While Danish reactions to German occupation showed a broad development from cooperation to resistance, the more detailed picture of political thought and action during those five years presented considerable complexity. Almost from the beginning and to the very end of the occupation there were instances of both cooperation and resistance. Often the two were mixed, with public bodies, private institutions – as well as groups and individuals – each finding their own, often shifting, balance between cooperating with and resisting the authorities of the occupying power. Moreover, there were different types and degrees of the two kinds of reaction.

Rather than attempting a chronological sketch of the whole complex and chequered development, it will be more useful here to construct a spectrum of reactions, ranging from wholehearted support of the occupying power to armed resistance. Such a structure may be divided into three segments, namely support, cooperation and opposition, and each of them divided into two parts, allowing for differences of nature and degree within each of the three broad kinds of reaction. Within each of the six subsections it will be possible to present a number of significant instances of particular types of reaction, discuss their motivations and indicate their influence.

2.1 Support

First a few distinctions between support and cooperation, its contiguous segment in the spectrum, will be to the point. Whereas cooperation usually implies a degree of mutuality between the parties, support, as
the word will be used here, typically denotes a more subsidiary role for the supporting party. While cooperation generally rests on a measure of common ground between the parties, support is more likely to spring from some kind of identification with the party receiving the support. The most active form of support can be described as collaboration, an activity which may be defined as requiring a more complete commitment than mere cooperation.

Danish supportive reactions to German occupation will be considered under two headings, wholehearted support and opportunistic service. The former type was largely ideologically motivated, the latter much more economically conditioned. The former came from ethnic organizations, political parties and uniformed corps of various kinds, the latter more from private companies and individuals. Though there were instances of both types throughout the period, such support was by far the least common of all the Danish reactions to German occupation distinguished here.

Wholehearted support

The two foremost institutional sources of the more devoted type of support for the occupying forces in Denmark, and the Nazi regime in Germany, were the organizations of the German minority in North Schleswig and Denmark’s National Socialist Labour Party (DNSAP). The Germans in North Schleswig, since 1920 again part of Denmark, numbered about 30,000 during the occupation. In the general election in April 1939 they had gained about 15,000 votes, which had given them just one seat in the Danish parliament. Thoroughly Nazified well before the war, they had set up a number of Nazistic organizations and arranged various provocative uniformed demonstrations. Their ultimate goal had been another shift of the Danish–German border. Their masters in Berlin, however, had failed to support them in that enterprise, and had made no move to change their line after the invasion.

Always ready to comply with directives issued by the Nazi authorities in Germany, the minority organizations concentrated their efforts during the occupation on serving German interests in economic and cultural matters. They also responded positively to calls for young people to report for military service, with the result that a total of about 2,000 joined the armed forces of Germany, of whom more than a third were killed in action. Moreover, the German minority set up a home guard and an anti-sabotage guard of its own. On the grounds of the absence of
so many of their men, as soldiers or workers in Germany, the minority authorities declared themselves unwilling to let their members vote in the general and local elections of 1943. In the general election, however, the Germans in North Schleswig appear to have cast their votes for DNSAP rather than abstain.

DNSAP was established in 1930 but not represented in parliament till after the election in 1939, where it received 31,000 votes, i.e. 1.8 per cent, and gained three seats. Under its leader Frits Clausen, a physician by profession, it became a faithful imitation of the German Nazi party in both name and style. Its members wore the swastika and greeted each other with raised arm. The programme was taken from Hitler’s Germany, including anti-Semitism, and Mussolini’s Italy, especially the idea of the corporate state. Its membership rose from approximately 5,000 at the outbreak of the war to about 21,000 in the spring of 1943. Yet, in the general election in March that year it received only 43,000 votes, i.e. 2.1 per cent, which again gave it three seats. By the end of the occupation the party, by then under a new leader, still had about 12,000 members, most of the new ones having come from the working class.

With substantial financial support from German sources, for the party as well as for its chief organ Fædrelandet (The Fatherland), DNSAP always steered close to the German authorities. In Copenhagen and other towns, it arranged challenging meetings, provocative demonstrations and uniformed marches, which led to violent clashes with anti-Nazi spectators and Danish police. With its offensive programme and aggressive propaganda, and a leader who struck most Danes as a rather comical figure, the party failed to attract public support outside its own narrow circles. Indeed the chief effect of its pro-German image and bombastic efforts seems to have been to convince the Danish population that to be a Nazi was to be a traitor.

Nor did the party command significant forces of its own. Its storm troopers, numbering only 1 or 2,000 men, had no weapons other than spades. At no stage of the occupation was the party, acting on its own, in a position to bring about a coup. However, DNSAP was not always alone. In the summer of 1940 it entered into tentative cooperation with Landbrugernes Sammenslutning (LS), an extremist agrarian association, and its close associate Bondepartiet, the Farmers’ party with four seats in parliament. With many members who were attracted by Nazi ideology, both of those organizations were against the coalition government and campaigned for a non-party caretaker government on good terms with Germany. In an apparent attempt to prepare the way for a government headed by Frits Clausen, spokesmen of the two organizations
tried unsuccessfully to achieve their anti-parliamentary goal by putting pressure on the king.

When DNSAP, despite its unpopularity, weakness and lack of parliamentary support, for some years remained a threat to the political system and national reputation of Denmark it was because of German political support. Already at the earliest stage of the occupation several highly-placed German officials supported the idea of pressuring the king to accept a Nazi government. In October 1940, when plans for a Nazi takeover were under debate among German authorities, a delegation from the foreign ministry in Berlin visited Copenhagen and had meetings with Frits Clausen and other Nazi leaders. In February–March 1942, we now know, Hitler stated that he in due course wanted Clausen to replace the Danish king, an idea which he brought up again later that year. Subsequently, however, German interest in such plans waned. After the poor showing of the party in the elections of March 1943 economic support from German sources ceased. In the spring of 1944 Clausen had to retire as leader of the party. A year later, after the liberation, the party went into liquidation.

Though DNSAP never achieved its ultimate goal of governmental power under German protection, it did find some ways of assisting the Nazi bid for European domination. It procured political intelligence for the occupying power and played a leading role in the recruitment of Danes for German military service. In 1940 Heinrich Himmler’s Waffen-SS started recruiting in Denmark together with DNSAP and the German minority in North Schleswig. The following year the party collaborated in the recruitment for a new unit, known as Frikorps Danmark.

Established on Himmler’s initiative in June 1941, after the launching of the German attack on the Soviet Union, Frikorps Danmark was conceived as a purely Danish unit under Danish flag but attached to the SS. Volunteers were invited to join the crusade against Bolshevism. Initially the unit was under the command of a Danish officer who was anti-Communist but not pro-Nazi. After training in Germany and Poland, Frikorps Danmark fought on the Eastern Front in 1942–43, and suffered substantial losses. On leave in Denmark in October 1942, its soldiers joined civilian Nazis in violent and provocative disturbances.

No doubt some of the Danish volunteers were adventurers, others men escaping severe unemployment in Denmark. A number were army officers frustrated by the defence policy of the pre-war government and the feeble reaction to the German invasion. But most seem to have been ideologically motivated, whether primarily pro-Nazi or more anti-Communist. After the Winter War, in which many young Danes
volunteered to help Finland against the Soviet Union, some must have seen Hitler’s invasion of Russia as an opportunity to again take up the battle against Bolshevism. Others, however, were fanatical Nazis.

In Denmark, most people soon came to regard all the volunteers simply as traitors. Yet, the establishment and existence of the corps presented a problem for the government. While avoiding a formal recognition of Frikorps Danmark, it gave in to German pressure by allowing Danish officers so inclined to take leave of absence and join the corps. The total number of Danish citizens, including minority Germans, serving with German forces in the war has been estimated as about 7,000.

There were also a few corps of Danes who had volunteered to serve in the armed or the police forces of the occupying power on Danish soil. The most notorious was the Schalburg Corps, called after a DNSAP youth leader who had become the second commandant of Frikorps Danmark and had been killed in action, and led by another officer from that corps. First established, by Himmler, in April 1943 under the name of *Germansk Korps*, its original purposes were to recruit and train soldiers for the Waffen-SS and to prepare the ground in Denmark for the Greater Germanic Reich. It had a military and a civilian and political section as well as a number of more specialized departments, including an intelligence service and terror department. Its foremost functions turned out to be to combat the resistance movement and terrorize the public. In addition to creating a large number of violent incidents, its members informed for the German police. During the mass strike in Copenhagen in 1944 one of the demands of the freedom council was to have the Schalburg Corps withdrawn from the country. After a good deal of reorganization, it was abolished three months before the liberation because of insufficient intake. A number of minor bodies of Danes working for the Germans included the Sommer Corps. Called after its founder, a former commander of the Schalburg Corps, it took on the guarding of German airports and factories working for the Germans. After the war about 700 members of the Schalburg Corps were prosecuted and given heavy sentences. Ten, including its first commandant, were executed.

After the arrest of the police officers in September 1944, an auxiliary police unit was set up in Copenhagen under the name of Hipo (an abbreviation of Hilfspolizei). Made up of about 550 uniformed Danes, it was under German control. Its function was to combat illegal activity. Recruited partly from within the Schalburg Corps, it became a branch of the civilian intelligence service of that organization. Patrolling the streets of Copenhagen, its members, sometimes working together with
Danish terrorist gangs, became notorious for shooting people at random and carrying out explosions and other acts of terror, and for arresting suspects and torturing prisoners. Up to, and including, the days of liberation Hipo men contributed to the horrors and the insecurity of life in a city without a proper police force. After the war they received prison sentences averaging 11 years.

Finally, a form of collaboration encouraged and organized by German or pro-German bodies but performed by Danish individuals must be mentioned, namely informing. Infiltration by informers was already a problem in the earlier stages of resistance but became more serious after August 1943, when the Gestapo operated independently and built up its own network of information gathering. For the resistance movement, the dangers presented by informing were so great that the freedom council decided to permit the liquidation of known informers. Approximately 400 people were shot, most towards the end of the occupation and nearly 10 per cent of them women. While it is conceivable that some informers, at least in the early years of resistance, were misled by ministerial admonishments against engaging in sabotage or by professional officiousness of members of the Danish police force, others no doubt informed mainly for monetary reward. Many, however, were motivated by ideological convictions, whether pro-German Nazism or anti-communism.

The sources of wholehearted support for the occupying power and its Nazi programme which have been presented here were of little significance in terms of direct effect on public opinion in Denmark. Motivated largely by ideological fanaticism, of one kind or another, and embodied through small, marginal parties and groups or in novel, militant corps and units, they failed to attract the larger public or influence the established institutions and organizations of the country. Far from helping to build bridges between the authorities and political programme of the occupying power and the ministries and policy of the Danish government, they rather served to emphasize the difference, at least in principle, between resolute collaboration and unavoidable cooperation with the Germans. The goals and means, character and behaviour of most Nazi activists and many members of the various auxiliary military and police units undoubtedly helped to develop and shape an enemy image of both the Germans and their locally recruited henchmen. Thus, paradoxically, the ultimate effect of such pro-German reactions to the occupation may have been to help prepare the way for popular acceptance of the resistance movement in the later years of the occupation.
Opportunistic service

If the wholehearted sort of pro-German activity helped to accentuate the distinction between collaboration and cooperation, the type of support that was motivated largely by considerations of expediency rather tended to blur that dividing line. Rarely inspired by pro-Nazi sympathies, activity of this kind might be seen as falling within a grey area between supposedly patriotic and decidedly unpatriotic behaviour. The companies, groups or individuals who, for economic advantage or out of need, provided certain services for the occupying power stood somewhere in between officials engaged in governmentally approved forms of cooperation with the Germans and the parties involved in blatant collaboration. Occasionally their predicament was, in certain respects, similar to that of public bodies which had to deal with the German authorities, in the sense that both might be acting from a combination of need and advantage. However, while the public bodies in principle were motivated by considerations of national interest and political necessity, the non-governmental parties were usually moved by more private calculations. Often the latter had more choice when deciding whether or not to provide the service required, and hence more responsibility for the decisions taken. What we are dealing with here are types of parties who, often in politically confusing and economically difficult situations, allowed themselves to take advantage of a particular constellation of circumstances and draw substantial benefits from serving the occupying power in some way or other.

The foremost instances of such support were those of the so-called værnemagere (a pun on the Danish word for Wehrmacht), companies which benefited unduly from carrying out work for the occupying power or producing goods for German importers. Almost immediately after the invasion the German authorities announced that they intended to build new airports in Jutland and were prepared to have the work done by their own companies, using either German workers or a conscripted Danish labour force. As a lesser evil, the government preferred to prevail upon Danish contractors to carry out the work with Danish workers. That solution, which prevented the arrival in Denmark of a large number of German workers, gave employment to many Danes without work and secured a modest degree of Danish control of the whole enterprise, was accepted by the Germans. It also became the model for the construction of many of the various German fortifications established on Danish soil during the following years.
In the same period, a growing number of Danish industrial firms entered into business relations with Germany, exporting manufactured goods, mainly in return for coal and raw materials. While accepting such business as not only unavoidable but also essential for the economy of the country, the Danish authorities endeavoured to control prices and profits, maintain the balance between export of goods and import of raw materials, prevent a distortion of traditional Danish industry and to exclude the supply of goods which constituted a direct contribution to German war efforts. However, official attempts to maintain some control of the companies involved, whether contractors or exporters, were not always successful.

For a contractor to respond to Danish ministerial pressure to take on major projects for the Germans was from the outset deemed a patriotic act by those who knew the circumstances. And for a manufacturer to give in to German demands and start exporting to Germany was also considered acceptable, provided it was done as far as possible within the guidelines indicated by the Danish government. But to charge hugely excessive payment for the services rendered or set abnormally high prices for the goods exported was not regarded as respectable practice. Nor was it in order for a manufacturer himself to institute the relationship with the Germans, or to change his line of manufacture in order to suit German needs. All such acts were deemed unpatriotic, particularly when seen in retrospect. Since the costs of constructing German fortifications on Danish soil were charged to a special account with the Danish National Bank and the excess of the value of Danish exports over that of imports from Germany was charged to a clearing account with the same bank, and since both of those accounts were guaranteed by the Danish state, any party exploiting the opportunities offered by dealing with the Germans was in effect doing so at the expense of the Danish nation. Having become increasingly unpopular in the course of the war, a substantial number of værnemagere were arrested and tried after the liberation. Under laws introduced retrospectively in response to the wishes of the freedom council, only relatively few were imprisoned and had their profits confiscated. Many were able to plead in their defence that the government or the civil servants had prompted them to collaborate with the Germans.

Another type of service, again motivated much more by financial need or advantage than by ideological convictions or sympathies, also came about as a result of German pressures. In the spring of 1940, when Denmark and Germany were negotiating a trade agreement, the Germans decided to make additional supplies of coal, which were
essential for Danish industry, dependent on workers from Denmark helping to man the mines. Instead, the Danish negotiators agreed to provide labour for other kinds of work in Germany. Thus Denmark not only avoided conscription of workers for service abroad but also eased its unemployment problem, which was particularly severe in that year. While nobody may have been downright compelled, some workers were pressurized and many encouraged by the Danish employment service to take jobs with German employers. The number of people who escaped unemployment in this manner, or simply found better-paid work abroad, culminated in 1941, when about 36,600 left for Germany and another 4,000 took jobs for the Germans in Norway. Many of those in Germany apparently ended up working in the armaments industry. The people who took work in Germany usually transferred part of their wages to Denmark over the clearing account, thereby in effect adding to the financial burden of their country. After the war, only those who had served as uniformed guards were prosecuted.

Finally two other sets of individuals may be mentioned briefly, under the heading of opportunistic service to the occupying forces, namely those informers who committed their deeds simply or mainly for monetary reward and the women who associated with German soldiers. While some of the former were retained by the German police, others worked on an ad hoc basis, collecting a modest reward for each case. Perhaps the women may be divided along similar lines, with some involved in a close relationship and others having only casual relations.

As in other countries in north-western Europe deemed co-racialist, the German authorities permitted sexual relations between their soldiers and willing local women. The number of Danish women who failed to follow the unofficial rule of cold-shouldering all Germans must have been fairly substantial, because about 5,500 children were registered as Danish–German during the occupation. The fraternization caused some friction between the Danish and the German authorities charged with managing it. It also made the women highly unpopular with the general public. Usually referred to as ‘field-mattresses’, some of them were hunted down by youthful crowds and publicly humiliated, typically by having their hair cut very short and their clothes stripped off. After the liberation about 300 women who had had relations with German soldiers were convicted of informing.

Though support for the occupying power took many different forms, in general it remained insignificant in terms of both the number of people involved and the degree of political influence exerted.
The number engaged in any kind of outright collaboration never exceeded a few per cent of the population. In the course of the war, many people grew increasingly hostile towards those who had chosen, or agreed, to support or serve the Germans, even towards those who had been requested or encouraged by Danish authorities to do so. The only real threat presented by collaboration was that of a Nazi takeover of government with German support. During the first two years of the occupation that risk was a decisive consideration for the Danish political system.

Above all, the Danish government was not directly involved in any of the kinds of collaboration distinguished here. When individual ministers or government agencies prevailed upon contractors to undertake projects or put pressure on unemployed workers to accept work for the Germans, they usually did so in order to avoid more onerous arrangements proposed by the Germans. As they saw it, they were acting out of necessity or in the national interest. Thus, it is not under the heading of support for, but of cooperation with German authorities that such attitudes and behaviour must be considered.

### 2.2 Cooperation

As distinct from collaboration, typically driven by ideological commitment or opportunistic calculation, cooperation was in principle motivated by patriotic considerations. For those in positions of responsibility, the overriding concern was to avoid the installation of a Nazi government, or direct rule by the occupying power, and to maintain a democratic government able to protect the population and institutions of the country. In a situation of military occupation by an overwhelming power, this might be achieved only through some form of political interaction with the authorities of the occupying power. From an early stage of the occupation the nature and degree of such interaction became a subject of some disagreement among the political leaders and other influential people. While some found it necessary or prudent deliberately to enter into limited cooperation with the occupying authorities, others thought it possible and wiser not to go beyond protracted negotiation and minimal concessions. The former searched for common ground between the parties. The latter strove for minimal involvement with the adversary.
Willing cooperation

The foremost exponent of deliberate cooperation with the German authorities was Erik Scavenius. Decidedly a man of the realist tradition of thought about international politics, he enjoyed the advantages but also shared some of the weaknesses of that approach to the theory and practice of politics among nations. At an early stage of his diplomatic career, before the First World War, when he was serving in Berlin and taking an interest in North Schleswig, he had made certain observations and reached some conclusions about the nature of international relations. While people might be moved by national sentiments and liberal ideas, policy, he had noticed, was based more on constitutional doctrines and legal rights. However, the actual outcome of an international conflict, he had found, was determined essentially by military power. In the same years, again according to his memoirs, he had given some thought to the foreign and security policy of Denmark, and had developed certain ideas about its role and place in international politics which later were to guide him as foreign minister. To avoid becoming embroiled in the wars of other states, he had concluded, Denmark must seek to balance between those great powers whose political interaction was decisive for its fate. Second, as a result of its geographical location, Denmark had to accept its dependence on the power dominating North Germany, since 1871 the German Empire, and adjust its foreign policy accordingly.¹

The same points were made, in a more polemical form, in a book based on an account prepared by Scavenius in 1944 in defence of Danish policy towards Germany before and during the occupation. In the preface, the author was sarcastic about the opinion, held by a large section of the public, that relations with foreign countries must be governed by emotion rather than intellect. The decisive factors in the formulation of Danish foreign policy, he maintained, were the European balance of power and Denmark's position in relation to the nearest great powers. As a continuation of the North German plain with no significant physical obstacles and with only limited natural resources and armed forces, Denmark was without military options against Germany. Whether one liked it or not, that was the power-political basis on which the country had to formulate its policy and manage its relations with Germany. As in the First World War, Scavenius's conduct of foreign relations was motivated not only by a deep sense of responsibility and a clear intellectual commitment but also by power-political convictions marked by a degree of geopolitical determinism.²
No sooner had he decided, after strong pressure from Munch in particular, to accept the post of foreign minister in the Stauning government formed in July 1940 than Scavenius put his stamp on Danish conduct of relations with Germany. Critical of the passive and procrastinating tactics of his predecessor, which he thought too dangerous in a situation where military victories had boosted the self-confidence and determination of Hitler’s regime, he believed that it was wiser for Denmark to demonstrate its willingness to cooperate with Germany in various fields. In a declaration approved by Stauning and issued on 8 July, Scavenius surveyed the foreign policy of Denmark since the First World War and pointed out that it had always followed a line favourable to the great neighbour to the south. The crucial passage came at the end:

With the great German victories, which have struck the world with surprise and admiration, a new time has dawned for Europe which will involve a reorganization politically and economically under German leadership. Here it will be Denmark’s task to find its place in a necessary and mutual active cooperation with Greater Germany. The Danish people trusts that it will be able to retain its independence in the new European order, and hopes to find understanding for its peculiarity and for its traditionally peaceful political and social development.3

In its humble style, which many Danes found offensive, that declaration revealed Scavenius’s lack of feeling for, or indifference to, public opinion. More important, the expectation that Germany would win the war and remain the dominant power in Europe, on which his projection for Denmark’s future role rested, proved a serious misjudgement. It was of course an opinion shared by many people in the first year of hostilities, not only in Denmark but in most parts of Continental Europe. For Scavenius, of a pessimistic temperament and long in the habit of focusing on the military dimension of power, it seemed a safe assumption on which to base his conduct of relations with the occupying power. However, though stylistically unfortunate and, ultimately, politically unsound, Scavenius’s statement of intent was in no way treacherous. His decision to seek cooperation with Germany was motivated by reason-of-state considerations. In 1940 he was convinced that the course he was proposing was the safest, perhaps the only, way of maintaining the independence of his country and protecting the interests of its people in post-war Europe. More immediately, he saw it as the best way of warding off a Nazi rule of Denmark.
When the declaration of 8 July reached Berlin, German officials were given to understand that Denmark was prepared to discuss future economic cooperation even before a European peace settlement had been accomplished. Before the end of the month they proposed a customs and monetary union between the two countries. Despite the highly disturbing implications of such a project, Scavenius thought it advisable to enter into negotiations. When the Germans presented a preliminary framework agreement which was totally unacceptable to the Danes, Scavenius still wanted to continue negotiations and proceeded to draw up a counter proposal. Here, however, he met strong opposition from most of his fellow ministers, the committee of parliamentary representatives and the king as well as from the big trade organizations. Fortunately, the German proposal met some resistance from trade interests within Germany itself, which made it possible eventually to discontinue the negotiations. Thus Denmark avoided becoming a founding member of an abortive Neuropa.

Other controversial goodwill measures sponsored or approved by Scavenius met with less determined opposition from his colleagues. On the initiative of the foreign ministry, a Danish–German Society was established in July, with Peter Knutzen, director general of the state railways, as chairman. Such a society could be justified on the grounds that it would be desirable for German officials and officers serving in Denmark to meet Danes other than the Nazi or pro-German set they usually encountered. The following summer the government tolerated the formation of Frikorps Danmark and allowed Danish officers so inclined to join and fight among German units on the Eastern front.

More controversial was the accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact, which Germany and Japan had concluded on 25 November 1936 and revived after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. At very short notice, the German minister made it clear that Denmark was expected to join a small group of countries, including Finland, which would meet in Berlin in November to celebrate the anniversary and renew the pact. Scavenius was immediately of the opinion that Denmark had to accept the invitation, but met strong opposition from most other ministers and the committee of parliamentary representatives. In response to rapidly increasing German pressure, the king, the government and the parliamentary representatives soon settled for a conditional accession to the pact. Though Scavenius had to struggle to uphold the agreed qualifications, he reached Berlin in time dutifully to represent Denmark at the ceremony. However, on the day of the celebrations a few hundred students demonstrated in Copenhagen against
the decision to accede to the pact. They appealed to the king to reject outright all attempts to interfere in the country’s domestic affairs and attacked Scavenius and his policy towards Germany.

A year later, the so-called telegram crisis was resolved only when Scavenius agreed to German demands that he head a new government in which he would remain in charge of foreign affairs. The crisis blew up when Hitler, already dissatisfied with developments in Denmark and upset by reports of widespread anti-German feeling in the country, became furious on receiving a rather curt acknowledgement of his customary message of birthday congratulations to the Danish king. The diplomats were recalled, and the fairly accommodating and tactful commanding officer of the German forces in Denmark was replaced by general von Hanneken, a much more authoritarian type. After a month of anxious uncertainty about Hitler’s intentions for Denmark, Scavenius was called to Berlin for a long meeting with Ribbentrop. The German foreign minister insisted on having the anti-German Buhl government replaced by one which included not only representatives of the trade unions but also ministers with pro-Nazi sympathies. Scavenius rejected the latter condition as well as a suggestion that he should take the part of prime minister himself.

Back in Copenhagen, he argued that the only way out of the crisis would be to accept Ribbentrop’s proposal for a change of government as a basis for negotiation. The so-called political ministers and the party leaders insisted on having the German demands reduced substantially. In particular, they wanted to retain Buhl as prime minister. After a confrontation with Scavenius, they gave way and started looking for a suitable person to lead a new government. When they failed to find a willing and acceptable candidate Werner Best, newly arrived as Germany’s permanent minister in Denmark, decided that the only acceptable solution was to have Scavenius in that post. After intense debate among ministers and parliamentary representatives, and a helpful contribution from the crown prince on behalf of the king, it was agreed to accept Scavenius as prime minister, despite the suspicions he had aroused, among Conservative and Liberal leaders in particular, and the unpopularity he was likely to incur in the country as the choice of the Germans. Round him, as prime minister as well as foreign minister, a new government was formed, with many of the old ministers retained. Having had Scavenius at the helm for well over two years, the decision-makers did not dare disrupt the established relationship with the occupying power.

During the following 10 months, till the rebellion in August 1943, Scavenius maintained the policy of willing but limited cooperation with
Germany. Engaged in a constant duel of negotiation with Best, who for reasons of his own wanted the Danish government to stay in power, he dealt with one imminent danger after another as best as he could, while all along playing for time. Thus he acted as a shield between the occupying power and the Danish population. Though becoming ever more unpopular with a growing section of the public, he enjoyed the explicit or tacit support of most ministers and parliamentary representatives, practically all national and local authorities and the leading trade organizations as well as of the Danish radio and the bulk of the legitimate press.

The outstanding result of the Danish policy of willing cooperation in this period was the parliamentary elections in March 1943. According to the country’s constitution, regular elections were due by the beginning of April. The political leaders assumed that the occupying power, which in 1941 had ruled out municipal elections in order to avoid civil disturbances, would demand a postponement. However, they found that the new plenipotentiary, Werner Best, preferred to go ahead and, moreover, was able to secure the support of his masters in Berlin. The politicians, though well aware of the risks and difficulties involved, on balance preferred to have the elections forthwith. Their main reason was that a parliament resting on a breach of constitutional law would lack formal legitimacy. This would weaken the political system, and could even serve as a pretext for the occupying power imposing a government that would lack parliamentary cover. Ultimately, the proclaimed Danish sovereignty was at stake.

The German authorities gave their consent on three conditions: there would be some restraint on the election campaign; no criticism of the occupying power; and some protection for the German minority in the country. The themes of the campaign became democracy and national solidarity, instead of disagreements among the governing parties. The day of the elections, 23 March, was celebrated as a national holiday. The turnout was 89.5 per cent, the highest ever recorded, with 95 per cent of the votes supporting the parties of the coalition.

Though the party leaders had been careful to distance themselves from Scavenius in the conduct of their campaigns, the result of the elections was seen as a victory for the policy of cooperation. Moreover, it spelt the end of DNSAP, which again secured only three seats. With the DKP banned, Communists had to be excluded from the elections.

Among Scavenius’s ministerial colleagues, some of his staunchest supporters were men without party-political attachments. One was Gunnar Larsen, a young and prominent industrialist who joined the ministry formed by Stauning in July 1940 and remained minister of
public works till the end of the occupation. In matters of foreign affairs, he identified with the policy of active cooperation with the occupying power. His first task was to lead the delegation that went to Germany to negotiate a customs and monetary union. Several later projects initiated or managed by him included the setting up of a committee in the autumn of 1941 to explore the economic possibilities for Danish industry and trade in the Soviet territories then occupied by German forces. A few other Danish–German enterprises of his turned out to be equally fruitless.

Larsen defended several of his major public-works projects in terms of their potential for reducing unemployment, which since the early 1930s had been one of the most important political and economic problems of the country. Some of his governmental colleagues, however, suspected that he, a successful businessman with an international horizon, was not blind to other potential advantages of such projects, perhaps including some affecting his private business interests. His relations with the professional politicians were further complicated by a general feeling that, like Scavenius, he was less than enthusiastic about the parliamentary system and its tedious procedures. In the illegal press, he was attacked not only for the nature of his policies but also for a tendency to confuse political concerns with private economic interests. Though educated at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and personally a man of British and American sympathies and standards, Larsen was widely deemed to be pro-German.

His position as Scavenius’s right arm, his close contacts with German officials and his numerous efforts to strengthen Danish–German bonds made Larsen one of the most unpopular men of the occupation years. After the liberation he was imprisoned, charged with collaborating with the Germans and giving financial support to Danish Nazi circles, but was eventually acquitted. In his defence, he was able to state that he had worked for the British Secret Service since April 1940 and had made a large sum of money available for organized resistance in the spring of 1943. The Supreme Court accepted that his payments to Nazi groups had been motivated by national considerations. However, though legally exonerated, public criticism of his person continued in the post-war years and made it impossible for him to remain in Denmark.

Not having been a member or representative of a political party, Larsen had no one to share the responsibility for the policies he had pursued and help defend him against the acrimonious and vengeful attacks his critics directed against him in the post-liberation period. Another non-professional minister found himself in much the same situation
in 1945. As commissioner of police since 1938, Eigil Thune Jacobsen was, from the outset of the occupation, saddled with the responsibility for maintaining law and order in the country. It was a task that he carried out with conviction and determination, letting the police deal firmly with anti-German manifestations as well as Nazi disturbances. Identifying with the policy of the government, he accepted the principle that Danish authorities should punish persons caught challenging or resisting the occupation forces. In some cases it might be necessary to impose severe sentences, and thus prevent the Germans from intervening and imposing harsher measures on the country. Personally, he was particularly opposed to violent and disruptive actions of the type usually associated with Communist campaigns. Having established and maintained close professional contacts with the police authorities in Vienna and Berlin since the early 1930s, Thune Jacobsen was well placed to handle relations with the German police in Denmark in the first year of the occupation. He was also an obvious choice for membership of the board of the newly established Danish–German Society.

When the Germans, in the summer of 1941, demanded the resignation of the minister of justice the leaders of the Social Democratic party pressed Thune Jacobsen to take over the post. The first task of the new minister was to prepare a law prohibiting Communist associations and activities. In response to a German demand made immediately after the invasion of the Soviet Union, internment of leading Communists throughout the country had already been set in motion before the change of minister. The new law, of 22 August 1941, provided for the arrest and punishment of persons guilty of Communist activity or agitation, and for the detention of persons whose conduct indicated that they might engage in such activity and become a threat to the security of the state or its relations with foreign powers. The law was administered jointly by the ministry and a parliamentary committee. Thune Jacobsen was also responsible for the preparation of a law, passed in December 1942, to provide protection against industrial sabotage. As minister, his basic concern was to retain the administration of justice in Danish hands. To achieve this, he thought, it was necessary to calm relations between the population and the occupying power and to continue the policy of cooperation. Even as late as 28 August 1943 he hoped to avoid a final rupture of the intergovernmental relationship with Germany.

The orders he gave to the police in the initial period, and the laws he introduced and influence he exercised on the judiciary as minister, made Thune Jacobsen a hated figure in resistance circles. Soon after the liberation he was arrested, but immediately released as a result of
an intervention by Frode Jakobsen. He hoped to clear his name through a process of impeachment but was not given the opportunity. Thus, he never provided a formal proof of certain claims he made in his defence, namely that he had worked for the British Secret Service and had been passing information to London about the police and sabotage in Denmark, which had been one of the reasons why he had had to escape to Sweden in October 1944.

Among the professional politicians, Scavenius found his most loyal supporters in the Social Democratic party. Foremost among them was Thorvald Stauning, who as prime minister till his death in May 1942 totally identified with the policy of negotiating with the Germans, making concessions when necessary and cooperating as required. It was a policy which followed naturally from the course he and Munch, as leaders of the Social Democratic and Radical Liberal coalition government, had pursued towards Germany in the 1930s and which, in his view, became imperative in the circumstances of the first years of the occupation. Like Scavenius, he apparently expected Germany to win the war and found it necessary for Denmark to prepare itself for German domination of Europe in the post-war world. His most important contribution to the political process was to maintain a degree of parliamentary backing for Scavenius’s dealings with the Germans. Time and again he defended the policy and measures of his foreign minister in the committee of leading politicians set up in the summer of 1940, to represent the old political parties and provide vicarious parliamentary control, and secured its backing for the government’s handling of relations with the occupying power.

Other Social Democratic leaders in support of the policy of cooperation included Alsing Andersen, Hans Hedtoft-Hansen and H.C. Hansen. Andersen was minister of defence in the pre-war government and remained in office till July 1940, and thus shared the responsibility for the extremely weak military preparedness of the country in 1940 and the early decision to cease fighting on 9 April. In the later part of 1942 he served as minister of finance. His most notorious act, however, was to put his name to a circular which, as acting chairman of the Social Democratic party, he issued to its representatives throughout the country on 2 September 1943. It was not only an aggrieved defence of the government’s occupation policy, which had saved the country from the disasters of war and could well have continued doing so till the end of hostilities, but also a bitter attack on the resistance movement, that ‘coalition of chauvinists and Communists which irresponsibly and secretly has sought to throw suspicion on the ends and means of cooperation and bring about a different mentality in sections of the public.’
That circular, which correctly expressed the party’s attitude to the events of August 1943, and may have been drafted by Hedtoft-Hansen, became a lasting embarrassment for Andersen. Carrying the formal responsibility for its appearance, he was strongly criticized in some of the illegal press. In subsequent years, when the attitude of the public to cooperation and resistance had changed markedly, the leaders of the party failed to acknowledge their responsibility for the circular, preferring instead to treat it rather as a mistake committed by Andersen. When Hedtoft-Hansen, in 1947, appointed him minister of finance he lasted only two days, his past once again catching up with him.

Hedtoft-Hansen and H.C. Hansen, both younger than Andersen, had no ministerial responsibilities during the occupation but, as members of parliament, held high posts in the leadership of the Social Democratic party. Since the 1930s they had been known for their inveterate anti-Nazi and anti-Communist attitudes. Though, early in 1941, the Germans forced them to resign their honorary posts in the party, both remained part of its informal leadership throughout the war. At all stages they were convinced that the policy of cooperation was both justified and necessary. Like Vilhelm Buhl, leader of the party after the death of Stauning, they were highly sceptical about the resistance movement and its leadership, the self-appointed nature of which they found difficult to reconcile with their democratic convictions. They also suspected that the Communists dominated its activities. In an apparent attempt to secure some control of its efforts, each established contact with members of the movement and, eventually, with the freedom council. Both became ministers in the liberation government and each of them eventually became prime minister, Hedtoft in 1947 and H.C. Hansen in 1955.

The state organs and public bodies of the country largely supported the policy of willing cooperation, especially in the first three or four years of the occupation. Since the most obvious alternatives to the existing order were government by the Nazi party and its sympathizers and military rule by the occupying power, official Denmark found it necessary to accommodate the Germans and avoid provocations. King Christian X set the tone from the very beginning. In the morning of 9 April, after the order to cease fighting had reached the units of the armed forces, the government prepared a proclamation which called for calm and restraint by the public and maintenance of law and order throughout the country. The king added his personal appeal for correct and dignified behaviour, explaining that any rash act or remark could have the most serious consequences. As it did for members of the public, caution became the first principle of official dealings with the Germans.
Though the king was cast in several roles in the course of the occupation, in his constitutional acts and public utterances he managed to back his government and support its policies. In the initial period he quickly became the focus of a public swell of patriotic feelings and expressions. His daily, unaccompanied ride on horseback through the streets of Copenhagen strengthened his bond with the people and helped make him the foremost symbol of national unity in trying circumstances. Soon, however, he also became a bold example of how to deal with the Germans on personal levels. Numerous stories about the king – some true, others apocryphal – went round, most of them involving some kind of snub to representatives of the occupying power. In British propaganda directed against Danish politicians involved in cooperation with the Germans, the king was sometimes presented as an alternative rallying point for patriotic efforts. However, though the king may have been attracted to some such roles, he usually made sure to consult the political leaders and secure their support for his interventions.

In the first summer of the occupation there was some uncertainty among politicians about the king’s commitment to the parliamentary system of government. Their fears culminated when the so-called Højgaard circle, a group of prominent men with rightist views, in November 1940 put pressure on the king to dismiss the Stauning government and, with or without parliamentary approval, appoint a ministry of politically independent people, drawn mainly from trade and industry and led by prince Axel, a cousin of the king. Such a government, it was argued, would not only protect the country against a Nazi take-over but could also secure some advantages from the Germans which were beyond the reach of the existing government. The king rejected the proposal, and let Stauning assure the parliament that he had no intention of acting without its approval.

After the telegram crisis and the riding accident in October 1942 and subsequent prolonged illness of the king, he gave loyal, if not always enthusiastic, support to Scavenius in the critical period of 1943. In May he marked his return to official duties with a broadcast address in which he spoke against sabotage. Aware that such an admonition now ran counter to the trend of public opinion, he had long resisted it, but eventually agreed because both Scavenius and Best wanted it. During the rebellion some months later he was again reluctant to associate himself with an appeal for law and order, which went out on 21 August, and gave in only after a long argument. Yet, despite his qualms, the king did not disown the policy of cooperation. Indeed, when the rupture of formal relations with the Germans finally came, on 29 August, he remarked
that it had happened too soon. After the August crisis the king, like the
government, was constitutionally out of action without having abdicated. Regarding himself as a prisoner, Christian X remained in this
state of suspension till the end of the occupation but kept in touch with
Scavenius indirectly.

In the state administration, the department responsible for for-
mulating and carrying out the policy of cooperation, before as well as
after the August rebellion, was the foreign ministry. Immediately after
the invasion it was agreed that relations with the German authorities
in the country should be conducted mainly through that ministry. Such
an arrangement made it possible to maintain the fiction that occupied
Demark remained a sovereign state, able to handle relations with its bel-
ligerent neighbour through normal diplomatic channels. Thus the policy
and practice of cooperating with the occupying power acquired a for-
mal, albeit legalistic, base which was convenient or acceptable to each of
the parties. It survived the deactivation of the Danish government and
lingered on, in its make-believe existence, till the collapse of the occupy-
power. Its function was to help the government and the ministry in
their efforts to protect the independence of Denmark in domestic affairs.

The central figure in the ministry was Nils Svenningsen. At the
time of the invasion head of the department handling politi cal and legal
matters, he had identified with Munch’s policy towards Germany in the
late 1930s and accepted the geopolitical dependence of Denmark on a
powerful Germany. In the spring of 1941 he was appointed head of the
ministry. As such, he became Scavenius’s most loyal and reliable helper
in the conduct of relations with the German authorities in Copenhagen
and Berlin. He entirely accepted the policy of willing but limited coop-
eration. Drafting most of Scavenius’s statements, he helped to formulate
the policy and took responsibility for putting it into practice. In diplo-
matic crises with the Germans, as well as in recurrent issues between
Scavenius and the politicians, he invariably gave his minister full sup-
port. After August 1943, when he became chief negotiator in relations
with the German authorities, he faithfully continued the policy of pro-
tecting the remains of Danish sovereignty by engaging in restrained
cooperation with the Germans. This meant close and continual negotia-
tions with Best under discreet supervision by the political leaders.

Never having any doubts himself about the necessity for such coop-
eration and its moral and political righteousness, Svenningsen resented
anything that stood in his way. He could not accept any breaches of loy-
alty to the ministry by diplomats and diplomatic staff serving abroad
during the occupation. Thus, he never forgave Henrik Kauffmann, the
Danish envoy in Washington, who immediately after the invasion and occupation, declared his legation independent of the government in Copenhagen and a year later, in the name of the king, signed an important agreement with the United States for the defence of Greenland. Nor did Svenningsen ever accept, or even understand, the motivations behind sabotage and other militant efforts of the resistance movement. Seeking solutions through established diplomatic channels was for him the only way. Through steadfast negotiation and expedient compromises he kept the dialogue with Best going till the end of the war, thus helping to ward off German intervention by military means. After the liberation Svenningsen was attacked for collaboration and sent into exile, as envoy to Sweden. In 1951, however, he was recalled to Copenhagen, where he again ended up as head of the foreign ministry, under the government of H.C. Hansen.

Military matters were not managed by the foreign ministry but dealt with through direct contact between the Danish and the German armed forces. For occupied Denmark it was important to maintain its army and navy, not only because they were visible symbols of its claimed sovereignty but also because they might be needed to quell internal disturbances, whether by Danish Nazis or, after June 1941, by Communists. Within a few weeks of the invasion agreements were reached with the Germans about the conditions on which the army could be retained in the new situation. Many barracks and installations had to be vacated to make room for the German troops; narrow rules for exercise and training were laid down for the army; and all weapons and explosives were put under German control. Later other agreements were negotiated to limit the manpower of the army, and frequent demands were made for the handing over of substantial parts of its war materials. For von Hanneken, who assumed command of the German troops in the autumn of 1942, the goal soon became the elimination of the Danish army and navy. This, however, did not come to pass till 29 August 1943.

The pivotal figure in the conduct of the army’s relations with the occupying power was Ebbe Gørtz. As chief of the general staff and senior liaison officer to the German military authorities, he managed the negotiations of the conditions imposed on 9 April. Promoted to lieutenant general and commander-in-chief in the autumn of 1941, he saw the army through the crises of the next few years. After the internment of officers and men in the autumn of 1943, he set up the so-called small general staff, which under the auspices of the leading politicians took charge of the army’s illegal activities and preparations during the rest of the occupation. His concerns throughout were to protect the army
and ensure that its officers and men did not upset the orderly relations with the German authorities that had been developed by the politicians responsible. Within the given limitations, he sought to train as many soldiers as possible and to maintain discipline throughout the army. When, on 29 August German troops attacked army barracks and other places of duty throughout the country and many units did not resist, or fought only briefly, and did not destroy their stock of weapons, they were following orders issued by him. Firmly believing the role of the army to be that of a loyal and obedient tool of the responsible government, Gørtz accepted the policy of cooperation and the many compromises and concessions it entailed.

Gørtz was against officers independently engaging in illegal activities, on the grounds that their professional loyalty to the government should always have priority. This was also his position after the setting-up of the small general staff, which he, in the absence of an acting government, saw as subordinate to the political leaders, Buhl in particular. That attitude made him unpopular with the resistance movement, and led to frictions with those who looked to the freedom council, rather than the politicians, for leadership. However, Gørtz retained the confidence of the Social Democratic leaders, with some of whom he had developed close relations in the earlier stages of the occupation. In October 1944 the allied powers appointed him leader designate of the Danish resistance forces in case of an allied invasion of Denmark. Thus he ended up as commander-in-chief of the forces of the resistance movement mobilized on 5 May 1945. In the post-war years he managed the reconstruction of the army and its reorganization for NATO membership. However, still under attack for his inflexible attitude during the occupation, he decided to decline when he, in 1950, was invited to apply for the new post of chief of defence.

The major organizations of the economic life of the country, which in its foreign trade had become highly dependent on Germany, fully supported the policy of cooperating with the occupying power. Since both the Association of Trade Unions (DsF) and the Danish Organization of Employers (DA) needed to keep the production flowing, they shared an interest in accommodating various German requirements and avoiding any disturbing rupture of the Danish–German diplomatic relationship. For the former organization, the most pressing problem was the high and rising rate of unemployment, which in the first winter of the occupation reached 36 per cent with unskilled labour particularly hard hit. This was the basic reason why the Association accepted the German demand for manpower, and encouraged, eventually pressed,
unemployed members to take work in Germany and thereby reduce the demands on its unemployment fund. Axel Olsen, chairman of the Union of Unskilled Labourers (DAF), was particularly willing to supply Danish manpower to Germany, on the principle that to look after his men was more important than anything else. Nor did he have great difficulty accepting the idea of a customs and monetary union with Germany proposed in the summer of 1940.

Another concern of the Danish labour movement was the challenge of the Communists, who competed for the loyalty of its members. Before their party became illegal, they continually attacked and criticized the Social Democratic party and the trade union leaders. After June 1941, the DsF took measures to suppress the influence of Communists within its organization. From late 1942, however, the problem was exacerbated by the growing number of strikes and acts of sabotage which appeared to be organized mainly by Communists. In the summer of 1943 rampant demonstrations and sporadic rebellions added to the fear of a Communist challenge to the leadership of the labour movement. Spokesmen of the Social Democratic party and the trade unions responded by defending the national policy of cooperating with the occupying power, warning against the dangers for the labour movement of a rupture in relations with the Germans and stressing the need to keep their organizations intact. Danish democracy itself, the DsF chairman Eiler Jensen warned, could be at stake.

In the summer of 1944 the DsF joined the DA and a number of leading politicians in an appeal to call off the mass strike in Copenhagen. Later the same year, when most of the departmental heads of the state administration were considering resigning in protest against the German arrest of the Danish police, the two organizations again joined forces, and put pressure on the civil servants to stay in office and continue the negotiation and cooperation with the occupying power. The trade union movement maintained that line till the end of the occupation. Throughout the war the overriding concern of the Social Democratic labour movement was to keep its political and economic organizations intact.

The DA, from May 1941 under the chairmanship of T.K. Thomsen, played a complementary part in supporting the policy and promoting the practice of cooperating with the German authorities. As chairman of the Organization of Contractors and director of one of the country’s largest such companies, Thomsen was from the outset of the occupation deeply involved in several major German projects carried out on Danish soil by Danish companies and workers, and with the approval of the government. Later he took the lead in condemning sabotage and
opposing strikes, as a result of which he and his organization attracted much criticism in the illegal press. At the same time, however, the DA donated large sums of money to a relief fund set up in 1943 to support various activities of the resistance movement.

By and large, the policy of cooperation, as developed by the political and promoted by the economic establishment of the country, enjoyed the support of the press. Immediately after the invasion, the occupying power banned news detrimental to its military interests as well anti-German propaganda, but left it to the Danish government to carry out the censorship. This became the responsibility of the press bureau of the foreign ministry. Since that office also maintained the contact to the German press attaché, it became the link between the occupying power and the Danish press. In practice, the system that emerged was one of self-censorship, though with frequent German complaints, requests and warnings.

That this procedure worked well enough to survive the first few years of the occupation was not only a consequence of German threats and interventions, which in a number of cases took the form of removal of anti-German journalists or editors. It was also because nearly all legal Danish newspapers were organs of one or other of the old political parties, and as such were disinclined to publish material detrimental to the established relationship between the coalition government and the occupying power. Thus, as late as the autumn of 1942 the press loyally backed the government in its condemnation of the growing anti-German sabotage. Later that year and in 1943, when Germany suffered setbacks in several theatres of war and the Danish population grew more critical of the policy of always accommodating the Germans, it became more difficult for the press to toe the line. Presumably motivated not least by a concern not to lose their readers, most newspapers now found ways of keeping their more discerning readership informed of developments both at home and abroad.

The period of self-censorship came to an end after 29 August, when the Germans took over the censoring themselves. Now both military, political and economic copy had to be passed to German censors, through the press bureau. Moreover, the Germans regularly supplied propaganda material which had to be published in full. If in the first couple of years the press on the whole had supported the governmental line towards the Germans and in the period leading up to 29 August to some extent had followed the rapidly changing political feelings and public attitudes of its readers, after that date it lost what remained of the traditional freedom of the press.
To the extent that the press in the summer of 1943 managed to minister to sections of a public growing tired of governmental policy and turning towards some form of opposition to the Germans and, at the same time, made sure to continue its support of the official line of cooperation, the press could be said to have been playing a double game. Of the various persons and organizations presented here as practitioners, advocates or supporters of willing cooperation, perhaps the one who came closest to such double-dealing was Christian X, who at several crucial stages seemed to be torn between demonstrating his sympathy with popular anti-German feelings and backing his government. When the DA donated substantial sums to a relief fund set up for various illegal ends it might be seen more as a case of hedging one’s bets. When Gunnar Larsen and Thune Jacobsen after the liberation claimed to have assisted British intelligence-gathering it had the taste more of an attempt at retrospective self-justification than of a revelation of a purposeful double game. And when Hedtoft-Hansen and H.C. Hansen established contact with the resistance movement as well as when general Gørtz set up the small general staff of the army and later took command of the military forces of the resistance movement, the basic concern appears to have been to secure some control of the activities of that movement and to make sure that the political leaders, the Social Democrats in particular, had as firm a hand as possible on political developments and military actions during the rest of the occupation and immediately after liberation.

For the men responsible for developing the policy of cooperation and conducting the relations with the occupying power there could be no double-dealing. Guided by a political realism which tended to take the form of geopolitical determinism, and in the cases of Stauning and Scavenius misled by the expectation that Germany would win the war and dominate post-war Europe, they felt compelled to accommodate the Germans, and emboldened to do it in a proactive way. Recognizing that the success of their policy depended on German confidence in Danish integrity, both Scavenius and Svenningsen negotiated in good faith and endeavoured to honour the agreements reached.

While the basic concern of ministers, political leaders and diplomats who identified with the policy of cooperation was to maintain what remained of the legal sovereignty and political independence of Denmark, the guiding principle of the leaders of the Association of Trade Unions was to look after the economic and social interests of their members and protect the organizations of the Danish labour movement. While the former set, concerned with present and future needs
of the state and nation, took a broader view of the interests at stake, the latter focused more narrowly on the welfare of a large section of the population. Neither group acted under the influence of Nazi sympathies or pro-German feelings; both were acting in a self-protective mode when they willingly engaged in limited cooperation and carefully steered clear of anti-German activities.

Reluctant negotiation

Those who recognized that some interaction between the Danish and the German authorities was unavoidable but preferred to keep it to a minimum were moved by much the same fears and concerns. As aware as those who felt compelled to engage in deliberate cooperation of the risk of a Nazi take-over or a German military rule and of the need to protect Danish institutions and political traditions, they tried to follow the principle of least contact and negotiation with the occupying power. In practice, that usually meant handling only particular matters which required attention or simply dealing with disputes in Danish–German relations as they arose.

However, though the approach was reluctant and procrastinating, it inevitably led to one concession after another, and thus threatened to take the Danish negotiators on to a slippery slope. While often presented as an alternative policy, this line of conduct turned out to be more a way of exercising some restraint on those who found it necessary or expedient to engage the country in various forms of willing cooperation. Ultimately, the course of reluctant negotiation and minimal concessions survived because it was shielded by the established policy of continuous contact and active cooperation. Yet it allowed many politicians and public servants to maintain some dignity in trying circumstances, especially in the first years of the occupation when there was little active resistance to the occupying power.

The first minister to attempt a pragmatic policy of limited contact and minimal concessions was P. Munch, who remained foreign minister for the first three months of the occupation. The German invasion and occupation meant the failure of Danish foreign and defence policy, the purpose of which had been to keep the country out of war. However, since the fighting by Danish forces in the morning of 9 April had been only brief and minimal and since the Germans immediately had described their occupation as a peaceful and protective measure, and had undertaken to respect the territorial integrity and political
independence of the occupied country, it was possible for the Danish government to describe the situation that had arisen as a case of peace occupation (*occupatio pacifica*). Munch, in his answer to a German note of 9 April, presented a formal protest against the violation of Danish neutrality, but also expressed his government’s willingness to manage relations within the country with due regard to the existing situation.

Having arranged for most official contact with the Germans to be through the foreign ministry, Munch stuck to his pragmatic policy of dealing with matters case by case as they arose. In this manner he helped to establish the principle that matters at issue were settled through negotiation, rather than through naked imposition by the occupying power. At a time when the Danish government was highly nervous about German intentions, and far from sure that its democratic form could be maintained, this seemed an important point. However, a series of concessions made in response to German pressure underlined the inequality between the occupier and the occupied and undermined the notion of Danish sovereignty. The latter effect of his policy and diplomatic style was reinforced by developments on the international scene, where the rapid victories of the German armies in the summer of 1940 made Hitler’s Germany seem almost invincible.

In the governmental crisis in early July, Munch gave way to Scavenius in the foreign ministry. By now a tired and disillusioned man, he was still unpopular with the old opposition parties – especially the Conservatives, who held him responsible for the policies that had led to invasion and capitulation – and well aware that the German minister found him too uncooperative. After retiring, he took one of the two Radical Liberal seats in the committee of parliamentary representatives of the old political parties, where he became a useful mediator in a series of disagreements between Scavenius and the party leaders.

Vilhelm Buhl, minister of finance for the first two years of the occupation and, after Stauning’s death in May 1942, prime minister for six months and leader of the Social Democrats, was critical of Scavenius’s policy towards the Germans. He could not support the ‘active negotiation policy’, according to which Denmark quickly offered concessions deemed likely in due course to be demanded anyway, and believed that the negotiators should give way only when compelled to do so. Thus, in the earlier years he tended to act as a brake on Scavenius’s endeavours. In particular, he opposed the proposed customs and monetary union, the setting up of a committee to explore possibilities of Danish participation in the development of areas of the Soviet Union occupied by German forces and the accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact.
As prime minister, Buhl’s situation became more difficult, marked as it was by the beginning of sabotage and growing tension with the German authorities. In September 1942 he broadcast a notorious speech in which he made a heartfelt appeal to the public to support the fight against those engaged in sabotage. His political concerns were to avoid a rupture of relations with the German representative and to maintain public support for his government’s policy of reluctant cooperation. An unchecked growth of sabotage and other anti-German acts, he feared, would jeopardize the continuance of Danish jurisdiction and consequently endanger public support for governmental policy. The Germans had already threatened court-martial jurisdiction and the death penalty for acts of sabotage.

The so-called telegram crisis, which broke out later the same month, saw the end of Buhl’s ministry. In Berlin, where his record both as minister of finance and as prime minister was well known, he was regarded as the main stumbling block to the development of a satisfactory relationship with the Danish state. When Best arrived in Copenhagen he was determined to have him replaced. While the political leaders, initially inclined to reject the German demand, were looking for a suitable person to replace him, Buhl decided to step down. Like Munch, he joined the committee of parliamentary representatives of the coalition parties, of which he soon became the unofficial leader. Though he tended to keep a distance from Scavenius’s government, at a crucial stage of the August crisis of 1943 he supported his party’s endeavours to uphold the policy of cooperation and sponsored the broadcast call for law and order. However, a week later, after the receipt of the German ultimatum of 28 August, he was the first politician to speak up and decisively reject it. In the debate that followed in September he also rejected as impossible all ideas of forming a new parliamentary government. In contrast with Scavenius, he always kept an eye on public opinion and displayed a keen sense of what was possible and prudent in any given domestic political situation.

It was inevitable that Buhl, as the country’s most influential politician, should establish contact with the freedom council in the last year of the occupation. But, like other Social Democratic leaders, he did it more to secure some control of the resistance movement than to support its efforts. Highly suspicious of the self-appointed leaders of the resistance and afraid that the movement might present a threat to the political system of the country, he relied on the illegal general staff of the army and the officers and on the Danish brigade, set up in Sweden largely under Social Democratic auspices, to protect the traditional order. From the
last winter of the war he became increasingly preoccupied with the risk that the resistance movement, through its growing popularity and its allied support, should emerge as the only body that had played a part in the defeat of the Germans and the liberation of Denmark, and thus obscure the standing and role of the official organs of the country.

However, Buhl enjoyed the support of the politicians, who saw him as the most suitable candidate for the post of prime minister in the liberation government. After a good deal of misgiving, the freedom council accepted him too. His post-war career, first as prime minister of the liberation government for six months and from 1947 as minister in Hedtoft’s government, marked the restoration of the pre-war Danish political system and the reinstatement of ‘the old politicians’.

Throughout the occupation, Buhl’s performance was a balancing act between too much and too little cooperation with the Germans. His political calculations and deft manoeuvring were motivated not so much by a patriotic urge to oppose the occupying power or a will to support the allied cause in the struggle against Nazism as by essentially domestic considerations. His concerns were to protect the traditional political system and established social order against the German onslaught and, once the disturbance of major war in Europe was over, return to the old ways of party politics in a democratic country gifted with powerful Social Democratic organizations.

Buhl and Munch, who had both been ministers in the Social Democratic and Radical Liberal coalition government of the pre-invasion years, found it relatively easy to accept a degree of cooperation with the occupying power. For the leaders of the two major opposition parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, it was more difficult. Knud Kristensen, prominent in the Liberal party and minister of the interior from July 1940 to November 1942, had been very reluctant to join the broader coalition government formed in the summer of 1940, initially insisting on merely observer status for his party’s representatives. He had accepted the establishment of a committee of parliamentary representatives only on certain conditions, namely a revision of social services and a tightening of the rules for unemployment benefits, both parts of the economic programme of the Liberal party.

As minister, he often infuriated Scavenius by opposing his policy of cooperation with Germany and criticizing his diplomatic conduct. In particular, he rejected the proposed customs and monetary union. While acknowledging that such a union could lead to higher German prices for Danish exports, which he suspected might tempt many, he stressed that the decisive consideration must be national independence. In the
summer of 1941 he took the leading part in an unsuccessful attempt to replace Scavenius, attacking him for never wanting to say no to the Germans and calling for a different policy. In the telegram crisis the following year Kristensen, now chairman of his party, maintained till a late stage his opposition to Scavenius becoming prime minister. When Scavenius did form a new government he refused to serve under him, but did not object to his party keeping its representation in the government.

Like Munch and Buhl before him, Kristensen joined the committee of parliamentary representatives after his resignation, and thus helped to maintain parliamentary backing for, and control of, Scavenius’s government. In the later period of the occupation he did not go out of his way to establish contact with the resistance movement, whose efforts he dismissed as attempts to engage in ‘private foreign policy’. When he, towards the end of the war, heard about the plans to have members of the freedom council represent the resistance movement in the liberation government he was not enthusiastic. However, in that government he again took the post of minister of the interior. In October 1945, following the first post-war parliamentary election, he became prime minister in a Liberal minority government.

John Christmas Møller, chairman of the Conservative party in the 1930s, minister without portfolio immediately after the invasion and minister of trade, shipping and industry for three months from 8 July 1940, had a much more positive attitude to the resistance movement. Resenting the practically immediate capitulation on 9 April, he reacted by delivering outspoken anti-German speeches at political meetings, which soon attracted the attention of the German authorities and led to his resignation as minister. Nor would the Germans accept him as member of the committee of parliamentary representatives. After further public statements of anti-German character, including remarks about ‘the enemy’ being in this country, the Germans demanded, in January 1941, that he give up all his posts, including membership of parliament. Politically isolated, he soon found himself in contact with prominent individuals who were disposed to engage in illegal activities against the occupying power. One was Frode Jakobsen, Social Democratic maverick and founder of the resistance organization the Ring. Another was Aksel Larsen, the Communist leader, with whom he started an illegal paper, Frit Danmark. This period came to an end in the spring of 1942, when Christmas Møller, after receipt of an invitation from London, illegally left the country for Sweden and, together with his wife and son, flew to Scotland.
When Christmas Møller, despite his opposition to the foreign and defence policy of the Stauning-Munch government in the 1930s and his indignation at the capitulation on 9 April, accepted a ministerial post in Stauning’s government he did it in the compatriotic spirit that marked Danish political life in the period after the invasion. He saw the need for some negotiation with the occupying power, especially in regard to economic matters, but believed it should be conducted on the basis of the Danish–German exchange of notes immediately after the invasion, in which Danish sovereignty in domestic affairs had been acknowledged. In principle, he was sceptical about the pragmatic approach of dealing with matters as they cropped up because he thought it might lead the government on to a slippery slope. In practice, however, he accepted as unavoidable a number of cases where the government yielded to German demands which showed little respect for Danish sovereignty, but were backed by superior power. What he could not accept were voluntary concessions. In particular, he rejected the proposed customs and monetary union, seeing it as a deliberate signing away of national independence in a number of fundamental areas, which would be effective not only during but also after the war. Here he took a strong stand, staking his ministerial post on the outcome of the negotiations.

In contrast with Buhl, for whom the occupation was a Danish–German matter to be managed largely in the context of domestic political considerations, Christmas Møller was very aware of the wider international dimensions of the situation and conduct of his country. Given the minimal fighting and immediate capitulation on 9 April, he was concerned about the impression that the free world, and the allied powers in particular, might gain of the attitude and policy of the Danish government towards the occupying power. Anxious that Denmark should not be seen as collaborating with Germany, he wanted it understood that the country had retained a degree of independence, and was prepared to do its utmost to resist German diplomatic pressure. Hence, he was angry with Kauffmann in Washington for having declared himself independent of the government he was representing on the grounds that it was no longer free but controlled by the German occupier. While the government should give in to German pressure only when palpably forced to do so, the diplomats serving it abroad, he insisted, should remain loyal.

Christmas Møller’s experience as minister demonstrated the difficulty of reconciling the principle of limited contact and minimal concessions with the practice of dealing with a forceful occupying power. In London, where he was most of the time till the end of the occupation, he was able to devote his efforts to encouraging the activities of the
resistance movement in his BBC talks to Denmark and to rallying Danes in Britain and other allied countries. Towards the end of the war he engaged in some delicate and complex political manoeuvring, which led him to the post of foreign minister in the liberation government, where he represented the free Danes abroad.

The secondary ranks of the leadership of the four major political parties as well as most ordinary members of parliament, none of them personally involved in dealings with the Germans, on the whole preferred protracted negotiation and reluctant concessions to willing cooperation with the occupying power. After August 1943, when relations with the German authorities were managed by the permanent heads of the state administration, there was again a tendency for dissatisfaction with the policy of cooperation to be more marked among those less directly exposed to German pressure. Thus, it was Nils Svenningsen, the chief negotiator, and Eivind Larsen, a departmental head in the justice ministry responsible for matters relating to the police and jurisdiction, who negotiated the details of cooperation, and other departmental heads who occasionally opposed particular proposals put forward in response to German demands.

A major question from the autumn of 1943 related to the role of the Danish police in the fight against sabotage. The Germans wanted their assistance in return for an undertaking that any saboteur caught would be dealt with under Danish jurisdiction. A proposal prepared by the justice ministry met strong opposition when presented to a meeting of the departmental heads in January 1944. The arguments advanced against it were that the Germans could not be trusted to honour their undertaking, that an arrangement possibly requiring Danish police to open fire against saboteurs could lead to civil war, and that the proposed form of cooperation might compromise Denmark’s reputation among the allied powers. However, Svenningsen and Larsen got their way, and the justice ministry prepared a proposal for the Germans, who failed to respond.

Four months later the matter came up again. An expansion of sabotage against railways and several attacks on armament factories led Best to demand that the Danish police take over the guarding of a large number of industrial concerns. Svenningsen again wanted to comply; but the majority of civil servants, this time including Larsen, were against it, as were the professional organizations of the police. The result was a refusal of the German demand. But the mass strike in Copenhagen later the same month, which was accompanied by some spectacular acts of sabotage, brought the issue to the fore once more. This time the departmental heads, supported by the politicians, agreed
on a compromise proposal for the solution of the problem. Best found it acceptable, and a system of limited cooperation went into force.

Only two months later, however, general Pancke, head of the SS and German police in Denmark, attacked the police stations and rounded up nearly 2,000 policemen and sent them to concentration camps in Germany. That meant the end of Danish jurisdiction, and was a fundamental blow to the system of administrative management of relations with the occupying power. Buhl, and some other politicians, thought that the departmental heads should retire and break off relations with the Germans. Most of the heads as well as the freedom council took the same line. However, both the trade union movement and the employers’ association, with the support of some politicians, appealed to the heads to remain at their posts. Svenningsen, determined to continue the existing system, succeeded in preventing a break with the German authorities. Thus, the policy and practice of negotiation and cooperation, whether willing or reluctant, stayed in force till the end of the occupation. When the large organizations in a major crisis took the side of Svenningsen and colleagues against other colleagues and a number of politicians on the opposite side, the pattern emerging had much in common with that typical of earlier years, when Scavenius, together with his most faithful colleagues, usually could rely on the support of the central administration and various major organizations against the political leaders. What had changed was public opinion. In the first years after the invasion the nation, rallying in support of the king and the coalition government, could accept the policy of accommodating the occupying power and the practice of making concessions of the sort which either could be deemed necessary or could be seen as practical, perhaps even advantageous for Danish interests. In the last year of the occupation, a considerable section of the population had long since come round to the view that it was not always necessary to give way to German demands, and usually not in the Danish interest to do so. An increasing number of people had also decided that it was both politically justified and morally right to resist the occupying power, even with arms.

2.3 Opposition

The third section of the spectrum of Danish reactions to German occupation presented here is characterized by opposition to the occupying power and its local representatives and servants. Here the most obvious
distinction is between passive and active opposition. While the more passive forms predominated in the first period of the occupation, the decidedly active, and more obvious, manifestations came to the fore in the later years, with the rise and organization of the resistance movement.

Most of those engaged in some form of passive opposition supported, or at least implicitly accepted, the policy of limited cooperation with the Germans pursued by official Denmark. Others, however, were less satisfied with that policy, and more inclined to regard passive opposition as a preparation for increasingly active resistance to the occupying power. While the reactions of the former, generally to be found at the broader levels of society, typically were spontaneous and emotional, the efforts of the latter, often involving particular categories of people, were usually more organized and purposive. To some extent, it was also a difference between those who were plainly pro-national and some who were more anti-German.

**Passive opposition**

The state of shock and perplexity of the Danish people immediately after the invasion on 9 April was soon followed by a wave of nationalism stronger than anything experienced in the inter-war period. The nationalism of 1940 had a negative as well as a positive side, but in both of its aspects found only a rather feeble expression in terms of public behaviour and practical politics. The negative side, taking the form of fairly mild anti-German feelings, led to the popular practice of cold-shouldering the Germans in Denmark. Resolved to ignore them, people would look the other way when meeting one of the soldiers in the street. At the same time a large number of heartening stories about Danish–German personal exchanges, for example relating a snub by the king or a bold answer by a delivery boy, went round, many no doubt invented.

The positive side of the new nationalism took the form mainly of an intense cultivation of national identity. The focus of the movement was the king, who became the symbol of the Danish nation. Despite his rather reserved nature and less than democratic style, he soon gained enormous popularity, which reached a peak with his seventieth birthday in September 1940. To mark the occasion, silver and gold badges, designed with the Danish flag and crown, the king’s monogram and the year 1870 and 1940, were produced for sale, and worn by very many people throughout the occupation.
Some other demonstrations of national unity in the first summer of the occupation took more unusual forms. One was what became known as alsang, community singing of patriotic songs in the open air. It started in Aalborg with 1,500 participants, and quickly spread to other parts of the country. Within two months it was possible to arrange simultaneous and coordinated rallies throughout the country with one sixth of the total population singing along. The meetings that day finished off with telegraphic greetings to the king. Attempts the following year at algang, brisk community hikes in the country, were physically more demanding and did not rouse quite the same degree of patriotic passion.

The nationalist feelings also found more intellectual expressions at this early stage of the occupation. Throughout the country well-attended meetings with lectures and talks, typically about Danish history or Danish identity, were arranged. Here the foremost sources of inspiration were the writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig, the nineteenth-century clergyman who devoted his life to awaken the people of Denmark to an awareness of its identity and, through a monumental religious and historical quest of Danishness, became a formative influence on the Danish mind in modern times. At Copenhagen University Hal Koch, professor of ecclesiastic history, delivered a series of lectures on Grundtvig which attracted large audiences. About the same time the Royal Theatre showed a play about Grundtvig’s youth written by Kaj Munk, a clergyman and dramatist who since 9 April was moved by uncompromisingly anti-German feelings. In their different ways, both Koch and Munk became vehicles of the new nationalism.

A more organic manifestation of the gush of national feelings in 1940 was the establishment of Dansk Ungdomssamvirke (DU), an organization set up to facilitate cooperation among the various youth associations of the country. Conceived as a national and cultural body, it acquired also a political programme when Hal Koch became chairman of its council. In a Europe where the democratic form of politics was challenged by contending political systems, by Nazism from the right and communism from the left, he thought it vitally important to protect Danish traditions and values by guiding and educating the youth of the country. The result was a large number of meetings and events for young people in many parts of the country which were intended to go beyond emotional appeals on the theme of the thousand-year-old Denmark and also address the challenges and risks of the existing political situation of the country. The ultimate concern of the leadership of the organization at that stage of the war was to protect the nation against future attempts by a victorious Germany to Nazify Denmark.
In the following years, when the danger of a Nazi take-over of the government became increasingly unlikely, DU acquired the additional function of serving as a channel for disseminating news about Danish–German governmental and administrative relations. In its earlier as well as in its later phase the organization, which in its composition itself reflected the parliamentary and governmental cooperation of the four old political parties, supported the established policy of accommodating the occupying power.

The forms of passive opposition considered so far could be described as politically self-protective and nationally introspective. Though essentially reactions to invasion and occupation, their opposition to German forces and Nazi ideas stopped short of antagonism. For some people, however, a commitment to king, government and parliament, with its implied acceptance of the policy of cooperation with the occupying power, was not enough. Though the immediate political situation might preclude more active forms of opposition, sections of the population found it possible to combine passive opposition with preparing for active resistance at a later stage. Here three initiatives proved important, namely the setting up of clubs for cross-country sports in most major towns, the creation of a nearly nation-wide ring of political study circles and the preparation of the Communist party for illegal activities.

The idea of a civilian movement for cross-country sports, which were already part of the training of army officers, arose among officers and found support among people with a positive attitude to national defence. It could be a way of training young men in cross-country racing and map-reading as well as in close combat and perhaps shooting. A council, composed mainly of officers, was set up in the summer of 1940, and contact was established with circles which might be willing to start such clubs. In the autumn of 1941 the Danish Cross-Country Sports Union was established, later to be attached to the Danish Rifle, Gymnastics and Sports Association. Moved by the idea of laying the foundations of a better Denmark, the leadership of the Union attached importance to inculcating members with patriotism and willingness to defend their country and native soil. Soon the movement built up 30 branches, starting with major cities and the garrison towns. For many members, involvement in cross-country activities led directly to active resistance. Indeed, some branches of the movement were set up as cover for the training of illegal groups.

In November 1941 a group of academics and intellectuals formed the Danish Study Ring, which after August 1943 became known simply
as the Ring (*Ringen*). The original purpose was to build a defence for Danishness and democracy by setting up cross-party study circles round the country. Largely through the efforts of its manager Frode Jakobsen, several dozen such circles and individual contacts were organized. In Copenhagen, a further dozen groups, each made up of members of a particular profession, as well as some groups for Social Democrats only were set up. In the first year or two the leadership of the organization limited its activities to providing confidential information about governmental policy and the occupying power and publishing relevant pamphlets, eventually also producing a regular publication with political news and comments.

For Jakobsen, who before the occupation had majored in German at Copenhagen University, travelled in Germany and there established contact with anti-Nazi circles, that programme was not enough. As a maverick Social Democrat belonging to the left wing of the party, he was in conflict with its leaders about the policy of accommodating the Germans, and more minded than any of them to engage in active resistance. From an early stage he clearly saw the organization he had built up as a potentially illegal body, eventually engaged in anti-German activities. In the course of 1942 a disagreement developed between him and the chairman, the historian Erik Møller, who wanted the organization to stick to its educational programme. When Møller retired, early in 1943, the Ring rapidly moved towards illegal activity with Jakobsen as its most influential leader. In the later period of the occupation it expanded immensely, establishing itself as a corner-stone of the resistance, with Jakobsen as its powerful representative in the freedom council.

Denmark’s Communist Party, which at the outbreak of the war had less than 8,000 members and only three seats in parliament, found itself in a complicated position when Germany invaded and occupied Denmark. Since 1933 Nazi Germany had demonstrated, in words as well as in action, its hostility to communism. Yet, as recently as August 1939 the Soviet Union, for a while allowing strategic and diplomatic considerations to override the ideological and political conflict dividing Europe, had signed a pact with its potential enemy. The situation that resulted was one which called for particular circumspection on the part of a Communist party in a small country contiguous to Germany. On the day of the occupation, when two of its leaders, including the chairman Aksel Larsen, happened to be in Moscow for consultation with the executive committee of the Comintern, the political committee of the Danish party met to discuss the situation. The issue was whether to provoke the occupying power to ban the party and drive it into illegal existence or, as the majority urged, to endeavour to maintain its legality. The following
day telegraphic directives arrived from Moscow, instructing the party to seek to retain legal status as long as possible, while at the same time preparing for eventual illegality. This was the course the party took.

Deeming the war to be a struggle among imperialist powers for the resources of the world, the party could not support any of the sides but only strive for peace. The first few months it directed its critical comments mainly at the Western powers, especially Britain, but later presented a more balanced view in its reporting on the progress of the war. In domestic politics, where the long-term aim of the Communists was the overthrow of the capitalist system, the party opposed the formation of a coalition government of the old political parties and cautiously dissociated itself from the policy of accommodating the occupying power. In parliament it failed to support various measures introduced in response to German pressure, and devoted most of its efforts to attacking the social and economic legislation of the government for being detrimental to the standard of living of the workers and the many unemployed. In defending the interests of those groups, the spokesmen of the party concentrated their attack, in parliament as well as in the Communist press, on the Social Democratic party and the leadership of the trade unions. As a result, the party strengthened its position among the working classes and attracted some new members.

In its attempt to prepare for illegal existence and activity, the Communist party took some steps to decentralize its structure and set up an alternative organization, with unknown leaders, cover addresses and secret lodgings. It also began to make arrangements for the printing of illegal publications. However, it was not till well after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the subsequent arrest and internment of about 150 leading Communists and the banning of the party, that the reorganization was completed. After an initial period of collapse and chaos, a leadership was set up, consisting of Aksel Larsen, the deputy chairman Alfred Jensen, the party secretary Thorkild Holst and Børge Houmann who was responsible for the finances of the party and for its publishing activities. In the provinces, too, efforts were made to decentralize the organization of the party. A leadership of three persons was established in most towns and secret cells were set up at lower levels, on the principle of no horizontal links and only minimal vertical contact. Printing and distribution of publications were also reorganized, so as to facilitate the printing of local papers and thus avoid the hazard of bulk posting of illegal materials.

With the Soviet Union now an ally of the Western powers in the war against the Nazi and fascist powers and the Communist party
banned by both the German and the Danish authorities, its members were both freer and more motivated to engage in active opposition to the occupying power. Guided by Moscow, the party adopted the revived tactical principle of popular front, which required Communists to join non-Communists in the struggle against the Nazi enemy. That meant giving priority to the goal of national liberation and letting the ultimate aim of social revolution recede into the background. Thus, for a while, the national fight was allowed to eclipse the class struggle. Soon Communists established themselves as among the leaders of anti-German resistance, in practically all its forms. Sometimes, as in various strikes and demonstrations in August 1943, ordinary party members, perhaps led by a shop steward, acted more or less independently of their leaders, possibly initiating events which turned out to be of some importance. The influence of the party and its members in the emerging resistance movement was manifested in the composition of the freedom council set up in September 1943. Two of the six founding members were Communists, namely Børge Houmann and Mogens Fog, the latter representing the cross-party illegal paper *Frit Danmark*, which started on Communist initiative as an exercise in popular front.

In so far as the more self-protective and introspective forms of passive opposition mentioned here were at all meant as anti-German demonstrations, they were on the mild side. As largely emotional expressions of attachment to Danish qualities, values and institutions, they carried only little risks of provoking the Germans in the country. They could be seen as merely innocuous reactions of placid people to a precarious situation. People who were more resistance-minded than those who went to *alsang* and similar events tended to dismiss such manifestations of the national awakening as mostly cases of sentimental stir, or even to discredit them as ignoble substitutes for more practical and courageous activities. Yet it seems possible that the exploration and cultivation of Danishness in those early years may have led some individuals towards more active opposition to the German menace, at a later stage. Perhaps more important, the collective engrossment in the study and enjoyment of Danish history and identity in the first summer of the occupation may have helped prepare the way for the growing public support for armed resistance three or four years later. If so, it might be seen as a preparatory stage in the political education of a people conditioned by generations of neutrality to steer clear of international power politics and schooled for decades in Radical Liberal pacifism and Social Democratic anti-militarism.
The three organizations introduced here as representing those who wanted to go beyond pro-Danish sentiment and start preparing for anti-German action showed that there were groups of individuals and sections of the population who did not need to go through such a learning process. Each organization attracted particular groups and types of people and developed its own programme of preparations for future activities. As the war in Europe took its course and the political situation in Denmark developed, with international as well as national conditions becoming more conducive to active resistance, all of them, or at least many of their members, became ready to join groups or individuals already engaged in anti-German activities.

Active opposition

The last of the six subsections of the broad spectrum of Danish reactions to German occupation, too, presented so many different forms that some distinction will be required. The most obvious one is between unarmed and armed, or at least militant, types of active opposition. The former were in force from the very beginning, or from a relatively early stage, of the occupation and lasted till the liberation of the country. Among them were the most direct and substantial of Danish contributions to the allied efforts to defeat Hitler’s forces and conquer Nazi Germany. The more warlike kinds of opposition, however, depended much more on the fortunes of the allied powers in the war and on the development of public opinion in Denmark. Thus, armed opposition only rarely established itself as a significant influence in Danish–German relations till the last few years of the occupation.

In the first years, before a resistance movement emerged and became organized, and throughout the rest of the occupation Denmark contributed to the allied cause in three ways: by shipping, with intelligence and through propaganda. The most important contribution was that of the merchant navy. It became involved in the hostilities between the great powers soon after the outbreak of war in September 1939, and in the following seven months, when Denmark was still neutral and unoccupied, lost 29 ships and 362 sailors, nearly all victims of attacks by German torpedo-boats in the North Sea.

The invasion caught the shipping companies, as the rest of the country, by surprise. Two thirds of their tonnage and more than half of their crews were on the high seas or in foreign ports. Two of the largest companies, J. Lauritzen’s and A.P. Møller’s, ordered their captains to
seek neutral port and follow the instructions of their authorized representatives in New York. A few months later A.P. Møller’s son, Mærsk McKinney Møller, moved to New York to take control of the Mærsk fleet. East Asiatic Company, operating through its subsidiary in London, managed to arrange for the transfer to British service of the right of disposal for 12 of its large ships. Some ships on the high seas belonging to other companies received conflicting instructions from various authorities, which left the decision-making to the captains, most of whom consulted their officers and crew. Of 60 or 70 ships on which the crews were free to decide, about one half chose a British and the other half a neutral port. Most of the approximately 230 Danish ships in allied (mostly British) or neutral ports in the summer of 1940 ended up in allied service.

Danish ships which had reached Britain, or some part of the British Empire, were formally treated as prizes and put under British flag, and their crews encouraged to stay aboard and continue their service. About 90 per cent of the sailors agreed to do so. Like the officers, they eventually formed a trade union. Their leader became Børge Møller, an able seaman who had been trade union representative in Antwerp and had escaped to London after the German invasion of Belgium. Their base was Newcastle-on-Tyne, where they signed on and enjoyed various facilities. In the course of the war, about 3,000 Danish sailors attended their centre there. Many of them also joined the association of ‘free Danes’ in Great Britain.

In the summer of 1941 the United States, responding to British pressure, seized 40 Danish ships which had been laid up in American ports, and later put them back in service with Danish captains. Since most of the original crew had left and signed on Norwegian, American or British ships, many of the officers and men of those ships were foreigners. Many of the ships, now flying the flag of Panama and bearing new names, crossed the Atlantic with supplies for British forces in the Middle East. Within only a few months seven of them were torpedoed. Once the United States had joined the war, in December 1941, the demand for experienced officers and men to man the many new ships being launched increased rapidly. In the end, there were as many Danes sailing for America as for Britain.

Danish ships and sailors played a part in most kinds of war transport on the oceans of the world. While large ships sailed in convoys along the English and Scottish coasts during the crucial 1940–41 stage of the war, small steamers carried goods to various ports of the British Isles. There were Danish contingents in the transatlantic convoys at the time when German submarines still had the upper hand in naval warfare.
About 25 Danish ships, now again carrying their own flag, took part in operation Overlord, the allied invasion of Normandy in 1944. In the war in the Pacific region, A.P. Møller’s large ships were useful in carrying American troops to the Far East, each taking a few thousand soldiers at a time.

The deployment of the home fleet of the merchant navy was regulated by a Danish–German agreement reached within weeks of the invasion. In addition to carrying goods to and from Denmark and between harbours within the country, Danish ships should provide transport and carry cargoes, such as iron ore, for the Germans at their expense. However, since they frequently called at German and Swedish ports, such ships were occasionally able illegally to take individual Jewish refugees, allied airmen and resistance fighters with them to neutral Sweden. Some ships also played an important role in ferrying illegal post and other materials between the resistance movement in Denmark and its representatives and contacts in Sweden. Total losses incurred by Danish shipping in the course of the Second World War have been estimated as 192 ships and approximately 2,000 sailors.

However, the most memorable episode in Danish shipping during the Second World War did not involve large ships of the merchant navy sailing on distant oceans but small boats of all kinds navigating in home waters. Within two weeks in October 1943 a large number of boats, ranging in size from rowing to fishing boats, set out from more than two dozen Danish harbours and moorings to ferry persecuted Jews across the Sound to safety in neutral Sweden. Arriving at more than a dozen diverse points on the Swedish coast, the skippers managed to save about 95 per cent of all Jews in Denmark. This achievement, as we now know, was not merely a manifestation of Danish solidarity and individual bravery but also a result of German hesitation and personal discretion.

During the first few years of the occupation the so-called Jewish question had not become an issue in relations with the occupying power. The Danish government had categorically denied its existence and resisted all pressures for discriminating legislation. The German minister Cecil von Renthe-Fink had taken much the same line, for the reason that anti-Semitic initiatives might spoil the good relations with Denmark and thus stand in the way of what mattered most, namely upholding the image of Denmark as a model protectorate and maintaining its export of foodstuff to Germany. The relatively small number of Jews in Denmark may well have made it easier for his superiors to accept such arguments and postpone the pursuit of racial policies in that country.
Werner Best, the high-ranking SS officer who succeeded Renthe-Fink in November 1942, initially followed the moderate line laid down by his predecessor. However, following the dramatic events of August 1943, when demonstrations, strikes and sabotage led to martial law, diplomatic crisis and the retreat of the Danish government, it very soon became more difficult for him to maintain such a course. In a weakened position in relation to both the top leadership in Berlin and the new head of the armed forces in Denmark, Best seems to have started a double game of his own. On 8 September he sent a telegram to the foreign ministry in Berlin, which passed it on to Hitler. Formally the message called for action against the Jews in Denmark, but also listed quite a few reservations and objections to such an initiative. Whether Best had received confidential information about an impending order, as he insisted after the war, or simply expected it and wanted to turn the situation to his own advantage is not clear. But Hitler’s order for action in Denmark followed on 17 September, with allocation of extra police forces for the task.

For handling the situation in Denmark after despatch of his telegram, Best relied heavily on Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, a fellow diplomat responsible for shipping, who previously had spent some years in Denmark, learnt the language and established contact with many people in business and political circles. He, and a few other Germans, went to Berlin in an attempt to avert the action under preparation. Duckwitz even travelled to Stockholm in order to persuade the Swedes to accept the Danish Jews. In the meantime Best denied rumours of an impending action and, in his meetings with the permanent head of the ministry of foreign affairs, asserted that a recent day-time robbery in the office of the Jewish community and a subsequent seizure by the German police of the membership archives had nothing to do with any such action.

However, on 28 September Duckwitz turned up at a meeting in Copenhagen of Social Democratic politicians and confirmed to friends among the younger leaders of the party that a raid was imminent and urged that all Jews be warned and offered shelter. There are indications that this decisive warning was given in tacit understanding with Best, who, though a man of anti-Semitic convictions, did not particularly want a manhunt across the country. Duckwitz’s message was passed on to C.B. Henriques, head of the Jewish community, the same night and was read out at the morning service in the synagogue the next day.

The Jewish community was far from ready to deal with the situation. It was dominated by long-established, fully integrated and socially distinguished families of conservative views, confident that the
governmental policy and administrative practice of cooperating with the occupying power would protect them against the imposition of anti-Semitic measures. There were no emergency plans for safeguarding the less influential and poorer members, including more recent arrivals on Danish soil. Ideas of mass escape or underground existence had been rejected on the grounds that such solutions would require too much help from non-Jewish members of the population. In a situation of alarming rumours and urgent warnings, the representatives of the community focused instead on a few desperate and rather unwise alternatives broached by the departmental heads and themselves.

In the evening of 1 October, a Friday, trucks with German police soldiers, accompanied by members of the Danish Schalburg Corps, drove round Copenhagen and arrested Jews. Though the soldiers, according to reports, were brutal and rough in their treatment of people, they followed orders not to break into locked houses and flats. In the course of three hours they made only 202 arrests, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish population in the capital having already left their homes. Another 82 Jews were arrested in Jutland and on Funen. Later a further 197 Jews were arrested while trying to escape. All 481 Danish Jews were immediately sent to Theresienstadt, initially a ghetto for Czech Jews established 60 kilometres north of Prague. In a message of 5 October to his masters in Berlin, Best could declare Denmark 'jüdenrein'. Himmler and other superiors were less than enthusiastic about the meagre result of the action.

Though for propaganda purposes presented as a model town, Theresienstadt had become a transit camp where Jews stayed for some months until moved to Auschwitz or some other extermination camp further east. However, according to agreement reached on 2 November between Best and Adolf Eichmann, who was in charge of the administrative side of the final solution of the Jews of Europe, those from Denmark were allowed to remain in Theresienstadt. It was also agreed that they could have a visit by representatives of Danish authorities and receive food parcels and clothes from Denmark.

Moreover, they were in good company. Theresienstadt had also become a camp for privileged Jews from the Altreich, many of them prominent scientists or artists. A rich cultural life, organized by the Jewish ghetto administration, helped the inmates to cope with the material deprivations and uncertain future in the later period of the war. Shortly before the final collapse of Nazi Germany the Jews from Denmark were evacuated and brought back to Denmark on the 'white buses', sent to rescue surviving concentration camp inmates under a
The Jews not arrested in October 1943 also underwent a harrowing experience. Immediately after the start of the German police raid in Denmark the Swedish government lodged a protest in Berlin and broadcast a message offering to accept escaping Jews. With the help of non-Jewish Danish citizens, 7,056 Jews and 686 non-Jewish relatives reached the Swedish coast unharmed. This mass escape in the earlier weeks of October was not an operation organized by the emerging resistance movement, though groups and members here and there no doubt played a part. Rather, the help provided was a case of improvised reactions of a very large number of local individuals, backed by a united public opinion outraged by the Nazi provocation. The reactions were also encouraged by the stand taken by national authorities. On 2 October most of official Denmark, including the king, the politicians, the trade organizations and unions and various other institutions, lodged protests against the Nazi initiative. The following day, a Sunday, a pastoral letter from bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, sharply criticizing the action and calling on people to help the victims, was read out in the churches of the country.

Most of the escaping Jews made for the east or north coasts of Zealand, primarily Gilleleje, and other major islands, where they hoped to secure passage to Sweden. At all stages, they were able to rely not only on neighbours, friends and acquaintances but also on strangers for secret help with transport, shelter and a place on a boat. Many owners of the larger boats, risking boat, livelihood and perhaps their freedom if caught by German police, charged for their services. But all involved, whether on land or sea, accepted the risks incurred.

Few of the helpers could have known that those risks were not quite so great as generally assumed. At this stage, too, there was a degree of tacit and passive coordination of German measures. While pursuit of Jews not yet arrested was left to a modest number of Gestapo soldiers, surveillance of the Sound by German police units was suspended during the month of October. Thus, the greatest threat to the escaping Jews may have been Danish Nazis and informers. Yet, only a very small number were caught.

Apart from a few who drowned or committed suicide, the rest, including some European Jews who had escaped to Denmark in the 1930s, settled down in Sweden for the duration of the war. There they established themselves as an influential section of the community of nearly 20,000 Danish refugees living in Sweden by the end of the war.
Some of the Jewish men and youths joined the Danish Brigade set up there in November 1943 with a view to deployment in Denmark at the end of the occupation.

For the Nazi masters of the occupying power, the relocation of nearly all Jews in Denmark to safety in Sweden represented a compromise. It served their purpose of preparing Denmark for a future Nazification, but excluded well over 7,000 Jews from their projected final solution of the racial problem. For the Danes, the successful exodus turned out to be the most laudable result of the dual interaction marking relations with the German authorities, limited cooperation and restrained resistance. Achieved at a time when the emphasis in Danish reactions to the German presence was shifting from cooperation towards resistance, it was also of political significance. The story of the events in October, which took place only weeks after the drama in the last days of August, helped to enhance the reputation of Denmark abroad, not least in the United States, and prepare the way for acceptance as an ally in the war.

The second major Danish contribution to the allied cause, the gathering and transmitting of intelligence, started at an early stage of the occupation and continued till the German forces in north-western Europe capitulated and Denmark was liberated. The work was initiated and, till the autumn of 1943, carried out by a small group of army and navy officers, assisted by a few well-placed civilians. In the course of the war, approximately 18,000 pages of information were passed to the allied powers, mostly to London via Stockholm. The material supplied dealt mainly with the troops and authorities of the occupying power but included also occasional information about political and social developments within Denmark deemed of interest to Britain and its allies.

In 1940 the Danish intelligence services were run by half a dozen officers of the army and the navy, supported by two fairly basic networks of military and civilian informants stretched across the country. After the invasion the flow of intelligence to the general staff of the two services continued, but was of little use to the Danish authorities after the government’s decision to capitulate. It was not till later in the year that the intelligence officers, at heart anglophile, managed to establish contact with Britain. It went through Ebbe Munck, a journalist with good contacts in both Denmark and England who in the autumn managed to be appointed Stockholm correspondent of *Berlingske Tidende*, a leading Danish daily. Among his acquaintances in Copenhagen was major Volmer Gyth, one of the intelligence officers in the general staff of the army. Before Munck’s departure it was arranged for the intelligence reports
to be smuggled out by couriers and delivered to him in Stockholm, and there passed on to the British legation.

In Stockholm, Munck was soon approached by Charles Hambro, who represented the newly-established sabotage organization Special Operations Executive (SOE). The connection was strengthened when that organization set up an advanced headquarters for the Nordic countries in the Swedish capital. The result was that most Danish intelligence reports ended up in SOE’s headquarters in London. There they were passed on to Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), SOE’s potential rival, on the condition that British activities in Denmark were left to SOE. However, the Danish officers, for a long time apparently unaware of the existence of SOE, were under the impression that their connection to London through Munck was with SIS directly.

Confident that the supply of military and political intelligence was the most important contribution Denmark could make to the allied cause in the existing situation, the officers were opposed to any form of anti-German activities in Denmark likely to stand in the way of their collecting and transmitting information for London. Thus, they turned against the growing sabotage in 1942 as well as the later anti-German demonstrations, all of which they recognized as destabilizing threats to the coalition government and its policy of cooperation, which provided the cover for their secret, illegal and dangerous activities. Unaware of the rivalries and disagreements among organizations and ministries in London and not conversant with changes in British policy towards Denmark and other occupied countries, the officers tended to assume that their own priorities were in harmony with those of London. Since this was not always the case, their reactions to sabotage and other disturbing activities not only led them into conflict with the emerging resistance movement but also seriously complicated their interaction with SOE.

In the autumn of 1942, after the priorities of SOE had shifted from building up secret armies in the occupied countries to organizing sabotage against the occupying power, the Danish intelligence officers’ relations with that organization reached crisis point. Some of the senior SOE officers, general Colin Gubbins in particular, having developed suspicions about the commitment and reliability of the Danish officers, the organization decided to test their loyalty to the allied cause and willingness to engage in active resistance by calling for some spectacular acts of sabotage to be carried out by the Danish army. The reactions of the Danes revealed that their concern was not merely to secure optimal conditions for the continuation of their intelligence work but also to keep
the Danish army intact – ready, as they liked to think, for deployment some great day in the distant future. Here their position was in accordance with the programme of the army’s general staff and in harmony with the policy of their government.

The confrontation lasted more than six months and was never quite resolved. It soured relations between the parties and affected their cooperation. While the Danish officers, perhaps inclined to overestimate the importance for the British of the intelligence provided, felt unappreciated and distrusted, the more activist among the SOE officers, for long sceptical about the need for complete peace and quiet in Denmark, reached a low opinion of the military morality and professional judgement of the Danish officers.

The events of 29 August 1943 broke up the League, as the senior intelligence officers called themselves. One was arrested and sent to Germany for the rest of the war and another temporarily interned in Denmark. Three went underground and ended up in Sweden, from where two of them, with the help of others and some support from the Swedish intelligence service, set out to restore the Danish service. This involved re-establishing a network of contacts across the country. The man entrusted with that task was lieutenant Svend Truelsen, a reservist of the Royal Life Guards who had been attached to the general staff and trained in intelligence work, and was now employed by the Agricultural Council. In a short time he managed to reorganize and develop a highly efficient network across the country, for both the army and the navy. While the network of informants in Copenhagen was expanded, the organization in the provinces was decentralized. Moreover, a direct telegraphic connection with London was set up.

In the course of this work, Truelsen established and maintained contact with members of Denmark’s freedom council, but declined a request to set up an independent intelligence service for the council. However, his connection with the resistance movement led him into conflict with the so-called small general staff, set up by younger officers of the army’s general staff during their internment in the aftermath of the events of August 1943. That body owed its existence not least to a prevailing nervousness within the Danish establishment, especially among the Social Democratic leaders, about Communist influence in the resistance movement and plans for the post-liberation situation. Hence it was determined to keep contact with the resistance movement to a minimum, and eager to secure control of the reorganized intelligence service. To this end, one of its members, major Svend Schjødt-Eriksen, assumed formal responsibility for the domestic part of the service,
which in principle included information about Communist activities in the country.

Schjødt-Eriksen belonged to a small group of younger officers who, out of frustration with the events of April 1940 and the defence policy of the country, had decided to join DNSAP in the summer of 1940. Only a passive member, he had left the party after some months, and later developed close relations with the Social Democratic leaders. The result of the struggle that ensued between him and Truelsen for control of the intelligence organization was that the latter in May 1944, by then hotly pursued by the Germans, had to escape to Sweden. As Gyth had done before him, he soon moved on to London, where he spent the rest of the war. However, while Gyth was largely ignored by SOE, Truelsen was appointed major and attached to its head office with responsibility for intelligence work. Subsequently he joined the Danish section, where he managed and organized intelligence work and participated in the planning of SOE actions in Denmark, notably the bombing by the Royal Air Force of three Gestapo headquarters.

After the departure of Truelsen, major F.B. Larsen took over the management of the intelligence service in Denmark. Like his predecessor, he guarded its independence of the small general staff. After Larsen’s arrest, in September 1944, by the Germans – who never realized whom they had caught – Schjødt-Eriksen assumed overall management of the service. By then, however, it was so decentralized that each region or section functioned more or less independently. The collection, transmission and presentation of intelligence were carried on efficiently till the end of the war. If the information produced turned out to be of relatively minor importance to the allied powers, it was because Denmark belonged to an area of low priority in the conduct of the war. However, towards the end of hostilities in western Europe, when at one stage it looked as if Denmark might become a theatre of war, the up-to-date and comprehensive information supplied by the Danish intelligence service was appreciated in the headquarters of the armies commanded by general Montgomery.

The third major unarmed form of active opposition was the propaganda that the illegal press directed against the Danish authorities and the occupying power. To the extent that the allied powers disapproved of the coalition government and its accommodating policy towards the occupying power and wanted the Danes to make a stand and resist the Germans, an illegal press that campaigned against the government and called for resistance was in effect supporting the allied cause. That such a press did not emerge till well into the second year of the occupation.
was partly because the allied powers themselves for a long time were not willing or ready to encourage the Danes to turn against their government and start resisting, but mainly for the reason that the political situation within Denmark itself was only then becoming conducive to the emergence of an illegal press.

In Britain, Denmark did not enjoy much respect in the period after 9 April 1940. At war with Germany since September, and now involved with the Norwegians in their fight against the invading forces of the German army, the British tended to overlook that Danish reactions to Nazi Germany before, during and after the invasion, were in harmony with the policy pursued by Britain itself practically up to the German invasion of Poland. Nor did they perhaps appreciate that the Danish policy of appeasement had been sealed in 1937, when the Foreign Office had indicated to the Danes that they could not expect British military support in case of German aggression against their country. If the British now censured the Danes for nonchalant conduct on 9 April and the following months it may have been mainly out of fear that the country might end up as vassal of Hitler’s Reich.

The policy that Britain later that year developed towards Denmark was to encourage the government to stand firm against German demands and pressures. In its propaganda, it made a distinction between the king and the government, building up the former while criticizing the latter. The criticism, however, was directed more at Scavenius and the other ministers without party-political attachments than at the party leaders in the government. In 1942, after the beginning of sabotage in Denmark, the propaganda switched aim, focusing the attack on collaborators among the public while leaving the government in peace. The immediate reason was still to protect the flow of information from the Danish intelligence officers. A more long-term consideration for the Foreign Office was to keep the Danish political structure intact in order to smooth a future transition from occupation to liberation and secure goodwill and cooperation from post-war governments. Thus Britain tried to balance between the existing government and the emerging resistance movement.

It was not till the spring and summer of 1943 that British propaganda towards Denmark again hardened. The entire government and its accommodating policy now came under attack, while those engaged in active resistance received some encouragement. However, while calling for a stepping up of sabotage and other forms of resistance, the British still did not want the government to collapse and the German authorities to assume complete control of the country. Their aim was to
encourage passive resistance by the public and militant efforts by the growing resistance movement, all within the existing political structure of the country. Thus, British propaganda was still conditioned by the political considerations of the Foreign Office on the one hand and motivated by the military ambitions of SOE on the other.

American policy, diplomacy and propaganda towards Denmark in the earlier years of the occupation, too, went through several stages. The first one lasted from April 1940 to April the following year, when the United States signed its agreement with Henrik Kauffmann about the defence of Greenland. The second stage came to an end with Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into the war in December 1941, which led to the closing of the American legation in Copenhagen the following month. The third stage concluded with the public rebellion in August 1943 and the retreat of the Danish government. Though the relationship between the two states was continuously complicated by Kauffmann’s declaration of independence of his government at the outset of the occupation and the partial acceptance by the United States of his unprecedented diplomatic status, the Washington administration endeavoured to stay on reasonably good terms with the government in Copenhagen throughout the whole period. Its reasons for pursuing that policy towards Denmark, however, varied from stage to stage.

The first year, when the outcome of the war in Europe was uncertain, the United States had good reasons to stay on cordial terms with Denmark. Any peace settlement which established Germany in a dominant position on the Continent and left a formally independent and neutral Denmark within a German sphere of influence would present a situation in which it might be in American, as well as in Danish, interest to maintain friendly relations between the two neutrals. Though the US administration was disturbed by a series of apparently voluntary concessions by the Danish government to the occupying power, it was sufficiently well informed to know that such acts were not motivated by Nazi sympathies or pro-German inclinations and to appreciate the reasons and calculations governing Danish conduct. Kauffmann’s campaign, which presented Denmark to the American public as a hostage to German power and its policy as forced upon the government, also helped the administration to tolerate Danish management of relations with the occupying power.

The second stage in US–Danish relations, up to December 1941, was marked by the agreement for the defence of Greenland. Signed by Kauffmann on behalf of a ‘free Denmark’, it inevitably burdened
American relations with the legitimate government of the country. Since the administration already then recognized the importance of also being able to maintain its military presence on Greenland after the end of the war, it was eager to limit any damage done by the independent envoy and by its open implicit acceptance of his diplomatic status in Washington. To mend relations with Copenhagen, president Roosevelt wrote a letter to the king, assuring him that the United States still recognized Danish sovereignty over Greenland and had merely taken charge of its defence.

After Pearl Harbor and the entry into the war, it became in some respects easier for the American administration to distance itself from the Danish government and start reconsidering Danish conduct of relations with the occupying power. Kauffmann’s personal accession, again on behalf of the ‘free Denmark’, to the Declaration of the United Nations on 2 January 1942 and other activist initiatives encouraged such a development. A certain amount of discreet competition with Britain in the sponsorship of a Danish resistance movement, and even in the projection of post-war spheres of influence on the European Continent, was a further incentive to begin to think of Denmark as a potential ally in the war. Yet, the policy and diplomacy of the administration remained ambiguous. Continuously well informed, mainly by its legation in Stockholm, about conditions and developments in Denmark, it understood and, in the period leading up to the events of August 1943, even came to respect Scavenius and his policy. Thus, at no stage of the first several years of the occupation did the American political authorities initiate or encourage a propaganda campaign directed against the Danish government and its policy of limited cooperation with the occupying power.

Till well into the occupation, the Soviet Union had reasons of its own not to engage in or encourage anti-German propaganda against the Danish government. Having signed a non-aggression pact with Germany in August 1939, with a secret additional protocol which divided eastern and central Europe into a Soviet and a German sphere of interest, the Soviet government was inclined to regard Denmark as belonging to the German sphere. When Germany invaded Denmark the Soviet envoy in Copenhagen referred to the event as the ‘arrival’ of German forces, and enjoined the Danish Communists to avoid critical comments on the occupation. Instead they should blame the British and French imperialists for the war, and the Social Democrats for letting Denmark become involved. Diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Denmark continued, with the Danish side seeking to expand trade between them and the Soviet representatives focusing their concern more on the strategic importance of Denmark, at the entrance to, and exit from, the Baltic.
The German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 immediately led to a breaking off of diplomatic relations between Copenhagen and Moscow. In the following period till the dissolution of Comintern in May 1943, the only significant political relations between the two countries were between the headquarters of that organization and the Danish Communist party. Here contact seems periodically to have been via the Swedish Communist party and intermittently by radio. After August 1943 the party had its own representative in Stockholm, Alvilda Larsen, and through her presumably regular contact with the Russians. On a broader and more public level, there was continuous contact during the war through Radio Moscow, which broadcast news and propaganda and issued orders and directives to the Communist parties of the occupied countries. During the last year of the occupation the resistance movement had its own representative in Moscow, Thomas Døssing who acted as envoy of the freedom council.

As an ally of the Western powers, the Soviet Union presented a new interpretation of the war. No longer a war of imperialist powers, it was a joint struggle for liberation from Nazi and fascist domination. In a speech broadcast on 3 July 1941 Stalin appealed for a united front of peoples in defence of freedom, thus reviving the tactical dogma of popular front enunciated by the Comintern congress in 1935. Shortly after, Moscow called upon the Communist parties in occupied countries to organize resistance through strikes, rebellions and guerrilla warfare.

Denmark, however, seems to have been of only marginal importance to the Russians, even in the later years of the war. Though still concerned about the future strategic importance of the Danish straits, they do not appear to have included this country in their plans for an expanded sphere of Soviet influence in the post-war world. Nor do they seem to have developed an active interest in the political life of the country. Though critical of the close cooperation of the government and administration with the occupying power and resentful of the anti-Soviet policy of the parliament and political leaders in 1941, the Russians did not go out of their way to encourage and support the Danish resistance movement, as a whole. Not too impressed with some of the people who represented it abroad, they thought it lacked efficient leadership and a political programme, and was far from being a mass movement. Thus, for a long time the Russian attitude to Danish resistance remained uncertain and hesitant. When the Soviet authorities eventually accepted a representative in Moscow of the ‘fighting Denmark’, they used him as a willing tool for their own purposes but did little to facilitate his ordinary work.
Yet, despite the late arrival of the Soviet Union as an allied power, its limited interest in Denmark, sceptical attitude to Danish resistance and minimal support for the movement, this power became a greater ideological inspiration and political influence than the Western allies for some more resistance-minded sections of the Danish public in the two years leading up to the events of August 1943. This was so particularly in the sphere of illegal publications and anti-government and anti-German propaganda. Here it was those who looked to Moscow, rather than to London, for inspiration and guidance who seized the initiative. At both local and national levels, it was Communists, whether party members or sympathizers, who took the lead in setting up an illegal press. Spearheading the counter-offensive against the German propaganda machine, this press played an important part in shattering the image of occupied Denmark as a model protectorate of governmental cooperation and social order promoted by Nazi Germany.

Whatever the attitudes of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union to Danish politics, it was largely because of the situation within Denmark itself that a year or two went by before propaganda against the coalition government and the German authorities got under way. Till the autumn of 1941 the general public saw little need for an illegal press which could publish uncensored news and influence public opinion. Conditioned by generations of neutrality in foreign policy and affected by anti-militarist attitudes and pacifist ideas, it was at that early stage quite willing to accept the policy of cooperation forced upon the government by the prime minister and the king. Once they had adapted to the situation of an occupied country, most people were able to put up with a radio and press which, though restricted by governmental guidelines and German control, did provide daily information about Danish relations with the German authorities and the progress of the war. Those who wanted uncensored facts and opinions could read the Swedish newspapers, provided they understood the language, or tune in to the BBC, which broadcast in Danish from the beginning of the occupation. Listening to the BBC was not expressly forbidden, though many Danes thought it was.

The turning-point was the banning of the Communist party after the German attack on the Soviet Union. With its leading members arrested and interned or living underground, the party needed an illegal press to present its views and further its cause. Its first such publication, the pamphlet *Danske Toner*, came in September 1941. It contained the speech against the bill to ban the party that Aksel Larsen, its leader, had been unable to make in parliament. The following month the first issue
of the monthly *Politiske Maanedsbreve* appeared in duplicated form. Renamed *Land og Folk* in March 1942, and eventually properly printed, it became the foremost illegal paper of the country, appearing in numerous local editions and maintaining a print run of 120–130,000 in the last few years of the occupation. From May 1943 to the end of the occupation the party also published *Nyt fra Sovietunionen*. Moreover, a large number of illegal papers, of various sizes and varying regularity, were published by local Communist groups during the later years of the war. Always attaching great importance to propaganda, the Communists dominated the illegal press up to August 1943 and went on to play a major part in this form of resistance till the end of the war.

From the autumn of 1941 a few non-Communist groups, too, were formed for the purpose of publishing illegal papers. One of the first was a small group in Copenhagen which started *De frie Danske*. Its first number, appearing in December, was a protest against the Anti-Comintern Pact and a plea for the government to refuse future demands by the enemy. From January 1942 Frode Jakobsen’s Ring published *Det politiske*. In August the same year the first number of *Studenternes Efterretningstjeneste* appeared. It was published by a group of Conservative students in Copenhagen, who the previous November had set up a group under the same name in connection with the demonstration against the Anti-Comintern Pact. It became a fortnightly, which by the spring of 1944 reached a print run in excess of 100,000.

The most important development in the illegal press of 1942, however, was the emergence of *Frit Danmark*. That paper, as well as the organization by the same name, owed their origins to plans, developed by the Communist party the previous autumn, for a broad, cross-party illegal forum. The project took concrete form when Christmas Møller, leader of the Conservatives, joined forces with Aksel Larsen with a view to creating an organ which could serve as a mouthpiece for a national rally of those ready to oppose the policy of the government and resist the occupying power. A cross-party editorial committee was set up, and the first issue published in April. From an early stage, the driving force behind the paper was Børge Houmann, who also edited *Land og Folk* and other Communist publications. Moreover, for its printing and distribution *Frit Danmark* had to rely on the facilities and networks already organized by the Communist party. Thus, *Frit Danmark*, the paper together with the organization, may be seen as a cover organization of the Communist party, set up in accordance with the tactical slogan of national front against the enemy. However, the paper had a non-Communist co-editor throughout its existence, in the earlier period Ole Kiilerich and later
Kate Fleron, both Conservatives. Thus, from another point of view, *Frit Danmark* may be deemed a successful exercise in cross-party cooperation, with both sides of the political spectrum represented, each in rough proportion to the degree of its ideological commitment to the anti-Nazi cause and the level of its organizational preparedness for active resistance in 1942.

In a deliberate attempt to create a counterweight to the dominating influence of the Communists in the illegal press, several new papers were launched in the earlier part of 1943. One was *Danske Tidende*, which came out in January with Conservative and Social Democratic sponsorship. Another was *Hjemmefronten*, set up by Kiilerich and other Conservative Youth (KU) members and launched the following month. Despite raids, arrests and imprisonment, all the illegal papers mentioned here managed to maintain publication up to May 1945. Moreover, a large number of new publications appeared after August 1943, with the result that more than 250 different papers were in circulation in 1944–45.

In the same period a few illegal news services were set up to provide reliable information to editors, of both illegal and legal sections of the press, as well as to the world press. One was *Information*, a service instituted and, till his arrest in October 1944, run by Børge Outze, then a journalist working for the national newspaper *Nationaltidende*. This service prepared daily reports on the sort of news and information that could not be published legally and distributed them to a small circle of interested parties. The list of subscribers eventually included also editors of Communist papers, who since January 1943 had had their own news service, *Ugens Nyt* edited by Houmann. Via Sweden, *Information* also managed to keep other countries informed about developments within Denmark.

After the events on 29 August 1943 a number of Danish journalists stationed in Stockholm, finding themselves cut off from the legal papers they represented, decided to set up a central news service of their own, which they named *Dansk Pressetjeneste*. Its aim was to collect news from Denmark and pass it on to the world press, and thus help popularize the Danish resistance movement. Led by Erik Seidenfaden, the service eventually had a staff of about 50, with its own correspondents in the major Danish ports of shipment. News for the BBC’s Danish section was sent telegraphically, and used selectively in broadcasts to Denmark. During the mass strike in Copenhagen in the summer of 1944 the service succeeded in keeping the attention of the press of the free world for several days.
The establishment of the freedom council affected the illegal press in several ways. First, the council became a source of illegal publications of its own. Within a month of its formation it published the pamphlet *Naar Danmark atter er frit* (Once Denmark again is free), its programme for the immediate post-war situation. Representing a compromise between the different views of influential members of the council, the pamphlet served to allay the widespread fear among the public of the Communist section of the resistance and to moderate the revengefulness of parts of the illegal press. Written mainly by Mogens Fog, it became an important historical document. Later followed a long line of directives which, striking the public as wise and responsible, enhanced the authority of the freedom council. Statements and instructions were usually published in *Information*, which thus became the mouthpiece of the freedom council. Several members of the council, Houmann and Fog in particular, wrote frequently for *Frit Danmark*, the political line of which was to the left of the council’s.

Another way in which the freedom council exerted influence on the illegal press was through the setting up of a press committee. It started as an attempt to pacify certain right-of-centre illegal organizations and papers, including *Studenternes Efterretningstjeneste*, *Danske Tidende* and *Hjemmefronten*, which initially were inclined to disown the freedom council as a self-appointed body dominated by the Communist party and Danish Unity at the expense of less extremist sections of the resistance. In the winter of 1943–44 Arne Sørensen, leader of Danish Unity and member of the freedom council, took up negotiations with its opponents in the illegal press, with a view to forming a link between them and the council. In February the press committee was established, with representatives from both sides. Soon Outze from *Information* joined too. Though the freedom council failed to dominate the views and positions espoused by the illegal press and the press failed to control the decisions and statements made by the council, the weekly meetings of the committee did help to coordinate the efforts of the parties involved, especially in some crucial situations.

A retrospective study of the political contents of the bulk of the illegal press, from the autumn of 1941 to the spring of 1945, revealed some common features as well as a broad development. The minimal shared programme of the press in the first year, up to the autumn of 1942, was to expose breaches of faith by the occupying power and to oppose acts of deliberate cooperation by the government. In the following period, up to August 1943, there was broad agreement about supporting and encouraging sabotage and criticizing and opposing the
government, which was maintaining its policy of cooperation and carrying on a campaign against sabotage. There was also solid support for a hate campaign against collaborators, Nazis, informers and women having relations with German soldiers. In the last year of the occupation, well after the emergence of the freedom council and the establishment of its press committee, the illegal press reached a broad consensus in support of intensified sabotage, recurrent anti-German demonstrations and resolute liquidation of informers. When the freedom council, in the summer of 1944, found itself in disagreement with the politicians about the phasing out of the mass strike in Copenhagen, it enjoyed the solid backing of the illegal press. One reason why this press eventually could identify with the freedom council was that SOE had accepted the council as representing the leadership of Danish resistance and British propaganda had promoted it accordingly.

The overall trends in the illegal press were a hardening of opposition to the policy of cooperation pursued by the coalition government and the central administration and an intensification of propaganda against the occupying power and its collaborators. Seen from one point of view, this pattern simply reflected political developments within the country, in relations between the public and the government and administration as well as in interaction with the authorities of the occupying power, both of which ultimately were conditioned by the course of the war among the great powers. Yet, the illegal press itself obviously had some influence on those political developments in occupied Denmark.

In a situation in which the legal media of the country were prevented from carrying negative information about the occupying power and encouraged to support the accommodating policy of the government, even an emergent and sectarian illegal press which exposed the conduct of the Germans and criticized the policy of the government must have played some part in strengthening anti-German sentiments and weakening support for governmental policy at least in some sections of society. In a later situation, in which a broader and more representative illegal press promoted sabotage and opposed the government, such a press seems likely to have had a significant role in helping to educate a wider public and preparing the ground for various forms of resistance. In the final situation, which arose after the retreat of the government and the establishment of the freedom council, a fully-fledged illegal press soon became an integral part of the resistance movement, serving as an essential means of communication at critical stages and a useful forum for debate about long-term aims. From an international perspective,
Militant resistance

The last part of the spectrum of Danish reactions to German occupation presented here comprises various sorts of militant activity, each apt to lead to violent confrontations, namely sabotage and liquidations, demonstrations and strikes, organizing a resistance army, and serving with the forces of an allied power. Engaging in sabotage and executing informers was generally the closest members of the resistance movement came to actually fighting the Germans in the country. Participating in anti-German demonstrations and strikes was often the defiant reactions of sections of a public provoked by German reprisals following a wave of sabotage. Setting up a secret army ready to support allied forces in battles on Danish soil was part of the resistance movement’s preparations for a situation which, as it turned out, never arose. Enrolling in the armed forces of an allied power, whether in a regular unit or in the special forces of SOE, was the choice of Danes eager to join the fight against Nazi Germany and its allies.

In the first few years of the occupation there was not much sabotage. Nearly everybody was against it. Official Denmark, from the government to the police and the law courts, condemned it and punished perpetrators severely. The press and public opinion denounced it as irresponsible and dangerous, liable to provoke the Germans and upset the precarious relations with the occupying power. The allied powers refrained from encouraging it. Even SOE, cautioned by the Foreign Office and besieged by the Danish intelligence officers, for a long time held back. Above all, there was no organized movement in the country to plan and carry out sabotage. Thus, the acts that did take place during the first year or two were, on the whole, not only few but also casual, minor and insignificant.

The first real sabotage group to come to the attention of the public was the Churchill Club in Aalborg. Formed early in 1942, it was made up mainly of high-school students in the 15–17 age group, all from respectable middle-class homes. In April and May they carried out about 25 relatively minor acts of sabotage directed against the Germans, including arson and vandalism as well as some thefts of weapons. After arrest and imprisonment, a few of them, using the blade of a hacksaw,
managed to leave and return to their cell at night-time and thus for many weeks continue their sabotage in the town. Two of the older ones were sentenced by a German court martial to 10 and 15 years and sent to gaol in Germany. The others ended up in a Danish prison, where they were allowed to continue their high-school studies. While the name of the group indicated the pro-British orientation of its members, their actions, together with their conduct in court, constituted a challenge to their parents’ cautious and timid generation.

It was not till well into 1942 that the first signs of more organized forms of sabotage appeared. Here, too, it was Communists who took the lead. After a straw poll round major places of work, the party decided to organize sabotage against industrial production of military importance for Germany. The first result was a series of fires across the country in the summer months. The Germans reacted by demanding greater efforts by Danish authorities to prevent such incidents and threatening to resort to German courts martial. The government’s response was a broadcast address on 2 September, in which prime minister Buhl deemed sabotage an act against the national interest, appealed to the public to assist the police in its investigations and warned about the risk of loss of Danish jurisdiction in such matters. Only a few days later, Christmas Møller made his speech over the BBC in which he, ignoring the British censors, strongly urged the nation to engage in sabotage against the enemy. At that stage, the Danish population, still rightly suspecting sabotage to be largely the work of Communists and gangs of youths, was overwhelmingly opposed to it.

During the following winter the Communists continued their offensive, now also using explosives. The first successful railway sabotage, again carried out by a Communist group, took place north of Copenhagen in November. However, it was not till January 1943 that sabotage became a regular illegal activity. For a long time it remained largely the work of Communist groups. Yet, by the spring SOE, now with a new leader in Denmark and more men in the field, was beginning to establish some management and control of those actions. As instructors and organizers, the SOE men helped to strengthen existing groups and set up new ones, mainly in the larger provincial towns. They also introduced new materials, especially plastic explosives. About the same time non-socialist sabotage groups and organizations were formed, mostly in Copenhagen. Usually having better connections with the established authorities, not least with the police in parts of Copenhagen, such groups provided a counterpart to the Communist organizations, thus helping to make sabotage more acceptable to the public. The result
of those developments was marked intensification of sabotage in the summer of 1943, which provoked the German authorities and helped to touch off the interaction between German threats and reprisals and Danish demonstrations and strikes, a process which culminated in the events of August.

After the retreat of the government and the introduction of German police in Denmark acts of sabotage grew, in size as well as in number. The major targets were large concerns linked with the armaments industry, such as Riffelsyndikatet and Globus, and shipyards building ships for German use. But many smaller factories or repair shops which, directly or indirectly, worked for German bodies as well as numerous retail shops were also destroyed. And railway sabotage, mainly in Jutland, grew steadily. However, the earlier months of 1944 showed a decline in both industrial and railway sabotage, mainly as a result of an SOE call for a pause in such activities. The subsequent retreat of the German armies across Europe and the approach of the allied forces, giving rise to the expectation that the war would soon be finished, greatly encouraged selective forms of sabotage. In common with other activities of the resistance movement, sabotage now attracted ever broader support from the public.

Sabotage, at the level of intensity reached during the last two years of the occupation, required efficient organization, not only of the planning and carrying out of the various acts but also of communication with England and reception of instructors, explosives and weapons from abroad. The first large sabotage organization had its roots in the efforts of a score of Communists in Copenhagen in the summer of 1942. The Danish police eventually arrested so many of them that the Communist party in the course of the winter decided to broaden the membership of the organization and, in the name of popular front, include also non-Communists. As a private joke, the new groups, made up mainly of students, were referred to as bourgeois partisans or BOPA, which later became the name of the whole organization. Over its less than three years of existence, BOPA had nearly 400 members, of whom 175 remained at the end of the occupation. About 40 had been killed and most of the rest either arrested or driven to escape to Sweden. Despite the many arrests and casualties, the organization retained its dual composition, most of its members being either mechanics or students, and stayed largely under Communist control.

The leader of BOPA in 1944–45 was Børge Thing, code-named Brandt. Under his leadership, the organization carried out many minor and some large and well-planned actions, all in the Copenhagen area.
A few amounted to regular partisan attacks, carried out in daylight against well-guarded industrial concerns and involving exchange of fire and throwing of bombs. The organization also performed about 30 liquidations of informers. In the last weeks before the German capitulation BOPA was attached directly to the freedom council as an elite group, ready to engage in military action if required. After a final parade in the summer of 1945 the organization was disbanded.

The other large sabotage organization operating in the Copenhagen area was Holger Danske, called after the mythical Ogier the Dane. With the cross-country sports movement and the illegal paper De frie Danske among its sources of origin and with later links to Danish Unity and the Ring, it established itself as a non-socialist counterpart of BOPA. But Holger Danske was larger, looser, more democratic and less disciplined. Repeatedly plagued by casualties and arrests, it had to be rebuilt or reorganized several times during its two years of existence. First set up in April 1943 with Josef Søndergaard, code-named Tom, as the central figure, the group relied initially on BOPA for instruction and explosives but within a few months established contact with SOE. During the summer of that year it carried out, partly with British materials, a number of actions. One of them, namely the blowing up of the central public building Forum, was so spectacular that most of the members of the group, including the seriously injured Søndergaard, had to escape to Sweden.

The organization was rebuilt by Jens Lillelund, who through a connection in Danish Unity was able to establish contact with SOE agents in the country as well as with the freedom council. From October five sabotage groups were in existence, one made up of cornets and another of naval cadets and students. The latter group, led by a teacher Svend Otto Nielsen known as John, carried out a number of acts of industrial sabotage, relying on teams which combined bombing experts and marksmen. In the course of the winter, however, practically all the groups were uncovered, many of its leaders and members being arrested or forced to escape. Lillelund and Nielsen were denounced by a female informer. While the former got away, the latter was seriously wounded and arrested by German police, and later executed. Lillelund’s successor, and briefly Danish Unity’s representative in the freedom council, Jørgen Staffeldt died in a German concentration camp.

The rebuilding of the organization started in the spring of 1944, after a dissatisfied BOPA member had broken away and taken two groups with him, and subsequently attached himself and his men to Holger Danske. New groups were recruited, and Lillelund was recalled
from Sweden. He soon arranged for Holger Danske to be linked to Frode Jakobsen’s Ring, instead of to Danish Unity, which strengthened the organization’s representation in the freedom council. Sabotage activities, which the groups had started again in the early part of the summer, were resumed late in the autumn, after a lengthy lull following the general strike in Copenhagen.

However, in its revived form, Holger Danske was more than a sabotage organization. From the summer of 1944 it saw itself also as a military unit preparing to play a part in a final encounter with the forces of the occupying power and its uniformed collaborators. In the meantime members of the organization carried out a large number of liquidations in the Copenhagen area, perhaps nearly 200, mainly of known informers but in some cases also of persons whose behaviour or company made them obvious security risks. Some groups organized ruthless attacks on armed units of Danish guards and others serving the German authorities, such as the hated Sommer Corps. Not all such executions and attacks had the approval of the leadership of the organization, or the sanction of the freedom council. Like some acts of sabotage, they were occasionally carried out by local groups, or even individual members, without authorizations from above. Throughout its existence Holger Danske lost 64 men, some killed in action and other executed by the Germans, but it still had about 350 members by the end of the occupation.

The major activities of the two largest sabotage organizations were usually directed against industrial concerns and shipyards in or near the capital which, in one way or another, served the interests of the occupying power. In the provinces, sabotage was much more against railways. Since the aim of such sabotage was to delay and harass German transports, most of it by far took place in Jutland. It was usually there that the occupying power moved men and equipment to and from Germany and, especially in the last year of the war, from Norway to Germany. Troops and armaments moving southwards might be needed on one of the fronts. The selection of targets and timing of actions depended largely on reports about planned German movements received from contacts within the Danish State Railways (DSB).

Till late in the summer of 1943 railway sabotage, in Jutland and elsewhere in the country, was essentially the work of Communist groups. By the autumn of that year, however, groups operating within the ambit of SOE were making their presence felt. The most remarkable action took place in November, when the railway bridges over the Gudenaa, a small river in North Jutland, were blasted and the line disrupted for 12 days. After the pause in the first half of 1944 railway sabotage grew
significantly. In response to orders issued by allied headquarters after the invasion of Normandy in June, the resistance movement stepped up its efforts to sabotage the transport of German troops to and from Denmark. The effect, however, was not particularly impressive. Six months later, after the launch of the German Ardennes offensive, London demanded faster and more powerful sabotage. Lieutenant colonel Vagn Bennike, then leader of the resistance in Jutland, responded by introducing a system of coded signals, transmitted by the BBC in its Danish broadcasts, for ordering collective discharge of sabotage at several points of the railway system. This soon led to a marked improvement in the effectiveness of Danish efforts. Though a retrospective analysis has shown that the delays caused by railway sabotage were on the whole fairly minimal, this form of resistance did cause the occupying power considerable inconvenience. In the last winter of the war it had to allocate many thousands of troops to guarding the railway tracks.

Historians have calculated the total number of proper acts of industrial and other non-railway sabotage to be in the region of 2,800 and that of railway sabotage to exceed 1,500. Though obviously a hostile activity directed, instantly or ultimately, at the occupying power, such sabotage, like most isolated efforts in a great war, may well have been less effective in military terms than most of those closely involved with it at the time believed it to be. However, sabotage should also be seen in terms of its psychological and political, and even its diplomatic, impact in the later years of the occupation. For people humiliated by the capitulation in 1940 and frustrated by the accommodating attitude to the Germans of Danish authorities in subsequent years sabotage served as a release, not only for freedom fighters actively involved but also for more passive members of the public. As a forthright act of defiance of the enemy in the country, it was an explicit indication of anti-German attitudes and anti-Nazi convictions.

Politically, sabotage – together with its two concomitants, demonstrations and strikes – constituted a challenge to both the German and the Danish authorities. It rocked the rationale behind the German notion of peace occupation and the policy of negotiating agreements with the occupied country; and it undermined the Danish fiction of sovereignty and the policy of maintaining law and order in the country while cooperating with the occupying power. Diplomatically, sabotage was a friendly greeting to the Soviet Union from the fighting Denmark, and an explicit demonstration to the British and American allies of Danish will to play an active part in the struggle against Nazi Germany. Thus sabotage, together with the industrial strikes
and public protests of 1943 and 1944, helped prepare the way for the Danish bid for allied status in the later period of the occupation.

From the spring and summer of 1943, when the sabotage groups were growing increasingly dependent on SOE for guidance about targets and timing and for supply of instructors and material, rapid and efficient contact with London was becoming essential. Already the first parachute drops of agents – of lieutenant Thomas Sneum in September 1941, representing SIS, and of the ill-fated SOE captain C.J. Bruhn in December the same year – had included a radio telegraphist with relevant equipment. Others followed with later drops. But there were problems, to do with the equipment as well as with the telegraphists themselves. The senders, large and heavy, were often lost or damaged in the drop. For the telegraphists, not all of them sufficiently trained by their British instructors, the efficient German detector vans were frequently more than a match.

Most of those problems were solved when L.A. Duus Hansen, Bang & Olufsen’s chief engineer, became involved. Several of the early agents had turned to him for technical advice and spare parts, as a result of which he had become familiar with the English equipment and the code system. Himself a trained telegraphist, he offered to take over some of the sending. From the spring of 1943 the Danish intelligence officers, whose contact with London so far had been essentially by letter, used him for urgent military messages. A few months later, after several unsuccessful attempts by SOE to send more telegraphists and equipment to Denmark, Duus Hansen suggested that Danish-trained telegraphists and Danish-built senders be used henceforth. Though not in accordance with established SOE rules of security, his proposal was eventually accepted by London. From the autumn of 1943 Duus Hansen was the leader of all Danish radio communication with the free world.

Duus Hansen’s main contributions were technical and organizational. He constructed new and more practical types of senders, some of which were as light as 1.5 kg (only one tenth of the weight of the British type) and small enough to fit into a briefcase (instead of a suitcase). They could also be used as receivers. Suitable for both AC and DC, they could even be run from the battery of a car, which made it possible to outwit the German detector vans by frequent and rapid changes of location. The advantages of the new transmitters were so obvious that the British introduced them in other countries where SOE was active.

Duus Hansen also found a number of proficient and reliable telegraphists who were able to learn the British codes and ready to start
serving areas of the country which had been without adequate contact with London. His brother H.K. Duus Hansen, who as a veterinary surgeon had a suitably ambulant profession, started sending from Funen in March 1944. After some serious initial misfortunes, other telegraphists managed to establish continual sending from parts of Jutland from July the same year. On Zealand, which had had permanent radio contact with London since September 1943, automatic high-speed transmitters able to send eight to ten times faster than by hand were introduced in the summer of 1944. While Copenhagen acquired five such instruments, Jutland got only two. The organization also ran a workshop for the manufacture of transmitters.

Under Duus Hansen’s leadership the security system was greatly improved. As a rule, each telegraphist had more than one transmitter at his disposal and many places to send from. He also had a team of trained and armed guards to transport transmitters from place to place and to warn him when the Germans approached. Yet the struggle with the German detection system, constantly being refined, continued till the end of the occupation, sometimes with tragic results. To avoid straining the direct radio link to London more than necessary, Duus Hansen established a wireless telephone connection with Sweden across the Sound, and later a high-speed (UHF) connection which allowed him to transmit to London using Malmø as relay. The Germans failed to discover those means of communication. Thus, after a slow and difficult start, Denmark ended up with a highly efficient system of wireless communication, which both technically and organizationally became recognized as exemplary.

The reception on the ground of agents, equipment, explosives and arms, too, was marked by first dedicated and heroic performances by outstanding individuals and then by growing organization, at both local and national levels. The first proper reception, with a team on the ground, took place in the night of 12 March 1943 near Mariager in Jutland. Here a Royal Air Force aircraft, having already dropped the new SOE leader Flemming B. Muus and three other agents elsewhere in the country, delivered six containers. The team was led by Flemming Juncker, a landed proprietor with links to Danish Unity who since 1941 had been involved in active resistance and had become leader of the emerging movement in Jutland, and by Ole Geisler, captain in SOE who only the previous month had been parachuted into Denmark as leader of a team of four agents.

The containers received were transported on a horse-drawn carriage by Marius Fiil, owner of the Hvidsten Inn. Round him and his inn
a group was formed for the reception of future drops on a local site. In the course of the spring and summer five drops were received there. Since they included not only weapons and explosives but also seven SOE agents, the Hvidsten group played a significant part in the subsequent expansion of this organization’s work in Denmark. Within a year, however, almost the entire group was arrested by the Gestapo. Eight of its members, including Marius Fiiil and two close family members, were executed and others imprisoned, several in Germany.

In the course of the summer of 1943 a further half dozen drops took place in Jutland and on Funen and Zealand, with the new SOE agents now helping local groups to arrange reception of the containers and packages and distribution of their contents. From August of that year till the following summer only a few drops took place, mainly because the British and the Americans, fighting the Germans in Italy and busy preparing the invasion of Normandy, had higher priorities than arming the Danes, but also because the resistance movement was undergoing nation-wide organization. In accordance with SOE directives received by Muus, the country was to be divided into six regions, each to have its own organizer with direct radio link to England and its own military groups for future action. Those plans affected also the arrangements for receiving and distributing weapons.

Jutland was nominally divided into three regions. For a long time, however, Juncker maintained a degree of overall authority in that part of the country. In March 1944, after a wave of arrests of members of his organization, he made Anton Toldstrup leader of reception. Toldstrup, an active member of the cross-country sports movement who had links to Danish Unity, immediately organized reception groups in north and mid Jutland (regions 1 and 2). His energy and efficiency soon secured him a place in the unofficial leadership of resistance in Jutland. When Juncker the following month had to escape to Sweden – from where he continued to London, to become SOE’s organizer of despatches to Denmark – he left the movement in Jutland in the hands of Vagn Bennike and Toldstrup. When drops started in August, and rapidly reached substantial proportions, the latter was still in charge of receptions. Subsequently, however, he took over the leadership of region 1 at the request of Bennike. This arrangement led to a bitter feud between the army officer and the civilian resistance leader, in which the latter enjoyed the support of London. In the last months of the occupation Toldstrup again concentrated on the organization of reception.

On Funen (region 4) the leader of reception and distribution became Erik Frandsen, an engineer and instructor in the local cross-country
association who, as member of the leadership of resistance in Odense, had been responsible for sabotage. During the last seven months of the occupation the organization he built up managed to take delivery of about 30 drops, with approximately 700 containers, practically without losses. On Zealand and Lolland-Falster (region 5) Stig Jensen, editor and former lieutenant with friends in Danish Unity, became reception chief in the autumn of 1944. A veteran of Danish resistance and one of SOE’s first contacts in the country, he built up an organization which reflected his concern with security. Insisting on using only people not involved in other forms of resistance, he separated reception from transport and distribution and kept contact between groups to a bare minimum. The efficiency of his organization was decisive for meeting the needs for weapons and ammunition of the large resistance organizations in the Copenhagen area (region 6), in the months before German capitulation.

Altogether about 620 tons of weapons, explosives and other British or American materials were delivered to Denmark by air, most of it small arms. The great majority of the missions were carried out by the RAF on behalf of SOE, some of the flights crewed by Poles. At the later stage of hostilities, when SOE cooperated with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), its American counterpart, under the joint name of Special Forces, American aircraft, too, carried out missions to Denmark. A further few hundred tons were transferred to Danish fishing boats on the high seas or smuggled in via Sweden. While the Danish side of the former traffic was handled by Toldstrup’s organization, the latter operation was initiated by Ebbe Munck and carried out with the tacit consent of the Swedish authorities. In the later period of the occupation the supply of weapons was meant not so much for current operations of the resistance movement as for use by the illegal army then being set up to be available in case of an allied invasion of Denmark.

Hand in hand with sabotage, as concurrent militant activities directed against both Danish and German authorities, went demonstrations and strikes. In the first few years of the occupation, when the public largely supported the policy of cooperation and put up with the German presence in the country and many workers feared having to join the legion of the unemployed, there were very few industrial strikes and public demonstrations. Any such manifestations of dissatisfaction that did appear were usually minor and economically motivated, reflecting the severe effects of the war on the daily lives of wage earners in particular. It was not till early 1943 that illegal strikes and demonstrations became more numerous and serious, and began to take on a decidedly anti-government and anti-German character.
One reason for this development was the efforts of Communists, more of the men on the shop floor than of the party leaders, to exploit growing feelings of discontent and restlessness among workers in key industries and turn them against Social Democratic and trade union leaders, who generally were staunch supporters of the coalition government and its policy of cooperation with the German authorities. Another reason was a more general change in public attitudes to that policy and to the German presence in the country, a change which no doubt was conditioned by spectacular defeats of German armies in Russia and Italy and optimistic rumours of an early collapse of the Axis. A third factor in that development was the wave of sabotage that was building up in the earlier part of 1943. While significant acts of such nature might spur on the workers to challenge the Danish authorities and spite the occupying power, German reprisals to the sabotage could provoke industrial strikes and public demonstrations.

Odense presented the first notable case of sabotage leading to strike. One of the last days in July an SOE group carried out sabotage against a mine vessel at the local shipyard. When the Germans responded by placing armed guards on board the ship the workers immediately went on a sit-down strike, arguing tongue-in-cheek that ‘the rifles could go off’. The strike quickly spread to other places of work within the town’s iron industry, with about 3,000 men walking out, and lasted more than a week. By then, however, the unrest had spread to Esbjerg on the west coast of Jutland, where a Communist group had set fire to the fish warehouses and scuffles between German soldiers and local people had broken out during the fire-fighting. When the German commandant imposed a curfew the street disturbances spread, and a strike, organized by Communist shop stewards, closed down the engineering industry of the town. After some inconclusive negotiations between Social Democratic representatives of the trade union, who were against the strike, and the Communist strike leaders, a large meeting of workers called for a general strike until the Germans lifted the state of emergency. On 11 August the entire town closed down, which remained the situation till the Germans agreed to end the curfew.

After the victory of the protest movement in Esbjerg the disturbances spread to Funen, where Odense again became the focus of confrontation with the Germans and their collaborators. It started with Danes, including some soldiers, going on the attack in the streets. After a few days of restraint, the German commandant sent out patrols to quell the disturbances. This led to bloody street fights with more than a dozen Danish casualties. The next morning, on 18 August, a call for a general
strike went out. Within a few hours the town was in open revolt. The following days were marked by demonstrations in the street, rallies of workers, assaults on the properties of collaborators and punishment of women associating with Germans as well as by continual clashes with members of the Schalburg Corps and German patrols. In one incident a German officer who happened to be passing through the country was handled so roughly that it nearly became a case of mob lynching.

In response to intense German pressure, the local police force was rapidly reinforced from other parts of the country to help deal with the situation in the streets. With a view to stopping the strike and putting an end to the Communist agitation, the trade union leaders and the Social Democratic mayor negotiated an agreement with the Germans, but failed to secure the acceptance of the workers. The strike, organized and directed by Communists and goaded on by a series of acts of sabotage carried out by local groups, continued. At this point the situation seemed critical enough for Paul Kanstein, SS officer responsible for the internal administration of the country, Nils Svenningsen from the foreign ministry and Johannes Kjærbo, minister of labour, to travel to Funen and help bring about a solution. The local negotiators, helped by the support from Copenhagen but opposed by a strike committee dominated by Communists, reached another deal with the Germans, who again agreed to keep their soldiers off the streets for the next few days. The strike was called off on 23 August and work resumed the following day. Since the occupying power had accepted a compromise, the strike was regarded as a victory for the protest movement.

In the meantime the movement had spread to the smaller towns on Funen and a few on Zealand and to Jutland, mainly to towns in its eastern and northern parts. There the development in Aalborg, Denmark’s fourth largest town, became particularly dramatic. The occasion that touched off demonstrations and strike was the death of a young saboteur killed in a shoot-out between a resistance group and German soldiers. When the funeral on 23 August was advanced by some hours in order to avoid violent demonstrations and German military intervention, the town went on a strike immediately. Demonstrations in the town centre led to violent clashes, in which German soldiers used tanks and carbines to suppress the activists and killed several people. After more casualties the following day, the strike was intensified, and now specifically linked to a demand for the withdrawal of troops from the streets. When the Social Democratic trade union leaders negotiated a deal with the German commandant, a meeting of shop stewards in which unskilled workers and Communists were strongly represented rejected it. A mass
meeting led to more violent clashes, in which the Germans, on the orders of general von Hanneken, deployed armed patrols and imposed a state of emergency. The situation remained deadlocked till 29 August, when the national emergency eclipsed the resistance in Aalborg.

The events of the month leading up to 29 August gave rise to several myths. One was that the occupying power deliberately provoked the rebellion to prepare the way for a more forceful policy in Denmark. On the contrary, in town after town the German commandant exercised a degree of restraint to avoid exacerbating the conflict, or gave way to help bringing it to an end. Preoccupied with the possibility of an allied invasion, the German authorities had little interest in upsetting the established political and diplomatic balance in the country. Nor can London be held responsible for bringing about or abetting the rebellion. Neither the Foreign Office nor the masters of SOE wanted a popular revolt at that stage of the war, especially not one instigated or led by Communists. Nor can the events of August be attributed to the strategies or tactics of the Communist party as such. The leaderships in Copenhagen and the major provincial towns could hardly be enthusiastic about unpredictable events which disclosed the identities of local leaders and, by challenging the Social Democrats, compromised the Communist tactics of united front. Not even the idea, so popular with Danish authorities at the time, of itinerant Communist trouble-makers travelling from town to town and touching off disturbances seems well founded.

After thorough research at grass-roots level, Danish historians have shown that the August rebellions, in the 17 provincial capitals and market towns in which they occurred, were primarily the work of local industrial workers. Often instigated by Communist shop stewards, who seem largely to have been acting on their own initiative, and sometimes coordinated with local resistance groups, calls for strikes and demonstrations drew a quick response from workers whose dissatisfaction and anger had reached flash-point. Occasionally well-timed acts of sabotage followed by German or pro-German measures of retaliation helped to consolidate their support. However, it was not only workers who were ready for actions of protest. At that stage of the war and the occupation many other people, too, were becoming increasingly frustrated by the political and social situation, and more inclined to challenge the authority of the occupier. Thus, in town after town salaried employees, employers, shopkeepers and professionals responded to the call for strike, quickly turning it into a general strike, or town strike as it was also described. This sudden and simultaneous emergence in many provincial towns of a fairly broad-based protest movement weakened
the authority of the Danish government and undermined its policy of cooperation.

The combination of strikes and demonstrations that erupted in Copenhagen the following summer was even more dramatic. By then not only the international but also the national political situation had changed markedly. The elated optimism which already in the summer of 1943 had superseded the general pessimism which had prostrated the nation in the first years after the invasion had now been reinforced through the allied invasion of Normandy in June. One effect was a widespread conviction that the war in Europe was reaching its end, which was matched by a growing desire to show some defiance of the Germans still in the country.

An important difference in the domestic situation from the summer of 1943 was that there was no longer a working government, with responsible ministers ready to call for law and order when tension with the occupying power threatened to reach crisis point. The pressure on the population of the German military and police forces was now more direct. The wave of sabotage in June which, as mentioned above, included some spectacular and successful attacks in Copenhagen, led to a sharp increase in that pressure. The retaliatory measures included the execution of eight members of the resistance, the introduction of military courts on Zealand and a number of devastating acts by members of the Schalburg Corps, including the blowing up of the Tivoli concert hall. Provoked by such measures, the workers in Copenhagen, still dissatisfied with their economic deal but, in a situation close to full employment, now no longer so cowed by the spectre of unemployment, were ready to react to any further acts of punishment meted out by the occupying power.

On 26 June the German authorities proclaimed a curfew for Copenhagen, from eight o’clock in the evening to five in the morning, partly to punish its inhabitants and partly to facilitate the fight against sabotage. The blacksmiths at Burmeister & Wain (B&W), which was the biggest workplace and had a notoriously red labour force, reacted immediately by leaving work at 12 noon, on the pretext that they had to get some fresh air and look after their allotments before the curfew set in. The next few days the ‘go-home-early strikes’ spread to other parts of the machine industry, largely through the Communist network, as well as to other industries and workplaces. By the 28th more than half the workforce left work early. At that stage the Germans gave way and postponed the curfew by three hours. Many, perhaps half, of the striking workers responded by resuming work full time.
Hand in hand with those strikes went a street rebellion, taking the form of demonstrations, erection of barricades and lighting of fires, initially in the working-class areas but later also in other parts of the town. In the course of the four days it lasted 15 Danes were killed and about 100 wounded in fights with the German patrols. While the Danes saw the demonstrations rather as defensive measures, directed against the Schalburg Corps and German terror, the Germans, seeking to enforce their curfew and quell the demonstrations, were engaged in a battle to regain control of a rebellious city apparently bent on challenging the occupying power.

A few days later events in Copenhagen took a more serious turn. It started with rumours of a fatality incurred in connection with the overturning of some tram cars, which led the tramway employers to refuse to take out their cars the next morning. With people reduced to walking or cycling, the streets emptied and an air of suspense set in. The more decisive event was the announcement in the morning papers that eight members of the Hvidsten resistance group had been executed. The factories, metropolitan train services, telephone exchanges and department stores closed down immediately, with salaried employees and shopkeepers following soon after. By the afternoon only dairies, hospitals, fire services and power stations remained open. In the evening the Germans turned off the gas, water and electricity supplies of the capital in an attempt to force its inhabitants to give in.

The next day, 1 July, the occupying power proclaimed a state of military emergency in Copenhagen. It drew armoured troops and artillery to the town and deployed fighter aircraft over the rebellious quarters to demonstrate German power. Taking up key positions in various parts of the city, it bombarded the barricades with cannons. The next day the rebellion was crushed, the Danes having incurred losses of 60 persons killed and about 350 wounded in only a few days of fighting.

There is no evidence of a general plan or a central organization of the rebellion. While the Communist leadership warned against an open challenge of the occupying power, all the big resistance organizations ordered their members to refrain from taking part. If there was a degree of organization it seems to have been at the local rather than at any higher level. The list of casualties indicated that it was mainly young workers who bore the brunt of the battles. It was also youths who, at the height of the crisis, took the lead in attacking and punishing collaborators, Nazis and female friends of Germans, as it was youthful groups who, ignoring the warnings of the Communist leaders and the
freedom council, vandalized and looted a number of food stores and tobacconist’s shops – not all of which belonged to collaborators.

For the Danish police, those days presented a particularly difficult situation. While most of them privately may have sympathized with the national protest movement, their task and orders were to maintain law and order. This meant not only preventing or forcefully dealing with cases of vandalism and attacks on persons but also taking action against the building of barricades, in so far as this could be done without becoming involved in actual battles between German patrols and rebels. Since the police made many arrests and occasionally used their truncheons or fired warning shots, many of the activists were inclined to treat them as being with the enemy. On the other hand, the German authorities were dissatisfied with the performance of the police, which became an issue in Danish–German negotiations during the strike.

Though the street rebellion had been crushed, the strike continued for a few days more. After the imposition of the state of emergency the freedom council had intervened by proclaiming the strike to be continued till the Germans had lifted the restrictions imposed and had withdrawn the Schalburg Corps from the streets. The following day spokesmen representing the Danish authorities and organizations and the politicians, all of whom were inclined to be afraid of the Communists and nervous of the freedom council, sent out an appeal for resumption of work the next day, which had been approved by the German authorities. The freedom council, recognizing this as a proposal for unconditional capitulation, distributed handbills opposing it and calling for a continuation of the strike. Despite very strong pressure from the municipal authorities, the strike continued the following day and, moreover, began to spread, with sympathy strikes breaking out across Zealand. At this point Werner Best agreed to lift the emergency and keep the Schalburg Corps and German patrols off the streets. The same evening the leading politicians and organizational representatives made a second appeal to the public, this time over the wireless, calling on the strikers to avoid catastrophe and resume work the next day, 4 July. However, the freedom council, demonstrating its authority, declared the strike on for yet another day. A very large proportion of the strikers chose to follow the instructions of the council and ignore the appeal of the politicians and organizations.

In the allied world, the whole event was hailed as a victory for Copenhagen over the occupying power. Spread over 10 days and involving about 700 casualties, it became the foremost confrontation between the Danish public and the German authorities. That it turned out to be a
success for the protest movement was partly a consequence of German self-restraint. While the police forces of the occupying power resorted to torture, executions and terror in the fight against sabotage and its military forces used cannons to suppress street rebellions, the political representative of Germany eventually decided to compromise to put an end to strikes. He seems to have recognized that the practical circumstances of the ostensible peace occupation of the country still required a degree of cooperation with the Danish authorities, if the production and export of goods essential for Germany had to continue. At that stage of the war, there may also have been other reasons for not allowing a further deterioration of the political and social order of the country.

Whatever the nature of Best’s reasons for making a few concessions at a crucial stage, the conclusion of the crisis indicated that industrial strike, especially when managed by the freedom council, remained a useful weapon for the resistance movement. It was used again several times during the next month or two. In the middle of August the freedom council set off three-day strikes across the country in protest against the shooting of 11 members of the resistance movement, said by the Germans to have been trying to escape from custody. A month later railway workers near the Danish–German border went on strike in protest against the deportation to German concentration camps of 195 internees from the Frøslev camp, which the German police had set up for Danish prisoners who should remain in Denmark. When the strike started to spread to other parts of the country the freedom council assumed control. Only a few days later, when German soldiers attacked the police stations across the country and disarmed and arrested, and eventually deported, about 2,000 policemen, the freedom council again proclaimed a strike of limited duration. Perhaps the most important result of the waves of strikes in the summer and autumn of 1944 was to consolidate the authority of the freedom council in conflicts between the Danish public and the German authorities, and to strengthen its hand in the rivalry with the politicians of the old parties.

The initiative for the setting up of a properly organized resistance army, which went on throughout the last 18 months of the occupation, came from London. The considerations motivating the British were partly of a military and partly of a political nature. In the later stages of the war, it was important for the allied powers to have in Denmark, as in other occupied countries, a substantial body of men ready and able to assist the allied forces if and when the need arose. In the earlier months of 1944, it was also essential to leave the Germans in uncertainty as to the location of the projected Anglo-American invasion of the Continent,
and hence expedient to create the impression that Denmark, too, was being prepared for the arrival of invading forces.

The political considerations of the British related ultimately to the post-war situation of Denmark. Having come to regard that country as an important part of a future British sphere of influence on the Continent, they were concerned that the transition from occupation and resistance to liberation and restoration of democratic government should come as smoothly as possible, and at an early stage lead to stability in domestic affairs and pro-British orientation in foreign relations. Hence they were worried by the tension and issues between the Communist and the more rightist wings of the resistance movement as well as by the conflict between resistance leaders and certain remains of official Denmark, in particular the general staff of the army and the more prominent politicians of the defunct coalition government. A substantial army recruited across party-political divisions, officered by both professional soldiers and resistance fighters and ultimately under British or allied control, it was thought, could help deal with such difficulties and prevent a disorderly and violent transition followed by lasting political instability.

When Muus, the resident SOE chief, returned to Denmark in December 1943 he was under orders to organize a nationwide underground army divided into six regions, each with a separate structure and own leadership. The deadline was 1 March 1944. The freedom council set up a military committee to carry out the plans. In practice, however, the committee limited its activities to Copenhagen and the eastern parts of the country, while leaving the organization of the three regions of Jutland in the hands of Flemming Juncker.

The leadership of each region was intended to consist of three persons, namely a member of the Communist party, a member of Danish Unity and one who belonged to neither, together with an officer to provide military expertise. In practice, however, it often proved difficult to follow this pattern, especially in the Jutland regions where Juncker in effect set up a joint leadership round himself and his two helpers, Anton Toldstrup and Vagn Bennike. After his departure for Sweden and England a bitter rivalry, as we have seen, developed between Toldstrup and Bennike, in which the resistance leader, who had proved an outstandingly efficient reception chief, had the support of SOE and the officer had the backing of the illegal general staff of the army.

The general tendencies in the regions were for the leadership to grow larger and for the professional officers to become more influential. After the arrest of the police in September 1944, a representative of the illegal remnants of the police was in several cases attached to the regional
leaderships. In the following months liaison officers from SOE, too, were added. From the end of the year representatives of the other two major resistance organizations, Frit Danmark and the Ring, were also among the leaders. While the professional officers originally were intended to act as guides and instructors, by the end of the war, the chief of each of the seven regions (including the island of Bornholm organized as a new region in September 1944) was an officer.

The regions were divided into sections, towns, districts, counties, etc., each with its own leaders. As a result of pertinacious German efforts to roll up sections of the resistance army and arrest its members, it frequently became necessary to replace leaders, whether at local or at regional levels. Thus, region 3 (southern Jutland) was totally uncovered twice in 1944, while region 6 (Copenhagen) needed complete reorganization in March 1945.

The basic unit of the army was a group of six persons, typically young men living in a town or a market town. The first groups were mostly recruited either from members of the Communist party or from supporters of Danish Unity. Indeed, well before the launch of the SOE drive both the Communists and Danish Unity had started setting up separate task forces, some of which now became units of the projected army. From the spring of 1944 the Ring played an important part in both the organizing and the manning of the army. Through its network of contacts across the country, it helped to broaden the party-political base of the organization. In some towns it created a counterweight to the Communist groups by setting up military groups of Social Democratic workers.

To some extent, the professional army, too, contributed to the broadening of the political and social base. The so-called 0-groups, military task forces made up of professional soldiers or members of associations and clubs linked to the army which since the beginning of 1944 had been attached to the small general staff, were formally placed under the command of the freedom council. However, while in the provincial regions most such groups in July 1944 became integrated with the civilian military groups, in the Copenhagen region they remained a separate force directly under the control of the small general staff. Moreover, they secured their own supply of weapons, smuggled in from Sweden, which gave them an advantage over the civilian groups. Thus, rather than helping to unify the anti-German forces in the country, this arrangement in the capital served to accentuate the tension between the freedom council and the leadership of the professional army and its political masters.
The line of command within the resistance army, and in the movement as a whole, was not only a subject of conflict among the parties directly involved but also an issue between Denmark and the allies. Initially SOE and SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) intended to give orders directly to each of the regions. The freedom council, however, insisted that all orders from SHAEF to the Danish resistance should go through its military committee. To facilitate such a procedure, the council replaced that committee, in June 1944, with a high-powered command committee, which included two of the most prominent members of the council (Fog and Jakobsen), the resident SOE chief, two officers representing the army and the navy and, after the dissolution of the police force, a representative of the illegal police. The idea was that the command committee should handle all orders from the allied powers prior to an invasion of Denmark, at which point SHAEF would assume direct control of the resistance forces.

In practice, however, the command committee became a link merely between London and regions 6 and 5 (Copenhagen and the islands east of the Great Belt). Toldstrup in region 1 retained direct contact with London, as did Bennike, who till the end of the occupation controlled telegraphic communication between the rest of Jutland and England. Orders from London to region 4 (Funen), too, went directly. To some extent, this confusion of the British–Danish line of command reflected conflicts of allegiance and divisions of loyalty within sections of the anti-German forces of the country. The most divisive conflict was between professional officers of the regular army and civilian leaders of the resistance movement. Although general Gørtz, with the approval of the politicians, in December 1943 had agreed that the task forces of the army should be coordinated with the civilian military groups then under organization, and all be placed under the command of the freedom council, the majority of officers engaged in illegal activities, prominent among them Bennike in Jutland, still saw the small general staff as their superior authority. Recognizing it as a makeshift agent of the hibernating government, the ultimate legal authority of the country, they looked to that body for instructions and guidance, rather than to the freedom council of self-appointed resistance leaders.

Another line of command with potential for undermining the authority of the freedom council and its various committees was that of the Communist party. While the leaders and members of the party, very much pioneers of resistance in Denmark, had entered into cooperation with other illegal groups and organizations in accordance with their doctrine of popular front against fascism, they still looked to Moscow.
for ideological inspiration and moral support. Highly disciplined, they could not allow their engagement in the national struggle against Nazi Germany to eclipse their commitment to the Communist cause. Their dual loyalty found expression in the propaganda of the Communist illegal press as well as in the way in which their leaders and representatives in the resistance were appointed or replaced. All of them had to be approved by the leadership of the party. With the liberation of Denmark and the end of the war approaching came a growing concern in non-Communist circles about the nature of the post-war economic and political programme of the Communist party. Such anxieties were reflected in the planning and preparations of Danish political and military leaders in the later stages of the occupation, and also seem to have been at the heart of British policy and initiatives towards Denmark, both before and after the allied invasion of France.

Despite the various disagreements and difficulties, the organization and arming of the resistance army went on at a rapidly increasing pace. The total number enlisted in May 1945 has been estimated at about 49,000, nearly twice what it had been the previous December. Probably less than half of them were armed, largely with weapons received from Britain in the last months of the war. Yet numerically, the army at that stage was by far the most substantial section of the whole resistance movement.

The link to the allied forces was consolidated when SHAEF, in September 1944, set up a liaison mission to Denmark under the command of major general R.H. Dewing, and two months later accepted a Danish mission to SHAEF representing lieutenant general Ebbe Gørøtz. On the initiative of SOE, and with the approval of the freedom council, Gørøtz had been designated commander-in-chief of all Danish resistance forces, to assume command in case of allied military operations on Danish soil, when he would be acting under the orders of the supreme commander, general Dwight Eisenhower.

The diplomatic background to the SOE decision to seek the designation of general Gørøtz was the failure of a British attempt earlier in the year to persuade its allies to accept Denmark as an ally. Formalizing the link between the Danish resistance and allied forces might be another way of boosting the morale of the resistance movement, securing SOE control of the entire organization, easing the transition from occupation to liberation and protecting British interests in post-war Denmark. Mainly in an attempt to secure and maintain its grip on the resistance organization, the Danish section of SOE arranged for a directive to be drawn up to define the limits of Gørøtz’s freedom of
action. The drafters of the directive, particularly concerned about the risk of serious divisions arising within the movement as a result of shifts in the balance of power between a weakened freedom council and a usurping small general staff of the army, warned against centralizing tendencies in the lines of command and communication and stressed the need to keep the various parts of the whole organization separate.

The first paragraph of the directive stated briefly that Gørtz, when commander-in-chief of the resistance army, had to obey orders coming from general Eisenhower. The final paragraph dealt at some length with the status of the Danish Brigade stationed in Sweden and known as Danforce. This unit had been set up on the initiative of the small general staff and in accordance with an agreement reached between Social Democratic leaders and the Swedish government. Intended by its founders and sponsors as a police force ready to deal with any chaotic situation which might arise as a result of the collapse of German rule in Denmark, it had been put under command of officers loyal to the dethroned politicians and kept at the disposal of the latter. To dispel lingering uncertainty about the deployment of the unit, the directive now stated bluntly that Danforce was part of the resistance forces under Gørtz’s command, and formed a tactical reserve with the primary role of assisting in the liberation of Copenhagen and/or Zealand. Thus the brigade, which by May 1945 counted about 5,000 well-trained and armed conscripts and volunteers, would be ultimately under the command of SHAEF, like the rest of the Danish resistance forces.

As part of its attempt to regain control of developments in the field, SOE decided to send a new chief organizer to Denmark. Muus’s second period in this position had come to an end in December 1944 when he, personally run-down and hotly pursued by the Gestapo, had been ordered to return to London for consultation and rest. Earlier in the year he had played an important part in the reorganization of the resistance movement and the establishment of the resistance army. However, in the course of this work he had distanced himself from the freedom council and moved closer to members of the small general staff, especially Schjødt-Eriksen, and to friends of leading politicians, in particular the influential Herman Dedichen. Rumours of financial irregularities and aspects of his lifestyle had further affected his standing among the leaders of the resistance movement, as well as his relations with some of his SOE masters.

The man who had been trained to take Muus’s place, should the need arise, was Ole Lippmann. A young businessman with an
international education and strong anti-totalitarian views, he had been one of Svend Truelsen’s closest collaborators in the running of the illegal intelligence service after the evacuation of the army officers. Handpicked by Juncker and Truelsen, rather than by lieutenant commander Hollingworth who preferred to send Muus back to the field, Lippmann was more on the side of the civilian than of the military section of the resistance movement in the rivalry that was intensifying with the prospect of a German collapse. Well-briefed by his British superiors, he arrived in Denmark early in February 1945 and brought with him the directive drawn up for general Gørtz.

A fourth category, that of individuals enrolling in the armed forces of an allied power and joining the fight against Nazi Germany and its allies, completes the range of militant reactions to German occupation presented here. The most obvious cases were those of men trained by SOE and sent to Denmark as organizers and leaders of the resistance, as experts and instructors in sabotage or as radio telegraphists responsible for establishing and maintaining contact between British headquarters and the field. Like other Danes in British service, they had enrolled in the Buffs, the East Kent Regiment, in which the Danish king was an honorary colonel. Thus, they were under British orders when serving in Denmark. In the course of the war a total of 53 SOE agents were dispatched to Denmark, most of them dropped by parachute and some transferred by sea. More than half were evacuated, imprisoned or killed, leaving 23 active in the field in April 1945.

The first SOE leader, dropped over Denmark on 28 December 1941, was the ill-fated captain C.J. Bruhn, whose parachute failed to open. Captain C.M. Rottbøll followed in April 1942, but was killed in a scuffle and exchange of fire with Danish police in September the same year. Six months later his place was taken by captain, later major, Flemming B. Muus, who in October 1943 was called back to London for consultation. Two months later he was in Denmark again, where he stayed till his evacuation in December 1944. The last SOE leader, major Ole Lippmann, remained in Denmark till the end of the occupation.

Periodically, two other agents took over the leadership of SOE activities in Denmark. One was Mogens Hammer, who belonged to the first batch of Danish volunteers reporting for SOE training in January 1941. Parachuted into Denmark together with Bruhn, he found himself in the role of the only SOE agent in the country after the death of his superior. When eventually he, hotly pursued, returned to London in September 1942, he was asked to go back to Denmark immediately and assume provisional leadership after the death of Rottbøll. This
position he held till the arrival of Muus in March 1943. Returning to England the following month, he spent the rest of the war serving in the British army. The other acting leader was captain Ole Geisler. Like Hammer an engineer by profession, he was parachuted into Denmark in February 1943 as leader of a team of four men. After a long period in Jutland, he moved to Copenhagen, where he became a member of the freedom council’s military committee and later of its sabotage committee. Occasionally standing in for Muus as SOE’s representative and later keeping in close touch with Lippmann, he acted as SOE’s second in command.

Of the remaining agents serving in Denmark, only a few failed to live up to expectations, their main shortcoming being lax security. Especially in the first years of the occupation the Danish section of SOE had problems with the number and quality of its recruits. With no Danish exile government in London to attract suitable volunteers, the organization had to draw mainly on stranded sailors and Danes living abroad. Later, when refugees from Denmark began to arrive in England, mainly via Sweden, the recruitment situation improved somewhat. Another problem, however, was that a few of the most suitable of the men who had been trained at SOE schools preferred to serve with British forces elsewhere, rather than hang about, often for months, waiting for an opportunity to enter active service in Denmark.

Other Danes served SOE in an administrative capacity. The first was W. Michael Iversen, who, after 20 years managing a plantation in Malaya, happened to be in London in April 1940. His reaction to the German occupation and Danish policy was to rally Danes in Britain and encourage them to make an active contribution to the war. In touch with some of the people engaged in setting up SOE, he became the manager of the Danish section’s recruitment office. After retiring in 1943, he spent the rest of the war serving in the British army, with the rank of captain. E. Borch Johansen came to SOE with a different background. Having been very active in transmitting intelligence and organizing resistance, he had been arrested by Danish police for his part in arranging the illegal departure for Britain of the Conservative leader Christmas Møller in April 1942, but had been allowed to escape. Together with Hammer, he canoed to Sweden, and made his way to London, where the Danish section wanted him to help with planning the drops of men and material over Denmark. He left SOE in 1943 and spent the rest of the war in the British army, with the rank of major.

The work within the Danish section of Flemming Juncker, from May 1944 in charge of organizing parachute drops, and of major Svend
Truelsen, from about the same time attached to SOE’s head office in charge of intelligence work and later on the staff of the Danish section with responsibility for systematizing, processing and transmitting Danish intelligence, has already been mentioned. Together they became a formative influence on the policy towards Denmark of SOE (or Special Forces, as the organization became known after the fusion with the American OSS in May 1944) in the last year of the war.

Other Danes, acting independently of SOE, took great personal risks in attempting to escape to England to enrol in the British forces. Four outstanding cases may be mentioned. After 9 April 1940 lieutenant colonel T.P.A. Ørum took leave of absence without pay. Later in the year he decided to make for England and volunteer for active service in the Royal Air Force, having already encouraged others to take the same course. In December, however, he was arrested in Berlin and charged with espionage for Britain and treason, Denmark being deemed part of the German operational area. By a concession on the part of the German authorities, he and his accomplices were tried by a Danish court. In January 1941 he was dismissed from the Danish forces and sentenced to prison for life.

Flying officer Kaj Birksted was more successful. Only a few days after 9 April he managed to escape to Sweden and make his way to northern Norway, where he fought on the Norwegian side till the allied forces were evacuated, and he was transported to England. Eventually he was able to reach a Norwegian training camp in Canada known as ‘Little Norway’, where he trained as a fighter pilot. Having joined the Norwegian section of the Royal Air Force, he took part in several hundred missions over enemy territory and fought countless battles in the air, reaching the rank of wing commander and ending up as chief of the Norwegian section. In 1943 he joined the general staff of the RAF, and the following year took over as chief of its operational section.

A particularly daring escape from Denmark was that of lieutenant Thomas Sneum, who, together with a fellow officer, assembled a tiny sports plane near Odense and, in June 1941, managed to fly it to England. Here his aim was to join the armed forces. However, already well known to British intelligence authorities for important material he had gathered in Denmark and passed on to them – in particular information relating to a novel type of radar installation set up by the Germans on the island of Fanø on the Danish west coast – he was asked by SIS to return to Denmark and continue his intelligence work. Dropped by parachute in September 1941, he established contact with the cautious Danish intelligence officers, who soon found him too daring to work with. A situation developed
in which Sneum, hotly pursued by the Danish police, again had to abandon his work on Danish soil. In March 1942 he made his way across the frozen-over Sound to Sweden and returned to England. Like Birksted, he spent the rest of the war serving with the Norwegian forces in the RAF.

The Dane who attained the highest distinction in British service was a seaman who joined a commando unit. Already in April 1940 Anders Lassen, ordinary seaman on one of A.P. Møller’s tankers then in foreign waters, decided to volunteer for the British forces. Through Michael Iversen he secured a place among the first Danes to be trained as SOE parachutist agents. However, dissatisfied and impatient, he welcomed a transfer to special training for an amphibious commando unit. Ending up in a special training boat squadron, he took part in or led raids and campaigns in the Mediterranean region, especially Greece. He was awarded the Military Cross and two Bars to the Military Cross, and reached the rank of major. Fighting in the allied offensive in northern Italy, he lost his life a month before the end of the war in Europe. Posthumously he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

In addition to heroes still remembered, an unknown number of Danes, estimated to be in the region of 1,000 to 2,000 with 10 per cent of them women, joined the armed forces of the Commonwealth Countries or the United States and engaged in operations in various theatres of war. Without an exile government in London to attract and organize them, they fought alongside soldiers of other nationalities and played their part in allied efforts to defeat the enemies in Europe and the Far East.

The continuum of Danish reactions to German occupation presented above, ranging from wholehearted support for the occupying power at one extreme to armed resistance at the other, roughly corresponds to the historical development of such reactions over the five-year period. Wholehearted support of the Germans, always minimal, became negligible after the elections in March 1943. Willing cooperation, not motivated by ideological sympathy but by necessity and prudence, reached its highest point after Scavenius took over the foreign ministry is July 1940, and became much more discreet after the retreat of the government in August 1943. While opposition to the German authorities was largely passive in the first period of the occupation, later it frequently took decidedly active forms. With the rise and organization of the resistance movement, and the establishment of the freedom council in September 1943, various kinds of militant or armed resistance came to the fore. While the policy of limited cooperation with the Germans in the first years had been largely accepted and supported by the population, it subsequently became less popular. In the last few years,
especially the final six months of the war, active resistance, armed as well as unarmed, rapidly gained considerable public support.

However, this tentative correspondence between the logical arrangement and the historical trend of Danish reactions is somewhat marred by the important development taking place during the last period of the war. With the liberation of Denmark approaching, leaders of the old political parties, all men associated with the policy of cooperation, moved closer to the leaders of the resistance. From one point of view, this development may be seen as part of the broad trend from cooperation to resistance. In its effects, however, it can also be recognized as counteractive in relation to that trend, in the sense that it led to compromise and some cooperation between the politicians and the resistance movement, and thus brought about a relationship in which the politicians, with their parties and organizations, eventually gained the upper hand.

The underlying concern of the political leaders at that stage of the war was to keep their political organizations intact, ready to assume their traditional roles in Danish politics as soon as the country had been liberated and the democratic system re-established. For that purpose the party leaders needed to recover their authority in the country and restore some of the credibility they had lost among the allies during the years of governmental cooperation with the enemy. It was after the general strike in Copenhagen in the summer of 1944, in the management of which the freedom council had demonstrated its authority and influence among the public, that the politicians took the more decisive steps to establish relations with the resistance movement. Having declined earlier invitations to secure representation of their parties in the freedom council, they now decided to have two of their men join a contact committee set up by the council in August 1944. They were H.C. Hansen from the Social Democrats and Aksel Møller from the Conservatives, both younger leaders who already had been involved in various forms of illegal activities. In the initial period of the work of the new committee, Aage Schoch and Børge Houmann represented the freedom council.

Within Denmark, the driving forces behind this whole development were Herman Dedichen and Flemming Muus. While Dedichen, in close touch with both the politicians and the officers and enjoying the confidence of the British, for long had worked for some reconciliation between the political and military establishment and the resistance, Muus, largely sharing the views of his close collaborator Dedichen, had moved closer to the politicians at the expense of his relations with the freedom council.
Abroad, the idea of contact and coordination between the two camps in Danish relations with the German authorities at this stage of the war had the support of the Western allies, especially Britain. The Foreign Office, mindful of its post-war interests in Denmark and the region and uncertain about Soviet policy and intentions for that country, wanted to end the occupation with a minimum of internal tension. Hence Britain tried to steer a middle course between the political and military establishment and the resistance movement, which in practice meant seeking to rehabilitate the former while occasionally checking the latter. This was the policy that first Muus and later Lippmann, both under British orders, pursued in the field, the former leaning towards the old establishment and the latter identifying more with the freedom council.

For all the parties most concerned, the old politicians and the freedom council as well as Britain, the two most important matters to be resolved were the status of Denmark in relation to the allied powers and the composition and programme of its government immediately after liberation. The problem of status was complicated by the conflict between the peacefully-occupied role of the state and the militant activities of the resistance movement and by the absence of the government and the non-existence of an exile government. Already in the earlier months of 1944 Britain and the United States had negotiated a joint declaration which practically recognized Denmark as an ally. However, they had failed to secure the assent of the Soviet Union, which had not forgotten that the Danish government had broken off diplomatic relations with Moscow immediately after the German attack in 1941. In the autumn of 1944, a few months after Thomas Døssing had been accepted in Moscow as representative of ‘the fighting Denmark’, the king and the leading politicians, without consulting the freedom council, had sent a message to the Soviet government in which they apologized for, and tried to explain, the diplomatic rupture in 1941 and the subsequent signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

When this approach, presumably mediated by Døssing, drew no response whatever from Moscow it finally became clear to the politicians that in matters of diplomacy they had to cooperate with the freedom council and, in relations with the Soviet Union, show their united support for the resistance movement. After considerable debate about the basis for their cooperation, the politicians and the freedom council prepared a joint appeal for allied status, which early in January 1945 went off to the Danish representatives in London, Washington and Moscow. A lengthy negotiation, involving many parties followed. For long, the greatest obstacle was Døssing, who found it difficult to accept the recent
reconciliation between the politicians responsible for the policy of cooperation and the resistance movement he represented. Refusing to present and recommend the appeal to the Soviet authorities, he at one stage tried to impose new conditions for accepting the discredited politicians as partners of the freedom council. Here he could point out that his demands were in line with the attitude of the Soviet government. When the Germans capitulated and the occupation came to an end the matter of Denmark’s formal status was still pending. Later in May, however, its government received an invitation to take part in the San Francisco conference, where allied powers would meet to set up the United Nations.

Since the joint appeal to the three great powers was intended as a diplomatic demonstration of national unity behind Danish resistance, it presupposed a degree of political agreement between the parties. To achieve this at that stage proved very difficult. When the politicians initially insisted on first agreeing on the text of the diplomatic document and only later discussing the political issues, a vehement debate ensued. The basis for the discussions became a memorandum prepared by Frode Jakobsen and Børge Houmann on behalf of the freedom council. It dealt with two crucial issues in particular, namely the composition of the liberation government and its programme for the post-war period, and also presented certain demands.

As to the composition of the future government, it was too soon to reach a detailed agreement, even on the relative strength of representation of the two sides. The previous winter the political parties had prepared a list of future ministers which was made up entirely of politicians from the parties of the former coalition government, and included some names that were unacceptable to the resistance movement. In the meantime, the idea of such a government had become quite unrealistic. The memorandum presented by the freedom council demanded representation for the four major resistance organizations, *Frit Danmark*, the Communists, Danish Unity and the Ring, as well as for the ‘free Danes’ abroad, and pointed towards an equal representation of the two sides. All that could be agreed now, however, was that a government would have to be formed in unison, and with participation of both sides.

As for the political programme of the post-war government, the memorandum presented three major demands: punishment of all persons who during the occupation had committed treason or other crimes which it had been impossible to deal with at the time; compensation for all who had suffered loss as a result of German persecution; and the end of Denmark’s traditional and isolated neutrality and its full and binding entry into the projected United Nations. Those conditions the
politicians found largely acceptable. Thus, for the purpose of drafting the joint appeal to the allied powers, the parties were able to agree on a formula which stated that they were united ‘in seeking to maintain the solidarity of the Danish people also after the war, by forming the first free government of the country and determining its basic programme in unison’. At that stage, it was mainly the freedom council that laid down the terms for cooperation between the resistance movement and the old political parties. Four or five months later, a liberation government led by Vilhelm Buhl and composed half of politicians and half of representatives of the ‘free Danes’ abroad and the leading resistance organizations took charge. Before long the professional politicians managed to re-establish their control of the political process.

Diplomatically, Denmark’s efforts during the last winter of the war were less than successful, its joint appeal for allied status getting stuck somewhere in Moscow. Yet, it did enjoy the diplomatic support and receive the implicit recognition of the two great Western allies.

Politically, Denmark managed to reach an understanding and develop a form of partnership between the old political establishment and the leadership of the resistance movement. This achievement, though perhaps less than convincing to the Russians, was acceptable to the Americans and more than welcome to the British. Indeed, the Foreign Office and SOE, now working together, had for long sought a reconciliation between the forces of tradition and continuity and the revisionist tendencies and ambitions in Danish politics, with a view to reaching a political equilibrium of national unity which would be stable enough to protect the country against divisive influences and interventionist initiatives from the Soviet Union, and durable enough to prepare it for a pro-British role in post-war Europe.

Militarily, the resistance army, organized on SOE initiative, was coordinated with the allied forces. Through the designation of general Gørtz and a series of declarations, directives and missions following the allied invasion of north-western Europe, both the civilian and the professional forces of the country were potentially integrated in the forces at the disposal of SHAEF. Thus Denmark, despite its passive conduct in the early years of the occupation, ended up firmly within the camp of the Western allies. While encouraged, guided and supported by Britain and other allies, it did so essentially through its own efforts.