MISCELLANEOUS

KONTAKT MED ENGLAND 1940–1943 and HEMMELEIG AL-
LIANCE 1943–1945. By Jorgen Haestrup. (Copenhagen:
Thaning og Appels Forlag. 1959.)

Here is a chronological analysis of the Danish underground
movement during the Nazi occupation unique in its scholar-
ship, objectivity, and comprehensive treatment. Aided by re-
doubtable Danish historians and archivists, the author has
collected and researched a remarkable quantity of authentic
source material and documentation, meticulously and impar-
tially screening it to establish a factual historical record. The
resulting account of the Danish resistance, covering practi-
cally all phases of its intelligence and other clandestine ac-
tivity, is so replete with checked and double-checked detail
that it may lack appeal for the general public. For the seri-
ous student of unconventional warfare in a limited denied
area, however, the books offer a wealth of worth-while lessons.
Their complete picture of that period some twenty years ago
when unconventional warfare was for the first time developed
on an international scale through trial and error is ex-
traordinarily pertinent to the problems that face the intelli-
gence officer today.¹

In 1940 the embryo Danish resistance to Nazi occupation
was an organized secret intelligence effort, conducted by pro-
fessional officers of the subjugated armed forces of Denmark.
Its main initial objective was to re-establish contact across
closed and guarded frontiers with Danish citizens in neutral
Sweden and belligerent England. Adequate contact was in
fact established at such an early date that the British Spe-

¹For two papers in English by Dr. Haestrup, probably the outstanding
historian of the Danish Resistance, see his text published in Euro-
pp. 150–162), a paper delivered at the First International Conference
on the History of the Resistance Movements, and Denmark’s Conne-
cction with the Allied Powers During the Occupation, a paper delivered
at the Second International Conference on the History of the Res-
istance. A popular history of the Danish resistance is contained in
The Savage Canary by David Lampe (London: Cassell and Company,
1957), published in the United States as a paperback under the title
cial Forces were not yet organized to handle requests for assistance from inside occupied Europe and America was still not in the war. The Danish intelligence officers and their collaborators abroad nevertheless went ahead with their across-the-board organization, constantly casting about meanwhile for the right Allied connections at all echelons. Among themselves they established channels through which messages, material, and personnel moved regularly under conditions of maximum security.

During this period their clandestine communications between Denmark and England via neutral Sweden—whence there was access to Germany—were of considerable intelligence value to the Allies. It was well before the Danish population developed a will to resist that Stockholm became the meeting place for intelligence officers from London and Copenhagen.

When popular demand for unconventional action against the German occupation forces gathered momentum, both the British and the Danish intelligence people opposed cooperation with the activists. The UK’s Secret Intelligence Service shied away from the Special Operations Executive, now authorized for purposes of covert action and in the early stages of activation. Professional Danish intelligence operators similarly steered clear of the up-and-coming resistance cadres. They were not about to have their capabilities compromised by the uncoordinated efforts and hazardous activities of amateurs.

This conflict of basic interests is described in interesting and factual detail, along with the parallel conflicts among the activists themselves—the many behind-the-scenes organizational squabbles and shenanigans between the indigenous resistance workers and their SOE would-be supporters. Initially the SOE efforts were so inadequate and so disastrous that the entire budding underground became discouraged and disgusted. There was an almost complete loss of confidence in the intentions and competence of the unconventional warriors in London and elsewhere abroad.

As methods, techniques, and general know-how improved confidence was restored, however; and much later, towards the end of the war, it was also realized and proved that good
intelligence creates effective covert action just as surely as good covert action produces a wealth of worth-while intelligence. Finally the two were unified in a closely coordinated effort under the same leadership, with remarkable results.

The geographical size and social organization of Denmark made it an exceptionally difficult place to carry out militant resistance operations. Mr. Hastrup makes the useful point that the Danish Communist Party got off to a good start before anyone else for the simple reason that the Communists in any case function in secrecy and under routine operational discipline. The Danish Communists received no assistance from the Soviet Union, however. Attempted approaches to Moscow showed that the Russians were remarkably ignorant of conditions in occupied Denmark and far too busy with their own war anyway. In due course the Communist cadres, working closely with cadres from the intelligentsia in the cities and in rural areas, became invaluable in the massive sabotage operations for which the Danish underground became famous in Europe.

Of particular interest is the description of the formation of the Danish "Freedom Council," composed of national leaders of consequence and integrity. This secret group of top-level executives, politicians, and intellectuals actually functioned as the supreme command of all resistance. They were practical executives who managed to set up exceptionally efficient across-the-board operational management. Their identities were a carefully guarded secret, but they exercised complete control over all underground cadres regardless of political or professional affiliations. No acts of sabotage were carried out unless specifically approved and ordered by the Council. In addition, the Freedom Council eventually handled or supervised all clandestine contacts with the Free Danes outside Denmark, as well as with all echelons of the Allied war effort in any way connected with the situation in occupied Denmark.

After a cumbersome, painful, and almost hopeless beginning, the Danish underground thus achieved excellent and profitable results against the Nazi invaders. After the German surrender only token Allied forces moved into Denmark, and the Freedom Council maintained control until law and order were soon restored through genuine democratic pro-
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cedures. These books contain monumental evidence that the keys to success in large clandestine operations are, first, competent leadership, and second, operational discipline.