BOOK IV

WARTIME. THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND RESISTANCE.¹ IN MEMORIAM JAN MULDERS. DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF CIVITAS ACADEMICA

The war years (1940–1945)

Rademaker was a monarchist and a patriot. When the Second World War broke out, he realized that the existence and future not only of his country but also of ‘his’ University of Leiden were at stake. “Resistance and revolt were his logical steps”, as Denny-Brown put it later. Awareness of the developments in the academic world in Germany grew gradually in Rademaker and his colleagues in the medical faculty. This was especially clear in the case of friends such as Barge, Gorter, Van der Hoeven, who like Rademaker were members of the Board of the faculty and with whom he shared his concerns about what was going on in Germany. Johan Huizinga, professor of History at Leiden and author of a number of world-famous books on the history of culture, had also written about these dangers without mincing his words. His international reputation guaranteed that these warnings were also heard outside the borders of the Netherlands. Members of the medical faculty at Leiden also had one special source of information in the form of Prof. Siemens, who occupied the chair of Dermatology. A German citizen and member of the Siemens family of industrialists who specialized in medical technology, Prof. Siemens had paid frequent visits to relatives and captains of industry in Germany since 1933. As a member of such an influential family, he had access to secret information about Germany’s invasion plans, the types of occupation the Germans had in mind for civilians in the countries they hoped to occupy and the plans for the nazification of institutes of (higher) education such as Delft and Leiden. He passed much of this information on to Rademaker and other members of the medical staff. The inner circle of the medical faculty

¹ See also endnote¹.
thus became gradually imbued with an appreciation of the impending risks, thanks to his repeated warnings.

Siemens himself decided to renounce his German citizenship and voting rights before the outbreak of war.

The Netherlands was invaded on the 10th of May 1940. Despite all warnings, the blow to the intellectual community could not have been more severe. On the day of the invasion, Menno ter Braak, the brother of Wim ter Braak, the physiologist and neurologist who had collaborated as conservator of the Physiology laboratory in Leiden since 1933 and who was a good friend and colleague of Rademaker, committed suicide (with his brother’s assistance). It was the clearest message this well-known author and journalist (who worked for the daily newspaper “Het Vaderland” in The Hague) could give the younger intellectual Dutch generation for whom he was the figurehead. Rademaker understood this. Menno ter Braak had warned in articles of the disaster that could overcome the country if it were exposed to the pernicious logic of Nazi doctrine.

1942 and later

A chronology of the events of the period 1940–1945, including Rademaker’s activities as secretary and spokesman of the Board of the Medical Faculty, has been documented elsewhere. These events could not be fully documented at the time, for security reasons. The intellectual leadership of the medical faculty—Gorter, Barge, Van der Hoeven, Siemens, Rademaker and others—had to face up to the ethical implications for physicians of the general strike of university staff announced by the Vice-Chancellor Prof. F.R. Cleveringa, the dean of the faculty of law, on 26th November 1940, when the occupying powers ordered dismissal of Jewish professors and other members of staff in line with Nazi philosophy. The physicians on the university staff had two tricky ethical problems to deal with: on the one hand, could they respond to the call for a general strike in protest at the directives of the occupying forces? And on the other, could they stop treating Jewish patients in the University Hospital, as ordered by the occupy-

---