

**Book review by
Anonymous of Kontakt
med England (1940-1943)
and Hemmelig Alliance
(1943-1945) by Jorgen
Haestrup**

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KONTAKT MED ENGLAND 1940-1943 and HEMMELIG ALLIANCE 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 scholarship, objectivity, and comprehensive treatment. Aided by redoubtable Danish historians and archivists, the author has collected and researched a remarkable quantity of authentic source material and documentation, meticulously and impartially screening it to establish a factual historical record. The resulting account of the Danish resistance, covering practically all phases of its intelligence and other clandestine activity, is so replete with checked and double-checked detail that it may lack appeal for the general public. For the serious 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 extraordinarily pertinent to the problems that face the intelligence officer today.¹

In 1940 the embryo Danish resistance to Nazi occupation was an organized secret intelligence effort, conducted by professional 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 Special 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 procedures. These books contain monumental evidence that the keys to success in large clandestine operations are, first, competent leadership, and second, operational discipline.

1 For two papers in English by Dr. Haestrup, probably the outstanding historian of the Danish Resistance, see his text published in *European Resistance Movements 1935-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1960, pp. 150-162), a paper delivered at the First International Conference on the History of the Resistance Movements, and *Denmark's Connection with the Allied Powers During the Occupation*, a paper delivered at the Second International Conference on the History of the Resistance. 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 *The Danish*

Resistance (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1960).

Posted: May 08, 2007 07:46 AM