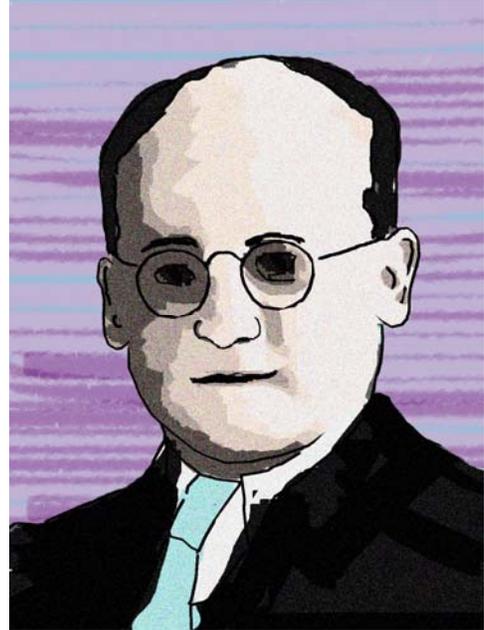


Dr Joannes C. Pompe

Joannes Cassianus Pompe (1901 – 1945)

Joannes Cassianus Pompe (pronounced Pom-Puh) was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands on September 9, 1901. He studied medicine at the University of Utrecht and during this time came across the symptoms of what is now known as infantile onset Pompe disease, which he described in his 1932 publication '*Over idiopathische hypertrophie van het hart*'. On December 27, 1930, Dr Pompe carried out a post-mortem on a 7 month old infant girl who had died of pneumonia. He found the enlarged heart (now known to be characteristic of the infantile form of the disease) and had some slides prepared to be viewed under a microscope. These slides showed that the muscle tissue was distorted into an oval mesh. Dr Pompe realised that this distortion was due to the accumulation of glycogen.



Dr Pompe graduated in 1936 in the subject '*cardiomegalia glycogenia*', indicating that this had been a continuing subject of study for him. Dr Pompe was appointed as Pathologist at the 'Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis' (Hospital of Our Lady) in Amsterdam, where he worked from June 1939 until his death in April 1945.

The Netherlands hoped to stay neutral when World War II broke out in 1939 but this failed to happen when Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940. On May 15, 1940, one day after the Bombing of Rotterdam the Dutch forces surrendered. Subsequently the Dutch government and the royal family went into exile in London. The occupying forces were supported by a minority of the Dutch. Dr Pompe (as a Captain in the Dutch army) fought during the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands, from May 10 to May 15, 1940.

Active resistance was carried out by a small minority which grew in the course of the five years of the occupation. The Germans deported the majority of the country's Jews to concentration camps. Dr Pompe became involved with this active resistance and at first was only involved in finding hiding places for the Jews. However contact with an operator of an illegal transmitter was made during these activities.

Joannes C. Pompe

During the Nazi occupation, all doctors had to belong to the Nazi Medical Association. Dr. Pompe decided he would rather resign his entitlement to practice as a physician, than belong to the Nazi Medical Association. The translation of the official resignation letter Dr Pompe presented to the hospital is located below.

RC Nursing
Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis
Laboratory for Pathology and Anatomy

Telephone 52300
Postgiro 32044

Amsterdam, March 24, 1943

To the Board of Directors of the Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis Amsterdam
Honourable Gentlemen,

With this I inform you that, as of today, I have given up my entitlement to practice in my profession of physician, as set out in article 5, sub 2 of the Physicians Regulations.

Under present circumstances, and with the limitations imposed on me under these new conditions, I ask you to advise me, if you wish that I should continue with my duties.

Your faithful servant,

J.C. Pompe

Note that Dr Pompe asks the hospital if they wish him to continue his work. As it is dated 1943, and he was still working there at the time of his arrest in 1945, it can be assumed that the hospital, at some level, chose to ignore the Nazi law too.

As Dr. Pompe's laboratory was somewhat isolated from the rest of the hospital, Dr Pompe suggested to Pierre Antoine Coronel that this isolated laboratory would make a good hiding place for the transmitter. The transmitter was installed at the end of 1944 in the house, where the research animals were kept, located beneath the laboratory. The transmitter was used to send messages to the UK on behalf of the resistance.

On Sunday morning February 25, 1945, the transmitter was detected by the Nazi Germans during a raid to the hospital. The Nazi went straight to the house that lodged the research animals after they entered the hospital. The transmitter operator, Pierre Antoine Coronel, was broadcasting at the time and tried to resist, but failed. Pierre Antoine Coronel was executed in the courtyard of the hospital. After the war, a street in Amsterdam was named after him – Coronel Street.

Joannes C. Pompe

During the raid, Dr. Pompe had been at Sunday mass and on returning to hospital was warned about the raid by patients. Dr Pompe went home to tell his wife that he needed to go into hiding. While leaving his house he was arrested in front of his wife and children.

It isn't known how the Nazi Germans knew where to look for the transmitter when they entered the hospital. It is assumed they were betrayed, but no evidence could be found for this.

On April 14, 1945, the resistance blew up a railway bridge near Sint Pancras (45 km north from Amsterdam) destroying an army train with munitions in the process. Two SS officers (SS was a major paramilitary organization under the Nazi Party) were killed by that attack. As a reprisal, 20 Dutch prisoners were taken from several prisons in the country. Among these prisoners was Dr. Pompe. The 20 prisoners were taken into a sealed truck to a meadow near the railway in Sint Pancras and, at around 9 pm on April 15th, the prisoners were split into two groups and shot. The bodies were buried in a mass grave in the sand dunes near Overveen. On the same day, Piet van Doorn was also shot, in retaliation for another attack on a railway.

On May 5, 1945, the Netherlands were liberated by the Canadian Forces.

Resources:

Archives of the City of Alkmaar

Nederlands Instituut Oorlog Documentatie Centrum

Pomp Blog – The Real Story

Website: <http://pompestory.blogspot.com/search/label/Nazis>