**The Revolt of the Netherlands**

The Netherlands was group of seventeen provinces around the Rhine ruled by the king of Spain. Each province elected their “**stadholder**” (usually important noble) responsible for military leadership. Many cities were controlled by wealthy merchants. There were a lot of Calvinists from France in these provinces.

However, the king of Spain, Phillip II., **requested a more centralized government on the Netherlands, stronger Catholic Church and following the decrees of the Council of Trent.**

These requirements provoked the resistance by some nobles, led by **William of Orange** called “**the Silent**.” He believed only limited quantity of people who discussed the political plans with. The agreement called **the Compromise of 1564**” led to rebellion.

Phillip II. sent 20 000 soldiers, led by **Duke of Alva** to suppress the rebellion. Alva established **the Council of Troubles** called sometimes called also **the Council of Blood** which executed thousands of Calvinists. Alva imposed the new taxes and the Inquisition was established.

The resistance of Alva included groups of sailors called **the Sea Beggars**. They frustrated the Spanish Army. In 1576 the Spanish army sacked Antwerp. Event called **the Spanish Fury** and they destroyed Antwerp´s.

The northern and the southern provinces were united in **1576** in **the Pacification of Ghent** but they were unable to cooperate and divided into two religious groups: **the Calvinist Union of Utrecht** (modern day Netherlands) and **the Catholic Union of Arras** (modern day Belgium).

The Spanish were driven out of the northern Netherlands in 1590. The war ended in 1609. The Spain recognized the **official independence in 1648**. The independent northern provinces dominated by province of Holland were called the **United Provinces** and the southern provinces, ruled by king of Spain, were called the **Spanish Netherlands**.