 12.

119 »Underground War Speeded Foe’s Fall«, NYT, May 8, 1945, p. 10.

120 »Citation for Denmark«, NYT, March 6, 1945, p. 20.

121 »News Again From Denmark«, NYT, May 3, 1945, p. 22.

Denmark, a country whose political system worked so hard to ease the country through the war protected via its model-protectorate-of-the-Reich status, in the end, ironically, was held up as the European model for massive popular resistance to Nazi occupation, and described to American readers in the post-August, 1943 *New York Times* as a whole nation, finally as Fighting Denmark, that resisted Nazi tyranny from the beginning to the end of German occupation.

RESUMÉ

*Fra hjælpeløst offer til heroisk frihedskamp
Udviklingen i nyhedsdækningen af Danmark
i New York Times under den tyske besættelse, 1940-1945*

I artiklen undersøges dækningen af Danmark under den tyske besættelse i *New York Times*, USA's mest dækkende og autoritative nyhedskilde. Med en kombination af kvalitativ og kvantitativ metode spores linjerne i avisens fremstilling af den danske reaktion på besættelsen. I begyndelsen viste *New York Times* et billede af landet som hjælpeløst offer for tysk aggression, men efterhånden som tiden gik, begyndte avisen at lægge vægt på samarbejdspolitikken, hvis førende repræsentanter blev fremstillet i et kritisk lys. Augustoprøret 1943 og folkestrejkerne sommeren 1944 medførte imidlertid et nyt skift i avisens vinkel af stoffet. Den danske befolkning blev nu rost til skyerne for sin djærve og tapre holdning. Til sidst blev ikke kun modstandsbevægelsen, men nationen som helhed krediteret for sin kamp mod det nazistiske tyranni, endda lige fra begyndelsen til slutningen af besættelsen. Det er ironisk, at et land, hvis politiske og forvaltningsmæssige system gennem alle krigsårene så vidt muligt holdt fast ved en tilpasnings- og samarbejdslinje, i det amerikanske nyhedsbillede endte med at fremstå som et mønster på vedvarende national kampvilje og folkelig modstand.