

**(UN)KNOWN HEROES  
OF THE  
WORLD WAR II**

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## Prologue

A good hero is the one who thinks of others and is able to stand up for his moral values.

It is someone who, with their good deeds, changed even one life, the future of their country or even the whole Earth for the better.

In this e-book we would like to introduce you to our Czech and Dutch heroes of the World War II.

We think that these historical figures meet the characteristic of hero.

With their braveness, they changed the history and became figures to whom our nation will forever look up to.

We are more than glad to have the honor of writing about them today and proudly say that they come from the same nation as we do.

But as the famous saying goes & quote; actions speak louder than words.

With that we would like to move on and analyze individual heroes chosen by us.

## Emil Hácha

Emil Hácha, full name Emil Dominik Josef Hácha, was born on 12 of July 1872 in southern bohemian town Trhové Sviny as a son of a revenue officer. He studied gymnasium in České Budějovice. He graduated in year 1895 from Charles's university in Prague and by the year 1898 he joined Czech governorship in Prague. In 1902 he married Maria Klaus.



During his work at court council of the Administrative Court of Justice between years 1916 and 1918 he acquired law experience. After creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Emil became member of Supreme Administrative Court, which he founded together with Ferdinand Pantůček. After Pantůček's death in 1925, president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk named him the head of SAC. He remained in this position, until he was elected for president.

As a lawyer he became valued for his knowledge of international law. In Czechoslovakia he was a member of legislative council of government of CSR, Czech academia and Czech educated company. He was also member of the Hague Court of Arbitration.

Big change in Hácha's life was year 1938. During this year, his wife, Marie Hácha, died. Another big change was abdication of Edvard Beneš, and partition of Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia. After pressure from his peers he accepted function of president on 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 1938. He was chosen for his neutrality and experience in leadership of big institution.

On 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1939 Emil received invitation to Berlin for negotiations with German elites. When he arrived, he was made to wait until 1:30 AM next day until Hitler finished watching a movie. After meeting, he was informed that German army was ready to invade Czechoslovakia. Hitler gave Hácha two options – war and invasion, or submission in form of protectorate. Hácha repeatedly resisted Hitler's pressure and continuously refused to accept disgraceful demands of transfer of power, by 4 AM, when Göring threatened with bombing of Prague, Hácha got a heart attack. After arrival of medical staff, in critical condition, he signed the deal and informed Prague about the decision. By the evening, he returned to Prague with train, that was purposely delayed by Nazis, so Hitler would arrive to Prague sooner. At 19:30 Hácha entered Prague castle for the first time as a president, accompanied by SS soldiers.

The first years of his presidency were spent as active politician, who fought for rights of Czech nation. He protested against germanization, in October 1939 refused to promise loyalty to Hitler and in November 1939 he asked for release of imprisoned students, in many cases successfully. After Reinhard Heydrich became protector of Bohemia and Moravia in September 1941 and after arrest of protectorate prime minister Alois Eliáš, Hácha got under higher pressure of occupiers. Because this and his worsening of his health condition he basically resigned on his attempts on resisting. From this moment Nazis used Hácha as propaganda tool as "symbol of protectorate nationalism within German Reich". This got the worst after assassination of Heydrich and his death, because those events coincided with Hácha's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. In his radio speech on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1945, he condemned both assassination, and Beneš's exile government.

His diminishing health caused that since 1943 he almost stopped his public appearances and resided in castle Lány. He supposedly asked his doctor for poison, so he could commit suicide by the end of occupation, he could barely speak, had failing memory and was not able to recognize people. On 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1945, he was arrested and transported to prison hospital on Pankrác. The doctor asked for his transportation to sanatorium, but it was not permitted. Hácha died on 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1945 in prison.

## Ferdinand Peroutka

Ferdinand Peroutka was a Czech writer, playwright and columnist.

He is considered to be one of the most important representatives of Czech pre-war democratic journalism.

He is the author of the work *Budování státu* (*Building the state*), which deals with the creation and first years of Czechoslovakia.

He was born on February 6, 1895 in Prague as the son of Emanuel Peroutka and his wife Leontina, he was their first child.

He studied at a grammar school in Prague, but he left it before graduating in 1913 and began his journalistic career on his own.

His journalistic activity was supported by the President of the Republic T.G. Masaryk thanks to Peroutka's strong belief in democracy.

Peroutka as a writer was against Hitler and also against his opinions about Jews so he published many articles where he criticized the current political and moral situation. Also Peroutka wasn't really likeable for Communists because he considered Communism as something very dangerous, such as Nazism.

At the beginning of 2WW he was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to a concentration camp but just a few days later he was released.

But that was just the beginning because he spent a horrible amount of time as a prisoner in concentration camps in Dachau and Buchenwald. It is important to say that Nazis offered him that he could write on their behalf and he would live happily without any troubles but he refused.

At the end of 2WW he was rescued by the American army.

After the communist coup in February 1948, he went into exile, first to England, later to the USA. From 1951 to 1961 he led the Czechoslovak department of Radio *Free Europe* based in New York. Ferdinand Peroutka died on April 20 at the age of 83 in New York, after a change in political conditions, his remains were buried at Vyšehrad in 1991.

One of Ferdinand Peroutka's most important legacies is the **Ferdinand Peroutka Award**, a journalistic award that was presented on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

The prize was established in 1995 within the framework of the *Lidové noviny Foundation* and its purpose was to increase the prestige of the work of journalists and columnists.



## Heliodor Píka

Heliodor Píka was born on 3 July 1897 in a village of Štítina, near Opava. In 1915 he finished High school in Opava. He went study a pharmacy, but as 19 years old he was taken away to army to fight on east front during Great war. He was captured by Russians and joined to Czechoslovak legion.

After the war Píka remained in army and began study in French military academy. In 1930s, Píka acted as a military attached to Romania and Turkey. He was afraid of German occupation and he tried to prevent it.

When the Nazis came to Czechoslovakia, after Munich agreement, he escaped to France and from there to United Kingdom, where he joins to Edward Beneš in his effort to form exile government. After that he was sent to Bucharest, where he was helping Czechoslovakian and Hungarians refugees and also there, he was looking for demobilized soldiers. After the German army approached to Balkan, he moved to Istanbul, where he made connection with Ludvík Svoboda and Czechoslovak communist, whose were in Moscow at that time. Píka was under constant pressure from the Soviets to betray Beneš, but despite attempts at blackmail, Píka remained loyal throughout his tenure, which lasted until 1945. In August 1941 he warned president Beneš to not trust Soviet Union, because their plans to Czechoslovakia weren't democratic. But his warning wasn't taken seriously. In 1942 he formed army of volunteers and soviet war captives. He participated to Czechoslovakian – Soviet Union alliance. In December 1943 he was promoted to brigade general. He argued with soviet leadership about the way, how would be Czechoslovakia liberated.

In May 1945 he returned to Prague, where he was promoted to divisional general. There he continues in restoration of Czechoslovakia. However, the might of Czechoslovakian communist after election in 1946 grew strongly. In February 1948 communist organised coup, which changed many things and connected Czechoslovakia to forming eastern bloc. Because Heliodor Píka was firmly against communists during the war and as skilled tactician he represented threat for new coming regime. The main Czechoslovak communist leadership decided to arrest him and they accused him of espionage and high treason. In fabricated trial he was sentenced to death. He reconciled with it bravely. Before his death he wrote two letters, one to the nation and one to his wife. According his son Heliodors last wishes as he stood at the gallows were: "*my ultimate desire is that the nation remain united, and that everyone, without regard for their differences, work toward the unity of our people*". He was the first of more than 200 Czechoslovaks tried and executed for political reasons by the communist government of Czechoslovakia. His body after execution was never founded.



## Jan Kubiš

Jan Kubiš was a Czech soldier but after the Munich Agreement he was discharged from army (1938) and he got back to his civilian life. At the eve of WW II. Kubiš fled Czechoslovakia and joined a forming unit in Krakow (Poland).

Thanks to this he fought in France where he got a metal for his heroic acts.

A month after the German victory in France he fled to Great Britain where he received a training as a paratrooper (someone trained to parachute into a military operation).

He was sent to exterminate Heydrich who was Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia. Heydrich participated in persecution of Jews and was one of the biggest organizers of the holocaust.



On May 27 1942 Heydrich was on his daily commute to Prague castle. Kubiš and Gabčík (another soldier) waited at the tram stop. As Heydrich's open-topped car got near the pair Gabčík tried to open fire but his gun jammed. Heydrich ordered the car to stop. As the car braked in front of him Kubiš threw a grenade at Heydrich but he missed. It didn't land into the car but it hit a wheel. It didn't kill him on the spot but it got him seriously injured and was rushed to the hospital. He died there on 4th of June.

Kubiš and his group were found on 18th of June in the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius in Prague. And the bloody battle began. It lasted for 6 hours and Kubiš was seriously wounded by a grenade and was found unconscious. He tried to use poison on himself but apparently lost consciousness before he could do so. He died within twenty minutes. The other parachutists committed suicide to avoid capture.

In revenge the Nazis murdered 24 family members and close relatives of Jan Kubiš in the concentration camp.

For his bravery he received many prizes. Our nation is thankful for his action to this day and he will certainly always be remembered.

## Karel Janoušek

Karel Janoušek was a Czechoslovak Air Force officer. He began his career as a soldier, serving in the Austrian Imperial-Royal Landwehr (1915–16), Czechoslovak Legion (1916–20) and Czechoslovak Army (1920–24). He was a citizen of Czechoslovakia, who was awarded the high British recognitions — by the Order of Knight of the Honourable Order of the Bath and to whom His Majesty the King George VI bestowed the rank of Air Vice Marshal first.

He was born in Přerov, Moravia, completed secondary school in 1912 and then went to a German business school. He spent the first three years of his working life as a clerk in a local business that belonged to a distant relative.

In June 1915 Janoušek was conscripted into the Austrian Imperial-Royal Landwehr, trained at Opava in Czech Silesia and was promoted to corporal. He served in the 57th Infantry Regiment and fought in the Sixth Battle of the Isonzo on the Italian Front.

In June 1940 when France fell to Germany he was able to escape to England where he immediately started to organize the Czechoslovak Air Force abroad within the framework of the Royal Air Force as a contribution to the war effort.

The courage and systematic work of this airman in combating the dark terror of war during WW2 was quickly appreciated after he returned to Czechoslovakia in 1945.

After the communist putsch in 1948 his fate changed in the blackest chapter of horror forced by the new regime.

He was dismissed from the armed forces, sentenced to many years of imprisonment together with physical torture, maltreatment and tyrannizing- that was the vicious reward for his heroism displayed in the struggle for the survival of democratic world.

In 1956 Janoušek's sentences were reduced and in 1960 he was released in a Presidential amnesty. A military tribunal canceled his convictions in the Prague Spring in 1968. Janoušek died in Prague in 1971. He was not fully rehabilitated until after the 1989 Velvet Revolution ended the Communist dictatorship.

Many books were written on this great theme as the former Czechoslovak squadrons in RAF became part of history together with their commander Karel Janoušek, AVM. It is very rejoicing that this great hero became even a heroic figure in a rock-ballad song, but not at home in his country, where he was born, but in Sweden.





## Františka Plamínková

Františka Plamínková was a Czech politician, journalist, feminist and organizer of the Czechoslovak and international women's movement.

She was a major contributor to women's emancipation. She advocated the abolition of celibacy for female teachers and the enshrinement of universal (i.e. also female) suffrage in the constitution of the First Republic.

She was born on the 5th February 1875 in Prague in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She graduated from a municipal and burgher school and studied at the Institute for Teacher Education in Prague. She was a teacher from 1894 to 1924. She was engaged to Wilhelm Freyer, but she couldn't marry him because of her teacher's celibacy. From 1918 she started to work in politics and journalism.



In 1897 she attended the 1st Congress of Czechoslovak Women. She became a member of the Association of Czech Teachers and founder of the Czech Women's Club (1903) and the Committee for Women's Suffrage (1905). She worked for the abolition of celibacy for teachers and for gender equality in the family and in society. Through her efforts, the celibacy of female teachers was abolished in July 1919 after fifty years.

In 1905, she was at the origin of the Committee for Women's Suffrage, whose main task was to promote fundamental rights for women. However, the Committee also educated women on gender equality. In 1908 she attended the International Congress of the Alliance for Women's Suffrage in Amsterdam. She brought the Czech liberal women's movement to the international level. In 1923 she founded the Women's National Council. The Council commented on proposals to regulate family law in the newly prepared Civil Code. She advocated for educated and qualified female civil servants in the state and public service and their entitlement to maternity leave. She was first elected senator in 1925 and served until the Senate was dissolved in 1939. In 1931 and 1932 she was the first Czech woman to speak at the League of Nations in Geneva.

In 1938 she showed her courage and did not hesitate to write an open letter to Hitler, in which she reproached him for insulting President Beneš. After the occupation, she protested again, this time to President Hácha, that there was not a single woman in the leadership of the only permitted Protectorate party. On the 1st September 1939, she was arrested and imprisoned. After her release, she was placed under Gestapo surveillance and could not devote herself to her activities in the women's movement. So she entrusted the leadership of the Women's National Council to her friend Milada Horáková. Two weeks after the assassination of Heydrich, she was arrested, taken to Pankrác Prison and executed along with other prominent figures of Czech public life. She was shot on 30th June 1942 and she was 67 years old.

## Josef Gabčík

Jozef Gabčík was a Slovak resistance fighter and member of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile during World War II. He is best known for his role in Operation Anthropoid which was a successful mission to assassinate Nazi leader Reinhard Heydrich. Heydrich took part in persecution of Jews and later on even became one of the main organizers of the Holocaust and much more.

Gabčík was born in Slovakia in 1912 and joined the Czechoslovak army in 1933. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany in 1938, he fled to France and later joined the Czechoslovak army there. In 141, Gabčík was selected to participate in Operation Anthropoid - a mission to assassinate Heydrich, who was known as the "Butcher of Prague" for his brutal repression of Czech resistance.

Along with Jan Kubiš, Gabčík was dropped by parachute into Czechoslovakia in December 1941. The two men made their way to Prague, where they set up a safe house and prepared for the assassination.

On May 27 1942, Gabčík and Kubiš got in Heydrich's car as it slowed for a sharp turn in Prague. Gabčík tried using his gun on Heydrich but his gun malfunctioned. Kubiš then threw a grenade at the car, but it bounced off and failed to explode properly. Heydrich was still severely injured in the attack and died eight days later.

The Gestapo police launched a massive manhunt for the assassins and Gabčík with Kubiš had to go into hiding. Despite the danger a lot of people were willing to help Gabčík and Kubiš. They provided them with food, clothes and other necessities and helped them move from place to place. But eventually despite the efforts of the Czech resistance, the two men were caught and killed in June 1942.

Their sacrifice had an impact. The assassination of Heydrich was a major blow to the Nazi regime. It weakened the Nazi hold on Czechoslovakia and inspired other resistance movements in occupied countries to continue their fight against the Nazi regime.

In the years since his death, Gabčík has become a hero in Czechoslovakia and a symbol of resistance against Nazi oppression. He is remembered for his bravery, selflessness, and willingness to stand up for what he believed is right, even in the face of danger.



## Vojtěch Luža

After he graduated grammar school, he decided to study electrical engineering in Brno which he couldn't graduate because the first world war started.

He was drafted as a volunteer with the 35th infantry battalion in Plzeň and graduated the infantry officer course. He was later sent to the Russian front where the 35th battalion was a part of the southern army. In 1915 he became a prisoner of war. In 1916 he signed up to the legions and was assigned to the 1st Serbian legion of volunteers. Later in 1917 he joined the "Jiří z Poděbrad" battalion of marksmen and as a commander of the group fought against the 75th infantry battalion in the famous "u Zborova" battle and against the Bolsheviks at the trans siberian railway. He then returned to Czechoslovakia in the 2nd boat transport in 1920.



He began teaching at the University of war in Prague and later became it's commander. He was transferred and became a military commander in Brno. He led the 2nd army during mobilization, which guarded the borders of northern Moravia. He was a likely successor to the chief of General staff. His offensive tactics were in conformity with the tactics of German marshals Foch and Ludendorff.

He was a part of a group of Generals who thought of violently overthrowing the government after the Munich pact was signed. In June 1939 he was discharged from the army and started studying again. He couldn't graduate for the 2nd time because the universities were closed by the Nazis on the 17th of November 1939.

He cooperated with the "Parsifal" resistance group after Czechoslovakia was occupied and kept in touch with general Alois Eliáš. When Eliáš was imprisoned he went into hiding. Agents of the Gestapo came to take him into custody on 29th of September 1941 and couldn't find him in his house. Since he was already gone, they took his wife Mílada and son Radomír who were later released because of lack of evidence. He was hiding in the region of Vysočina and since June 1942 in Brno. He left for Vysočina again in 1943 after members of the resistance in Brno were raided and taken into custody. He used the time to establish his own resistance organization called "Přípravný revoluční výbor" and later "Jaro". Direct connection with members of the exile government in Britain was possible by radio and later through paratroopers from Britain.

In summer 1944 "Jaro" merged with another resistance group called "Avala" and after the allied attack in Normandy (the D day) they began preparing for the last winter of war and armed uprising of the Czechoslovak resistance which Luža should have commanded. He was supported both by the resistance groups and the exile government. By order of his superior he moved to Říčany near Prague where he planned the exact strategy of guerilla attacks. Those should, in his opinion, resemble the uprising in Slovakia.

Unfortunately though, some members of "Avala" were caught and shot which meant an immediate danger to Luža and he moved back to Moravia, where he was safer. They went by foot from Říčany to Kácov with his partner Josef Korejš. They spent a night in Kácov and carried on through the valley of Sázava river in the direction of Nové Město, where the headquarters of the resistance group was currently located. Due to heavy rain they stopped in Hřiště u Přibyslavi after covering around 120 kilometers on foot. They first seeked shelter in the house of Aloisie Matějová who sent them to meet the town's mayor Jaroslav Honza.

Jaroslav was unfortunately afraid of Gestapo's response and decided to report the arrival of two strange men to commissar Josef Navrátil, who was currently carrying out an investigation in the area. Josef called for the reinforcement consisting of two police officers and was ordered by his superiors to follow the two strange men till the time the reinforcement arrived. Luža and Korejš were staying in an inn meanwhile. The two police officers arrived and around 5pm entered the inn and opened fire. Luža was immediately killed and his companion was hurt and later committed suicide in a nearby field. The real identity of Luža and Korejš was later discovered by the Gestapo.

## Josef Mašín

Josef Mašín was an commissioned officer of first-republic Czechoslovakia army and a member of antinazism organisation called Tři králové.

When he was nineteen years old he was attending lectures of tactical fights at commissioned officer academy.

In 1915 he was deported to the 36th Infantry regiment. One year later he joined the Czechoslovakia's legions. He was battling on eastern frontline and thanks to this he was awarded with many orders. Between the years 1923 and 1927 he was serving in the artillery unit at České Budějovice.



In March 1939 Mašín was suspended and accused for revolt. He refused to submit to Nazis occupiers. He wanted to blow up the warehouse with guns at the barracks of Ruzyně. That was prevention against Nazis. He didn't want to leave those guns

for them. After occupy of german Nazis, he tried to sabotage everything he could. At first he was alone but by the time 2 people had joined him. These two persons were Josef Balabán and Václav Morávek. They created the organization called Tři králové. This organization mainly gathered information and was sending it to London. Except this they were also gathering guns and making sabotages.

Mašín was arrested in May 1941 by the Gestapo. In these times he was sending with his friends important telegrams to London. As he was sending a few first messages to London the Gestapo knocked on the doors. When they heard of the Gestapo they immediately destroyed everything they were sending. After a gunfight Mašín was arrested but his friends managed to escape in time. While arresting he was tortured and the next day was interrogated. He was known for his fights with Gestapo and on every interrogation were at least two members of the Gestapo. He was also dressed in a straitjacket in order to not hurt any member of the Gestapo. Days in the prison were followed by many unsuccessful attempts of liberation. He was moved to Pankrác prison, where he tried to commit the suicide in order to not tell the information about his colleagues.

After the attack on Reinhard Heydrich in 1942 he was convicted for the punishment of death. According to the statement of witnesses Mašín bravely came and stood in front of the executors. His last words were "Long live the Czech republic!"

## Milada Horáková

She was born on the 25th December 1901 in Prague (Austria-Hungary) as Milada Králová. She was a Czech politician, lawyer, feminist and member of the underground resistance movement during World War II.

After the communist takeover in February 1948, she became an undesirable person and, two years later, was judicially murdered as a result of one of the most famous political trials in communist Czechoslovakia, in which she was convicted of crimes against the republic.

The trial is marked as the largest, as dozens of other trials throughout the country were linked to the main group, and the number of subsequent ones reached 639. The main trial resulted in four judicial murders, however, including subsequent trials, a total of 10 death sentences, 48 life sentences and additional prison terms totaling 7,830 years were handed down.

It was the first major political process in the preparation of which Soviet advisers took a very significant part. For the first time, it used pre-prepared scenarios of the fake statements and stage books of court reenactments. She was the only woman executed as part of these trials.

She was such an important personality that streets throughout the Czech Republic are named after her.



## Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema

Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema was born on the 3rd of April 1917 in the Dutch East Indies and moved to the Netherlands in the 1930's. Erik Roelfzema started writing in his early teens. He visited the University of Leiden. He had written a few books before the war, for example *Rendezvous in San Francisco*. When the Soviet Union attacked Finland he became a war correspondent. He joined the dutch army reserve, but the Netherlands was overrun by the Germans in just 5 days so he was never deployed. Through his studies he became involved with the dutch underground. After a lot of the jewish staff was dismissed, the university was closed down for some time, because of the students and professor protests. In February 1941 he was publicly protesting against the exclusion of Jewish students in his university and he was arrested for 1 week. Once he arrived in the UK, he became involved with a Dutch



intelligence service. Their job was to establish contact with dutchresistance groups and coordinate their activites. He was one of the people who came up with a new way of transporting agents which was by boat. He was also involved in evacuating people from the netherlands to the UK. He has done over 15 missions to transport agents into the netherlands. After that he got recommended him to join the Dutch Royal Air Force. Because of his bad eye sight he hid a lens in his hands to get through the physical exams. He quickly became one of the best pilots in his class. His mission was to escort bombers above Germany and protect them from german fighter planes. He has done 72 missions of which 25 were above Berlin. By the end of the war, when the Netherlands was freed from the germans Erik also helped with getting Queen Wilhelmina back to the Netherlands after 5 years of exile. After the war was over, he was offered to be a permanent appointment of adjudant but he declined the position. Shortly after that he moved to USA and got married and moved to Hollywood where he worked as an actor and writer. In 1956 he was appointed director of Radio Free Europe and moved to Munich. Some of his work as a writer was *Soldaat van Oranje* (soldier of orange), which was turned into a movie and a musical.

He recieved many awards, some examples of the awards he recieved are: Knight 4th class of the Military Order of William, Resistance Memorial Cross, War Commemorative Cross.

## Gerrit Jan van der Veen

Gerrit Jan van der Veen (1902-1944) was a Dutch sculptor. He was a member of the Dutch underground, which resisted the German occupation of Amsterdam during World War II.

He was born in Amsterdam 26 of November 1902. He was one of four children. His brother Gob van der Klei was also an artist. He was married to Louise Adriana van der Chijs on 25 of November 1931. He had two daughters.

He designed the train tracks in the Netherlands. His first act of valor was when he extinguished an oil tank that was on fire. He did this on his own when the rest of the crew fled. He was also the leader of an action group against the German Kultuurkamer and later an important member of the resistance. He worked at an identification center; this is also where he did his most valorous act. He made fake identification for people who needed it. He also made fake food coupons, for example he made coupons for families who were hosting jewish people so they could get more food. He was an engineer at Bataafse Petroleum Maatschappij in Curaçao. He studied at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten at Amsterdam. After that he continued studying in Paris. There is a school named after him, a high school for girls to honor him. He also has a street, the Gerrit van der Veenstraat, that's where the school is located.

He got caught and executed on the 10 of june. He was 42 at the time.



## Otto Frank

Otto Frank was a German businessman born the 12th of May 1889, into a liberal jewish family. After his exams in 1908 he went to study economics at the university of Heidelberg, although he did not finish his study, he got a job at a bank. Over the years he had lots of different jobs, in the United States of America and Germany. He worked at the bank, at a firm which made windowsills and a company which made horseshoes for the German army.

Furthermore he fought in the first world war as a lieutenant and earned a silver cross for his services. After in 1925 Otto Frank married Edith Holländer in a synagogue. The couple settled in Frankfurt after first living with Otto's mother. Moreover they got two children: Margot in 1926 and Anne in 1929.



However they were previously praised for fighting in the first world war, in 1932 they got alarmed by the Sturmabteilung, the followers of Adolf Hitler, who were marching through the streets of Frankfurt singing: 'If the jewish blood drips of the knife, then everything is well.' The National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) of Adolf Hitler was the largest party in Germany and got 37 % of the votes in 1932. At the end of January 1933 Adolf Hitler became the leader of Germany, so the Frank family decided to emigrate.

The Frank family emigrated to the Netherlands to escape the antisemitism in nazi-Germany. Because of an economic crisis it wasn't going well with the Frank family's bank. So Frank and his brother in law started a new company called Nederlandsche Opekta Mij. The Frank family lived in a part of Amsterdam where a lot of German Jews lived, some of which joined his company.

When the Germans invaded the Netherlands Otto became scared and tried to emigrate to Cuba or the United States of America, but all his tries failed. While the living situation and social status for Jews decreased, he handed the company over on paper to non-jewish colleagues, so that it could live forth. A huge razzia happened at the square the Frank family lived, in which Otto was involved and that's how they got their German nationality taken away. However they also did not get a Dutch nationality, so they became 'state-less'. Even when they had to wear the yellow David stars they tried to make the best of it for their family.

In the first months of 1942 when Otto got wind of what was happening to jewish people, he and some of his colleagues and friends started to make a place to hide in the back of the building of his company. When in July Margot, his oldest daughter, got a letter that she had to work for the Germans, the Frank family went into hiding the following morning. Later they were joined by two other families.

After hiding for 25 months, on the 4th of August 1944 they were found by the Nazi's, and were probably ratted out. Otto got separated from his family at camp Westerbork, before all being sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. His wife died by exhaustion at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and both his daughters died of typhus in camp Bergen-Belsen. On the 27th of January 1945 when the Russians liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau, Otto was hospitalized and quickly recovered. He was the only one of the people in his hiding place who survived.

After coming back from Auschwitz-Birkenau he received the diary of his daughter, Anne. After scraping and adding some parts he published the book to share his daughter's experience.

He remarried with a family friend who also survived Auschwitz-Birkenau, and lived a normal life after.

So Otto Frank was a hero for his family and a hero to share his daughter's story.



## Walter Süskind

Walter Süskind was born on 29th October 1906 in a small town called Lüdenscheid. He was a German Jew, who saved about six hundred Jewish children escaping the Holocaust. He had two younger brothers called Karl and Alfred Süskind, who were children of Herrman Süskind and Frieda Kessler, the same as Walter.

Süskind previously worked as manager of a margarine factory in Germany. He fled to the Netherlands in order to emigrate to the United States of America. From 1942 he lived in the Netherlands in Amsterdam with his wife Johanna Natt and their daughter Yvonne Süskind. He stayed in the Netherlands feeling safe since the country was not involved in the first world war and they thought that it would stay neutral just as last time.

Süskind was a member of the Dutch Jewish council. He was manager of the Hollandsche Schouwburg (Dutch theater), where the Jews of Amsterdam had to report themselves prior to their deportation to the Westerbork transit camp. He had access to information about Jews, therefore he was able to manipulate personal data of Jewish children. He had good relationships with the SS officers and it helped him to have that access to information.

The children came together at the theater, after a few days they were reported to Westerbork. But Walter brought the children via the backyard to a school. At school, the children were put in backs and were transported to the other side of the street. Through the other side of the street the children were deported to Friesland and Drenthe, where they were safe.

In 1944 his family were sent to the Westerbork transit camp. Due to his good relationships with local SS leaders, he was spared. He could have gone to Amsterdam, but he chose to go back to his family. They died later in a camp they were sent to. He himself died on 28th of February 1945 at an unknown location in central Europe during the death march.



## Walraven van Hall

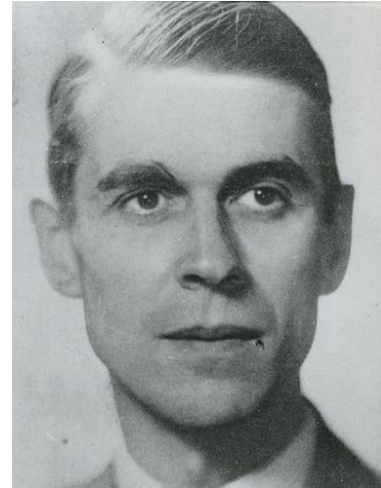
Walraven van Hall lived from 1906 till 1945. He was a banker and resistance leader during the occupation of the Netherlands in World War 2. He was born into an influential Dutch family. He studied economics and then he moved to New York in 1929, and he got a job in Wall Street. There he got his banking experience.

After the German invasion, a fund was established to help families of merchant sailors, who were stranded abroad when war broke out. Soon thereafter, the Germans began taking anti-Jewish and forced labour measures; resistance against these measures increased. Van Hall, who expanded his fundraising activities for all kinds of resistance groups, became known as the banker to resistance.

The Dutch national bank was under control of the Germans, so the, with approval the Dutch government-in-exile, managed to obtain 50 millions Dutch guilders. Another way to acquire money was borrowing from wealthy Dutch people, as a proof of investment, they received old stock paper, but after the war, they could get the money back in exchange for stocks. He also support almost 900 hiding jews.

He was in charge of the National Support fund, he had a nickname Kern (Nucleos). The NSF supported a variety of resistance groups.

On 27 January 1945 was Teus van Vliet, founding member of the resistance, arrested by Gemans and tortured, as a result, the Germans led to several leading members of resistance, including van Hall. So he was executed, after war he was buried in Overveen in the Erebegraafplaats Bloemendaal.



## Hannie Schaft

Hannie Schaft was a student who was still studying at the university of Amsterdam.

She was born on the 16th of september 1920 in Haarlem. Hannie wasn't her real name, she used the name Hannie as a hide name for the nazi's also her hair was red so was known as "the girl with the red hair". The real name of Hannie was: Jannetje Johanna and as a nickname Jo or Jopie.

Hannie was studying Human rights at the university of Amsterdam, she wanted to be a lawyer therefore the action she began to do for her jewish friends. Sonja Frank and Pheline Polak met at a student association where became friends and led to talk more about the jewish culture. This friendship made her feel strongly about actions against Jews.

In 1943 students had to sign a declaration of allegiance to the occupation authority, this was because of the German occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. Hannie refused to sign the petition and she wasn't able to continue her study. She moved back in with her parents in Haarlem, with the jewish friends of hers who went into hiding in their house.

In addition to this occasion she joined *Raad van Verzet* which together with CPN were not trusted by other resistance movements. Together with her friends she was responsible for sabotaging and assassinating various targets. Because of her actions against the Nazis she was eventually placed on Nazi's most wanted list. She was a traitor for the nazi's and also her own folk thought that she was also a traitor to them.

Hannie died on the 17th of april 1945 when she was executed by the Dutch Nazi's. Her last words were: I shoot better.

The Nazis shot her again, they missed the first time, which led her to be dead completely. Queen Wilhelmina called her *the symbol of Resistance*.



## Titus Brandsma

Titus Brandsma (1881-1942) was a Dutch Carmelite friar, Catholic priest and professor of philosophy. Brandsma was vehemently opposed to Nazi ideology and spoke out against it many times before the Second World War. Brandsma entered the novitiate of the Carmelite friars in Boxmeer on 17 September 1898, where he took the religious\_name "Titus" (in honour of his father) by which he is now known.

When the Germans occupied the Netherlands, the churches were prepared for attacks on the religious freedom of the Netherlands. That's because Titus Brandsma warned the people with his papers and lectures of the church. After a short time, the first conflicts appeared. In 1941 the NSB (National-Socialist Movement in the Netherlands) wanted the Catholic papers to place advertisements for them in it. Titus, together with another priest, wrote a letter to the editorials to not post the advertisements. He himself would make sure the letters were delivered by bringing the letters himself.



In January 1942 Brandsma was arrested by the authorities. They found that he was working against the Germans. He was put into a prison in Scheveningen, in there he wrote letters to the Carmelite father that he has never been as happy as now, because he knows he is close to god. He keeps this view even when he was moved to the concentration camp Dachau, where he was tortured. After some time the torturing became too much and his health declined heavily. Which eventually caused him to go unconscious and finally, on 26th July 1942, he was injected with a deadly substance, which led to his death.

After his death, he wasn't forgotten by the people and in 1982 he got the Verzetsherdenkingskruis and streets and buildings were named after him. Also, internationally, there are statues of him placed in rememberers of him.

He was beatified by the Catholic Church in November 1985 a martyr of the faith and canonized as a saint on 15 May 2022 by Pope Francis.

## Collaboration



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