

“The Whole Thing is Hopeless”: The Destruction of the Dutch Jewry

Samuel Bellin

Dr. Alison Fletcher

5/4/22

Table of Contents

- 1. Chapter One: Introduction- 3**
- 2. Chapter Two: Perpetrators, Direct Collaborators, and Indirect Collaborators- 40**
- 3. Chapter Three: Voices- 65**
- 4. Conclusion- 89**
- 5. Bibliography- 95**

Abstract

For centuries, the Netherlands proclaimed itself to be a welcoming and open land to members of the Jewish faith. Yet, during the Nazi Holocaust, the Dutch Jewry suffered the highest death rate throughout Western Europe (75 percent). This conundrum has been termed the “Dutch Paradox” by scholars, who have sought to unravel this paradox. In my thesis, I argue that the majority of Dutch citizens were passively anti-Semitic and that the Dutch both collaborated directly and indirectly with the German perpetrators. I consult both primary and secondary sources in order to show how the Dutch collaborated with the Germans to exterminate the Jewry, as well as how this showcases an insidious anti-Semitism on the part of the Dutch.

Chapter One: Introduction



Eva, Alfred, and Leah Münzer, all together for a family picture. Eva and Leah would die at Auschwitz in 1944 after their foster father turned them in to the police. They were just 7 and 5 years old.

Pictured above are the three Münzer children: Eva, Alfred, and Leah, right after the Netherlands became occupied by the Nazis. This photo was most likely taken around 1941, right after Alfred's bris, or ritual circumcision ceremony. At the time, Eva was about 4 or 5, Leah was about 2 or 3, and Alfred had just been born. The Münzer's were the children of Polish-Jewish immigrants to the Netherlands who arrived in the late 1920s.¹ What follows is the story of Eva and Leah after they were sent into hiding together to avoid being deported to the concentration camps of the east by the Nazis.

¹ "Eyewitness to History: Alfred (Al) Münzer," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Accessed August 31, 2021, [//www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/eyewitness-to-history/alfred-munzer](https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/eyewitness-to-history/alfred-munzer).

This scene begins in the Hauge, the Netherlands, 1944. The Dutch remained under Nazi occupation and hope is not within sight. Thousands of Jews throughout Dutch society have disappeared. Two young girls named Eva and Leah, aged seven and five, played with their meager dolls on the second floor of their foster home, trying to work past the unsettling feeling in their stomachs. These past few years have been chaotic, and they knew no sense of normalcy. Eva, the older of the two, tried to keep Leah's spirits up, but times have been difficult since they last saw their parents and baby brother. Both girls have been shuffled around, first to the home next door, where two devout Catholic women watched over them.² That was not so bad, but life there was tense. The women always kept an eye on the window and did not let either girl out of their sight.

Soon enough, Eva and Leah packed up again. At first, this new home appeared to be loving, but their new foster father seemed a little distant to them. As time went on, the girls felt that something was not right. Their new foster parents had disagreements frequently, and sometimes it seemed like their foster father did not want them there. One night, the argument seemed more intense than usual, and tears ensued.

The girls put down their dolls and looked at each other. Fear started to envelop them as they heard screaming after a loud knock on the door. Two large men entered the house and asked the husband where the girls were in a gruff voice as they seized their foster mother. The girls panicked but did not move. They heard loud footsteps quickly coming up the stairs. Eva had enough time to tell Leah that everything was going to be alright before the men entered. When they did, they saw the large black jackboots that had made such a clamor. Both men wore military uniforms, complete with a helmet on top. They carried guns, but what frightened the girls the most was the twin "S" on their necks just below the chin, which resembled thunderbolts

² *Ibid.*

of death. The two men told the girls that they are going to be taken to a place called Westerbork, where they would “be with their kind”. The girls did not know what that meant. Are they just taking girls away, or is it just children with darker hair perhaps, or maybe children who do not know where their parents are? The disgust and loathing in the men’s eyes scared the girls even more. They packed up quickly and headed out to the car waiting in the street. Leah looked out the window at her foster father, who was in rapid conversation with one of the men. He did not make eye contact as the car moved down the street.

This story above demonstrates a historical possibility of what might have happened to the Münzer sisters. Although we do not have the specific research into what exactly happened to the Münzer girls, we have information to imagine a scenario like the one above. We do not know whether the wife and husband fought over the issue of housing two Jewish girls. That part has been dramatized, although it may have happened. The husband denounced his wife and the girls to the Nazis, that is known. It is not known whether the police that took the girls away were Dutch police or German police, although by this point the Dutch police assisted with the roundups. Whether those who did were members of the Dutch Nazi party cannot be ascertained, yet we do know that the Dutch police were operating under the command of Nazis. Speculation is required to delve into the minds of the girls, who would not have understood exactly what was happening, yet would have known that something was very wrong. Much of what we know about the sisters came from their younger brother Alfred, who survived the Holocaust by living with an Indonesian family. Alfred described Leah as “so sweet, so considerate of others.”³ The girls were most likely sent to Westerbork, the main transit camp from the Netherlands to the

³ “A Life in a Box,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Accessed December 8, 2021, <https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/echoes-of-memory/a-life-in-a-box>. Alfred was far too young to know his sisters, but he was told this information from his mom, who survived Auschwitz.

concentration camps of the east. Of those camps, Auschwitz was the worst, as those not fit enough to work manual labor were killed immediately. Eva and Leah were sent to Auschwitz on February 8 and killed right away on February 11, 1944.⁴

Eva and Leah were just two of the 100,000 plus Dutch Jews who lost their lives during the Holocaust.⁵ Dutch Jewry before the Nazi Holocaust was about 2 percent of the population or 140,000 in total. That means roughly 75 percent of Dutch Jews were slaughtered during the Nazi Holocaust, the highest number of Jewish deaths in all of Western Europe. Why was this the case? European and Jewish scholars have attempted to figure out this so-called “Dutch Paradox”, the paradox that the Dutch Jewry was almost annihilated and yet the Dutch population rarely exhibited the violent anti-Semitism that was so pervasive throughout Central Europe, Germany, and Russia, where pogroms against Jews occurred frequently. Thousands of German Jews fled to the Netherlands, where they assumed they would be in less danger. The Netherlands had generally been considered a safe haven for Jews, who had lived relatively comfortably since the start of the 17th century. Dutch Jews never feared attack, unlike their Jewish brethren in the east, and were able to do well in the economic sector as well as have a voice in the government after the 19th century.

If Jews had been this welcomed and integrated in the Netherlands, how could so many have died? What happened was that passive anti-Semitism persisted within the Netherlands following the German Occupation. This did not reveal itself in a mainly violent way, rather, it was displayed through the casual nature in which the Dutch collaborated with the German Occupiers. Dutch citizens actively saw what was happening to the Dutch Jewry and chose to ignore it or continue with their cooperation instead of defending their fellow citizens. In this

⁴ “Eyewitness to History: Alfred (Al) Münzer.”

⁵ Most reports put the actual number of Dutch Jews sent to concentration camps between 105,000-109,000, and that around 5,000-7,000 survived, although this number is sometimes disputed.

thesis, I will argue that the Dutch civilians acted as direct and indirect collaborators with the German perpetrators, showing an insidious anti-Semitism that surfaced amongst the Dutch citizens during the Nazi Holocaust.

Historiography

The scholarship regarding the destruction of the Dutch Jewry is both numerous and holistic. Historians have grappled with the idea of the “Dutch Paradox” following the Nazi Holocaust in the Netherlands, and extensive research was conducted to better understand how so many Jews were killed efficiently with little protection from the government or citizens. Much of the research done has been at the hands of Dutch historians, which poses some difficulty to non-native speakers. Finding adequate translations proved to be a challenge, yet there were enough primary and secondary sources in English that allowed me to argue about the anti-Semitism of the Dutch through their direct and indirect collaboration.

The foundation of the historiography of the Netherlands and the Dutch Jewry during World War II comes from Dutch historians Jacques Presser and Louis De Jong. Presser was a historian who survived the Holocaust by hiding.⁶ Following the end of World War II, the Dutch Government asked Presser to write an account of the war and the destruction of the Jewish population. This was done at the behest of the Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, an institution set up by the Dutch Government to learn about the horrors and atrocities of war and genocide.⁷ Presser spent fifteen years researching war documents before writing the monumental *Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse jodendom*, which translates to *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry*. This book was first published in

⁶ Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf Dekker, “Jacques Presser, Egodocuments and the Personal Turn in Historiography,” *European Journal of Life Writing* 7 (August 13, 2018): 91.

<https://doi.org/10.5463/ejlw.7.263>. Unfortunately for Presser, his wife was killed at Sobibor concentration camp.

⁷ *Ibid.*

1965. Besides war documents, Presser conducted interviews with survivors and consulted diaries, letters, and memoirs.⁸ He did this “to confront the reader continually with the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of individual persons.”⁹

In *Ashes*, Presser provides a thorough history of the Dutch Jewry following the German Occupation. Presser writes in detail about the Jewish Council, the February Strike, deportations, and the different laws and measures that were passed and enforced.¹⁰ He documents individual and group stories of attempted hiding, successful hiding, persecution, life in the transit camps, and resistance to tell all aspects of the experience of Dutch Jews during the Holocaust. Throughout, Presser makes the argument that “since the German machine was ostensibly no more than a controlling body, what measures were taken against the Jews invariably involved the participation of Dutch officials--from the Secretaries-General in The Hague down to the lowliest village policeman.”¹¹ Presser shows the culpability of the Dutch authorities, who collaborated with German officials to efficiently round up Jews. However, he contrasts with my argument as he did not believe that the Dutch cooperation showed a hidden anti-Semitism amongst the majority of Dutch citizens.¹² He focuses more on the way that the German Occupation resulted in direct collaboration from Dutch officials, as well as the insidious nature of the German anti-Semitism that led to the destruction of so many Jews.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Jacob Presser, *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry* (Amsterdam: Souvenir Press, 2010), 523, 525.

¹⁰ Jason Dawsey's article helped provide additional information about the February Strike: Jason Dawsey, “The Amsterdam General Strike of February 1941,” The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, Accessed November 22, 2021.

¹¹ Presser, 6.

¹² Presser does conclude his magnum opus by saying, “It has often been said that every Dutchman worth his salt ought to have been in the Resistance.” (545) The passivity of Dutch bystanders during this time certainly stained the relationship between the surviving Dutch Jewry and the gentiles, and their lack of support and collaboration is mentioned consistently in Presser's work. It is not as anti-Semitism, but as cowardice in Presser's eyes.

The next major work comes from Loe De Jong, who wrote multiple volumes on the Netherlands during the Second World War from 1969 through 1991. His work, titled *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, which translates in English as *The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War*, is an exhaustive history of the Netherlands during the war. This series is often considered by Dutch historians to be the most comprehensive history of the Netherlands in World War II as well as the Nazi Holocaust. However, De Jong is criticized by Dutch scholars such as Ido De Haan for “the moral framework, emphasizing that attitudes toward the Germans were either *goed* (right) or *fout* (wrong).”¹³ Unfortunately, I was unable to read the entire series, owing to two key factors: I cannot read Dutch, and this is 14 volumes long, with each volume around 600-800 pages. However, almost every scholar on the Dutch paradox has quoted from some part of the series, and many discuss De Jong and his writing.

An important part of this historiography is understanding and explaining the Dutch paradox, the paradox of why so many Dutch Jews were systematically murdered in a country with so little prior anti-Semitism. Many scholars have researched this topic, and it is important to understand what they researched and its connection to this thesis.

The Dutch paradox was first coined by two social scientists named Wout Ultee and Henk Flap, although the debate on the matter truly began with Helen Fein’s *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust*.¹⁴ Fein’s chapter on the Netherlands initially placed much of the blame on the Jewish Council as a way to explain the high death rate and did not account for the amount of integration that Jews in Dutch society had

¹³ Ido De Haan, “The Holocaust in the Netherlands,” Oxford Bibliographies, Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199840731/obo-9780199840731-0050.xml>.

¹⁴ Ido De Haan, “Imperialism, Colonialism, Genocide. The Dutch Case for an International History of the Holocaust,” *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review*, 125 (2-3) 2010: 307.

undertaken before the Nazi Holocaust, which would suggest a level of compliance and collaboration on the part of the Dutch citizens.¹⁵ This sparked the question of the Dutch paradox, and numerous researchers have had their say on the subject. Ultee and Flap look at the government officials, the Jewish Council, and the registration of Dutch Jews from a sociological perspective, and conclude that an answer to the paradox partially lay within the registration of the Dutch Jewry along with the collaborating nature of the Dutch government and the bystanding of Dutch citizens.¹⁶ I group bystanders alongside indirect collaborators and use psychologist Ervin Staub's definition of bystander. Staub defines bystanders as "members of society who are neither perpetrators nor victims, or outside individuals, organizations, and nations."¹⁷ A large part of my argument is understanding the differences between perpetrator, direct collaborator, and indirect collaborator, and how each was individually affected by the passive anti-Semitism of the Netherlands.

Similar to Ultee and Flap, political scientist Henry Mason argues that the Dutch government and bystanders were almost as responsible for the devastation of the Dutch Jewry as the German perpetrators.¹⁸ He looks at the different mechanisms employed by both the Dutch government as well as the Jewish Council to ascertain how they made it easier to find and deport Jews. Mason concludes with a comparison of Danish officials and bystanders. He argues that since the Danes were more nationally unified in their goal to save Jews, they were able to save the majority of Danish Jews, unlike the Dutch. Throughout, Mason argues against Fein's claims

¹⁵ Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York, 1979) Chapter Three.

¹⁶ Wout Ultee & Henk Flap, "De Nederlandse paradox: waarom overleefden zoveel Nederlandse joden de Tweede Wereldoorlog Diet?," published in Wippler, Reinhard, Hermanus Bernardus Gerardus Ganzeboom, and S. Lindenberg, eds. *Verklarende sociologie: opstellen voor Reinhard Wippler.*, (Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1996): 195.

¹⁷ Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1989) 67.

¹⁸ Henry L Mason, "Testing Human Bonds Within Nations: Jews in the Occupied Netherlands," *Political Science Quarterly* 99, no. 2 (1984): 315–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2150408>.

that strong national bonds between Jews and gentiles helped prevent death rates from being so high in some countries.¹⁹ Although he makes similar arguments to mine, we differ in certain regards. I argue specifically that anti-Semitism in the Netherlands was an insidious and prevalent theme following the German Occupation, whereas Mason is interested in looking at the collapse of national bonds between the Jews and gentiles as well as the bureaucratic structure of the Netherlands that allowed a massive removal of the Jewish populace to occur.

Dienke Hondius, who has written much about the Dutch Paradox, argued about the amount of anti-Semitism throughout the Netherlands during and after the war.²⁰ Hondius used archival material right after the war's end to gauge the attitude of surviving Jews who headed back to the Netherlands, along with how gentiles responded. According to Hondius, the few surviving Jews who returned were greeted harshly, largely through silence and disbelief.²¹ There was a temporary rise in anti-Semitism in parts of the Netherlands, whether it was in refusing to hire Jews, descriptions of Jews as cowardly, or the fact that many Dutch believed that Jews should be thankful to the Dutch gentiles for saving them.²² Hondius believes this rise in anti-Semitism and lack of empathy for the Jews emerged thanks to the Nazi strategies of dehumanizing Jews through the anti-Semitic measures passed. This, coupled with the separation of the Jews, led to a belief of superiority over Jewish citizens. His argument helped augment my last chapter and conclusion, however, we disagree on the level of anti-Semitism displayed throughout the war, with Hondius arguing that it was fairly restrained.

Along the lines of Hondius' work, Dutch historian Bart Van der Boom studied Dutch diaries, of both gentile and Jewish diarists, to understand what they knew about the condition of

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁰ Dienke Hondius, "A cold reception: Holocaust survivors in the Netherlands and their return," *Patterns of Prejudice* 28 (1) (1994)

²¹ *Ibid.*, 55-59.

²² *Ibid.*

the Dutch Jewry and the Nazi Holocaust.²³ The question of knowledge is important in understanding the behavior of bystanders. Van der Boom argues that the Dutch citizens were in disbelief of the things they heard, yet the majority had heard about what was going to happen to the Jewish population, especially after 1942. He looked at hundreds of diaries of gentiles to ascertain what they did and did not mention. He found that those who did mention the Jewry also talked about the extermination of the Jewish population in the east. Van der Boom's research helped bolster my understanding of the gentile thought process, as well as providing helpful primary sources.

Criminologist Frank Bovenkerk also wrote about the Dutch paradox. He argues that the Dutch collaborators who allowed the "Holocaust machine" to operate deserve to be punished, especially given the international and Dutch laws that prohibit cooperation with an occupying force.²⁴ Bovenkerk discusses, in brief, the history of the German Occupation and goes further into a study of law to examine why more Dutch officials should have been charged with treason for their collaboration. Similarly to other authors on the Dutch paradox, Bovenkerk believes that it was the bureaucratic machine of the Dutch government that bears the responsibility and insists that the Dutch never had anything "personal" against the Jewry.²⁵ He thinks that anti-Semitism is a non-factor in this regard and instead focuses more so on the government, the bystander apathy, and the flight of the Queen and other important government officials. This is an area I do not cover, although it is important to briefly mention that many Dutch citizens felt betrayed by their leaders leaving them to the mercy of the Nazis. Bovenkerk argues that this set a bad example to the citizens, who no longer had any role models to look up to.

²³ Bart van der Boom, "'The Auschwitz Reservation': Dutch Victims and Bystanders and Their Knowledge of the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 31, no. 3 (December 1, 2017): 385–407. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcx042>.

²⁴ Frank Bovenkerk, "The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story: The Dutch Role in the Persecution of the Jews in World War Two," *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 34, 2000.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 240.

Throughout the first part of my paper, I attempt to provide a substantial history of the Dutch Jewry before the Holocaust, as well as the first years of the war before deportations began in earnest. To do this, I read Dutch historian Ivo Schöffers, who wrote about the Dutch Jewry since their beginnings in the Netherlands. Schöffers provides a history of Judaism in the Netherlands, as well as how Dutch Jews became so successful in the Netherlands even as a small minority. He attributes this to the grudging tolerance and acceptance of the Dutch gentiles, compounded by the religious freedom granted to Dutch Jews in 1795, making them citizens. However, enough casual anti-Semitism kept Jews together as a recognized minority, and Schöffers argues that the Dutch majority wanted to keep Jews separated in a positive manner, to encourage their pluriform society.²⁶ By doing this, Dutch Jews were unable to undergo pillarization as a group and were left out of the majority. Schöffers's arguments helped give me a basis for the history of the Dutch Jewry, as well as their importance in Dutch society.²⁷

One work that has monumental importance to my argument is Ad van Liempt's *Hitler's Bounty Hunters*.²⁸ Van Liempt describes in great detail the men who rounded up Jews in the Netherlands in return for about fifty dollars.²⁹ He goes through the lives of the men who made up the Colonne Henneicke, named after the leader Wim Henneicke. This group was organized by the Germans to help confiscate Jewish property, but this division quickly turned into a quasi-police force, hellbent on turning in Jews. The group, although established by a German

²⁶ I. Schoffer, "The Jews in the Netherlands: The Position of a Minority Through Three Centuries," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15, no. 1 (March, 1981): 97.

²⁷ Hans Knippenberg discusses a similar topic, and specifically looks at why the Jews never formed a pillar. Hans Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building: The Missing 'Pillar,'" *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 93 (2002). Paul Dekker and Hans Daalder similarly mention the lack of a Jewish pillar: Paul Dekker, "From Pillarized Active Membership to Populist Active Citizenship: The Dutch Do Democracy," *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 30, no. 1 (February 2019): 75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-00058-4>.

Hans Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a segmented society," *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* X, (1978): 191-194.

²⁸ Ad Van Liempt, *Hitler's Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews* (New York: Berg, 2005)

²⁹ In today's American money. At the time it would have been 7.5 guilders.

office, was made up of Dutch citizens, many of them with no police qualifications. The group also included many Dutch Nazis. Van Liempt uses records very recently released by the Dutch War Department, and some of what he does is based on other's records, interviews, and a variety of other sources. Still, Van Liempt cobbled together a disturbing picture of Dutch bounty hunters sanctioned by the Germans to round up Dutch Jews in hiding. Not only does this display the evil and greed of the members of the Colonne Henneicke, but it also shows how eager some Dutch citizens were to turn in Jews in hiding. Van Liempt argues that some of the men certainly did it for the money, but also that it was very likely that those involved in the Colonne were aware of the fate of the Jews, showing their anti-Semitism.

Finally, a discussion of the primary sources involved in this thesis is necessary. I mainly looked into Etty Hillesum's diaries, published as *An Interrupted Life: The Diaries, 1941-1943 and Letters from Westerbork*.³⁰ Hillesum has been called "the adult Anne Frank" because she similarly kept a diary during the German Occupation and also had a strong belief in the goodness of mankind. Hillesum barely mentioned the German Occupation until the enforcement of the Yellow Star of David, which changed her outlook. Hillesum discussed the evils of the occupation and made mention of the different anti-Semitic laws that continued to get passed. She also discussed the Jewish Council in detail, including her brief participation with the Council before she volunteered to go to Westerbork to help the prisoners there. The book changes from her diary to letters written to friends and family back in Amsterdam while she was interned in Westerbork. Hillesum's diary and letters offer a view into what it must have felt like to be a Dutch Jew before deportation, as well as giving insight into life in Westerbork.³¹

³⁰ Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life: The Diaries, 1941-1943 and Letters from Westerbork* (New York: Holt, 1996).

³¹ Erich Marx's account of Westerbork also greatly helped my understanding of the transit camp: Erich Marx, "That's How it was: A Report on Westerbork and Bergen Belsen (1945)," *Irish Pages* 9, no. 2 (2015): 72–101.

Besides Hillesum, I also gathered several online primary sources in the form of interviews and diaries. These included the interviews of Alfred Münzer, Dukie Gelber, Henry Fenichel, and interviews conducted via the Yad Vashem Youtube page. Although the subject of these interviews varied, they all helped contribute to the understanding of the passive anti-Semitism during the war as well as describing first-hand accounts of direct and indirect collaborators.

Background: Jews in the Netherlands, 17th century-20th century

The Jewish story in the Netherlands began in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Sephardic Jews from Iberia arrived in the Netherlands around the early 1600s, seeking religious freedom from the Catholic Spanish and Portuguese, whose policies were intolerant of Jewish peoples.³² The Netherlands had recently fought the Spanish and signed the Union of Utrecht which granted its independence. This treaty not only unified the northern provinces of the Netherlands against the Spanish but also allowed for personal religious freedom.³³ Much of Europe remained violently anti-Semitic, as evidenced by the Hannover merchant Michael-David Mayer's words to his fellow Jewish merchants: "the difference between Amsterdam and the German States was comparable to that between heaven and hell."³⁴ This paints an unrealistically optimistic portrait of early life in the Netherlands for the Jews that in reality was more complex.

In the largest cities, like Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam, Jews were generally tolerated and lived in peace, albeit without civil rights.³⁵ Jews in these areas were beneficial to the economy as traders and merchants and helped contribute to the growth of the Dutch colonies

³² Hans Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building: The Missing 'Pillar,'" *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 93 (2002): 194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9663.00194>.

³³ Union of Utrecht, 1579.

³⁴ I. Schoffer, "The Jews in the Netherlands," 90.

³⁵ Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building," 194.

in Brazil before Portugal overtook them.³⁶ However, in other cities like Utrecht, Jews faced more prohibitions. Jews were completely banned from Utrecht in 1546 which was upheld until the early 18th century.³⁷ Even then, Jews were banned during an epidemic in 1712 and were not allowed reentry until 1736.³⁸ Still, life in the Netherlands was far more tolerable than in the rest of Europe, and the Dutch Jewry thrived. Jewish immigration to the Netherlands was generally constant, although there were periods of great unrest which prompted more immigration, such as the increased pogroms in Eastern Europe in 1648 and in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.³⁹ The majority of the Jews coming from Eastern Europe were of Ashkenazi origin. The difference between these two ethnicities is their place of origin. Ashkenazi Jews largely hail from Central Europe, whereas Sephardic Jews come from Iberia and North Africa. In the Netherlands, these differences are important to understanding the Jewish story.

Jews in Dutch Society

When Sephardic Jews arrived in the Netherlands around the early 17th century, they were largely left to their own devices and encouraged to keep their distance from the Dutch. Dutch Jews kept to themselves and carried on many of their customs such as speaking Yiddish and Portuguese, as well as living amongst themselves in Jewish quarters, with the largest located in Amsterdam.⁴⁰ This Jewish enclave was kept in order by a group of community authorities called the Parnassim.⁴¹ The Parnassim was responsible for enforcing justice within the community, along with having the power to expel members using their small policing force. They were also

³⁶ Wim Klooster, "Communities of Port Jews and Their Contacts in the Dutch Atlantic World," *Jewish History* 20, no. 2 (2006): 130.

³⁷ "Utrecht - Jewish Cultural Quarter," Joods Cultureel Kwartier, Accessed September 23, 2021, <https://jck.nl/en/page/utrecht>.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Not all Jews were expelled from Utrecht. Jewish students at the University of Utrecht proved an exception to this ban, however they were the only exceptions.

³⁹ I. Schoffer, "The Jews in the Netherlands," 88. Etty Hillesum's mother was from Russia and came to the Netherlands during this time period. Hillesum will be discussed in greater depth later on.

⁴⁰ Hans Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building," 194.

⁴¹ I. Schoffer, "The Jews in the Netherlands," 90.

responsible for economic relief to the members of their Kahlila, or congregation.⁴² As evidenced, Dutch Jews were kept apart from the rest of society throughout the first part of their history in the Netherlands. This is compounded by the fact that Dutch Jews were prohibited from marrying gentiles by law, as well as being unable to join craft guilds. According to Dutch historian Ivo Schöffner, the Jews were treated “like semi-foreigners, perhaps to be compared with best with ‘apartheid’, if this word is used in a politically unloaded sense of the word.”⁴³ Schöffner believes that the Sephardi did their best to remain out of the negative spotlight by taking care of their own poor so as not to not draw attention and alarm their “hosts”.⁴⁴

This isolated yet tolerable situation of the Sephardi was disturbed by the arrival of Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe. The Ashkenazi were displaced by pogroms and anti-Semitism in Poland, Germany, and Eastern Europe. By contrast, the Netherlands was a beacon of hope. Dutch Jews were able to practice Judaism without fear of persecution along with having an already established small Jewish population that was allowed to live in peace, even though they lacked the same civil rights as Dutch citizens. Ashkenazi Jews settled in the Netherlands during and after the Thirty Years War in greater waves than the Sephardi. In most countries, this was a cause for alarm and new anti-Semitic measures, especially since almost all of the Ashkenazi were poor.⁴⁵ However, the Dutch government thought of this as a benign issue. The Sephardic Jews who already settled were more afraid of this new immigration and closed their communities and synagogues to the newcomers.⁴⁶ Ashkenazi settled mainly in Amsterdam

⁴² “The Netherlands (Holland) Virtual Jewish History Tour,” Jewish Virtual Library, Accessed April 7, 2021. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-netherlands-virtual-jewish-history-tour>. Part of the reason they kept their own laws was because they were treated as “semi foreigners” according to Schoffer, and thus were not accorded the same legal standing in a court of law.

⁴³ I. Schoffer, “The Jews in the Netherlands,” 90.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

and quickly outnumbered the Sephardic, although the Sephardic would remain economically superior through their connections in trade with Brazil and Portugal.⁴⁷

After settling into the Netherlands, the Dutch Jewry found themselves living in a certain limbo where they played a role in the economy and yet were still not a part of the Dutch society. This began to change in 1795 after the Batavian Revolution which brought French rule to the Netherlands under Louis Bonaparte. However, Louis was merely a puppet for his brother, who truly ruled. Napoleon Bonaparte's reforms included provisions for religious freedom and equal rights to all religious groups, granting Jews equal rights in the Netherlands for the first time.⁴⁸ Contrary to the modern-day conception of civil rights and equality, Dutch Jews were taken aback by this new proclamation, as it meant that the tight bonds of their culture which had held them together were now in danger of breaking. Jewish identity was strained: now Jews began to forgo their Yiddish dialect in favor of the Dutch language, they went to Dutch schools, they had more mobility that allowed them to spread around the country, and they generally began to assimilate more and more into Dutch society.⁴⁹ This assimilation process was not rapid and it did not occur all at once; rather, Dutch Jews (barring the wealthier Sephardi) still did not have access to guilds and merchant groups until after the industrial growth of the Netherlands in the 1870s due to anti-Semitism.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the Dutch Jews gradually gained more and more inroads into the society of the Netherlands. Jews became a part of the Dutch Assembly, as sociologist Peter Tammes says:

“By the end of the 19th-century Jewish representation in the Lower House had become a

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴⁹ The Ashkenazi were the Dutch Jews who spoke the most Yiddish, the Sephardic Jews generally spoke Portuguese or Spanish, “A Rosenberg, “The Adoption of the Dutch Language by Dutch Jewry,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 30, no. 1 (1996): 155.

⁵⁰ Peter Tammes, and Peter Scholten, “Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands: A Historical-Sociological Analysis of Pre–World War II Jews and Contemporary Muslims,” *Social Science History* 41, no. 3 (2017): 480–481.

structural element.”⁵¹ Around 50 Jews or men who were no longer practicing Judaism had been involved after 1848.⁵² In a more localized sense, Amsterdam Jews became a part of the city council in 1798, as well as being a part of “the *Provinciale Staten* [Provincial Assembly] of North Holland from 1850 onward.”⁵³ The Dutch Jewry faced fewer barriers than other European Jews and were able to more or less integrate into Dutch society. This included the economic sector, where Dutch Jews did well. Even though Jews struggled to gain admittance into guilds, that did not prevent Dutch Jews from being shareholders in the East Indies Company and becoming heavily involved in the diamond industry.⁵⁴ The diamond industry in the Netherlands lasted for 300 years, from the early 1600s until World War I, which quickly included Sephardic Jews in Amsterdam who had just arrived. This business was the way of life for so many Dutch Jews that it became known simply as “the trade”.⁵⁵ Jews were able to enter the diamond industry easily because there was no guild preventing Jewish participation.⁵⁶ Although the Dutch Jewry had indeed made inroads into Dutch society, they never gained enough status to have a “pillar”, an important part of Dutch social and religious life.

The Lack of a Jewish Pillar

Throughout the late 19th century and well into the 20th century, Dutch society was segregated into four distinct religious/political groupings, known as “pillars”. These four pillars included Calvinism (Protestantism), Catholicism, Socialism, and Liberal. Pillarization separated the Dutch as early as childhood since the religious pillars had their own private schools, and the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ “The Netherlands (Holland) Virtual Jewish History Tour,”

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-netherlands-virtual-jewish-history-tour>.

⁵⁵ “Amsterdam, City of Diamonds - Jewish Cultural Quarter,” Joods Cultureel Kwartier, Accessed October 12, 2021. <https://jck.nl/en/exhibition/amsterdam-city-diamonds>.

⁵⁶ Henriëtte Boas, “Jews and the Amsterdam Diamond Trade,” Edited by S. Lipschitz, Siegfried E. van Praag, Jozeph Michman, and Simona Edelman, *Studia Rosenthaliana* 26, no. 1/2 (1992): 216. At its peak, there were 2,815 Jews working in the Amsterdam diamond industry.

Socialist and Liberal pillars used state schools.⁵⁷ Besides schools, the pillars segregated society even further, with different pillars having different hospitals, social clubs, newspapers, soccer teams, political associations, and more.⁵⁸ However, despite this grand division of society, Dutch Jewry never managed to gain entrance into a subsection of one of the pillars, let alone the capacity to build a Jewish pillar. The lack of a Jewish pillar, and with it, a recognized foothold in Dutch society, helped contribute to the demise of the Dutch Jewry, as the rest of Dutch society was segregated into their individual pillars. This made it easier for them to ignore their Jewish neighbors and do little to help during the Nazi Holocaust.

The lack of a Jewish pillar began with schooling in the Netherlands. Jewish education was initially supervised by members of the Jewish community, but this all changed in 1796 when Dutch Jews were officially declared citizens of the Netherlands. From then on, Jews were encouraged to keep their schooling practices to themselves since the public schools were then Christian. The government enforced the rule that they speak in Dutch rather than the preferred Yiddish or even Portuguese in an attempt at assimilation.⁵⁹ This contributed to the assimilation of Jews into Dutch society, yet it also paradoxically kept them aloof. Jewish schooling ended when the state refused to fund religious schools in the mid-1800s.⁶⁰ The two religious pillars fought hard to get funding for their schools and succeeded in creating religiously separated schools. Unfortunately, the Jewish community lacked funds and clout, and was shuffled into the reorganized public schools of the Socialist and Liberal pillars.

The Dutch Jewry held close ties with both the Socialist and Liberal pillars in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and perhaps it was because of this that the Jewry never successfully

⁵⁷ Paul Dekker, "From Pillarized Active Membership to Populist Active Citizenship: The Dutch Do Democracy," *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 30, no. 1 (February 2019): 75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-00058-4>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Hans Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building," 202.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

created a Jewish pillar. Dutch Jews largely settled in the biggest cities in the Netherlands, with the majority located in Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam.⁶¹ Even though these centralized populations of Jews made pillarization more likely, the fact that these cities were steeped in rising liberalism and secularism made a religious pillar more and more unlikely. This is coupled with the fact that Dutch Jews were split between the Socialist and Liberal pillars. The Socialist pillar represented the Dutch proletariat, whereas the Liberal pillar featured the bourgeoisie.⁶² Dutch political scientist Hans Daalder said that “[the] Jewish *verzuiling* (pillar) was obviated, exactly because the Jewish bourgeoisie integrated successfully into the liberal segment, the Jewish proletariat (and also a number of Jewish intellectuals of bourgeois descent) into the socialist subculture.”⁶³ Examples of this division include the Amsterdam trade union of diamond workers, which constituted several Jewish and gentile members and represented the socialist pillar.⁶⁴

Jewish figures such as Issac Levy, David Wijnkoop, and Henri Polak were influential in the creation of different Liberal and Socialist political organizations.⁶⁵ Levy helped found the Liberal Union, the political faction of the Liberal pillar.⁶⁶ Wijnkoop and Polak were on the other side; Wijnkoop was one of the three heads of the communist movement in the Netherlands and served as the first president. Polak helped establish the Social Democratic Labor party while also helping to found the General Dutch Diamonds Workers’ Union.⁶⁷ This unintentional division

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Dekker, “From Pillarized Active Membership to Populist Active Citizenship,” 3.

⁶³ Hans Daalder, “Dutch Jews in a segmented society,” *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* X, (1978): 191-194.

⁶⁴ Hans Knippenberg, “Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building,” 203.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Jan Bank and Maaren van Buuren, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: 1900, The Age of Bourgeois Culture* (Assen, NL: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): pg. 354.

Both Polak and Wijnkoop were targeted by the Nazis in the aftermath of the German invasion, and both would die during the war years, although both died of illness rather than at the hands of the Germans (undoubtedly these illnesses were exaggerated by the stress of being hunted). Polak’s wife did die at Westerbork.

prevented the rise of both a religious pillar as well as a political pillar, keeping the Jewish population in a social limbo outside of the accepted social lines. Jews were able to interact with each pillar with little discrimination, yet they never achieved the important status of having a Jewish pillar or even being a subset of a larger pillar.

What this shows is that while the religious majorities in the Netherlands were able to fight against rising secularism and maintain their religious identity, Jews were not afforded the same privileges, and were instead assimilated into Dutch society without the benefits of the other religious or political pillars. This kept the Jewish population as “others”, even though there were rare occurrences of overt anti-Semitism. Dutch scholar Ivo Schöffers argues that despite the lack of pillarization, the pluriform nature of Dutch society allowed Jews to retain a sense of identity with each other and with society in general.⁶⁸ I do not necessarily disagree with this assessment, yet he is talking about Dutch society before 1940. He admits that “[t]he Dutch society, the Dutch majority, did not do much to save the Jewish minority although the prime responsibility rested with others and circumstances beyond their control forced the issue.”⁶⁹ Schöffers did not believe that the Dutch majority was as complicit as I will later suggest and show. Still, the Dutch Jewry remained in an ambiguous position in Dutch society, as a group tolerated, yet never fully accepted into one of the main pillars that were established. Dutch Jews faced almost no violent anti-Semitism. There were instances of formal and informal segregation and anti-Semitism, yet for the most part, Dutch Jews were able to live peacefully and gain some political and social clout until the beginning of World War II. This changed after the Nazi Occupation, as the insidious anti-Semitism of the Dutch citizens and government showed itself following the German invasion.

⁶⁸ Schöffers, “The Jews in the Netherlands,” 99.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Nazi Invasion of the Netherlands, May 10- May 14

On May 10, 1940, Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands to quickly defeat the Low Countries, including Belgium and Luxembourg, before attacking France. The Dutch military was unprepared for an invasion, as they had remained neutral in prior wars, including the Great War. The Dutch were woefully unequipped in terms of modern weapons and were also poorly trained due to recent cutbacks to the military.⁷⁰ The Dutch military numbered 240,000 men on the eve of battle, many of them reservists. Still, the Dutch put up a valiant resistance under the circumstances, and frustrated the Germans, especially at the Grebbeline.⁷¹



Map showing the Grebbeline

The Grebbeline was a land barrier that the Dutch army needed to hold because it provided direct access to Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Amsterdam. Unfortunately, the Grebbeline was too long to fully defend, and the Dutch could not repel the heavy artillery and aircraft attacks.⁷² The Grebbeline's fall crippled Dutch defenses, yet the Dutch kept up a spirited resistance despite the odds. German military leaders understood that they needed to move quickly and had expected the invasion of the Netherlands to take a day or two at most. The unexpected determination of the underfunded and undertrained Dutch military forced the Nazis

⁷⁰ Louis De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 1969).

⁷¹ Allert M.A. Goossens, "May 13-The Grebbeline," *War over Holland*, <http://www.waroverholland.nl/index.php?page=13-may>

⁷² The actual length of the Grebbeline is difficult to find, but it stretches from the IJsselmeer Bay through Grebbeberg in Rhenen, which is on the border of Germany and the Netherlands. This puts the line, which stretches out in several different directions, anywhere from 25-45 kilometers long.

to unleash one of their most devastating attacks on the Netherlands: the total bombardment of Rotterdam.

Rotterdam was, and remains, the second-largest city in the Netherlands behind Amsterdam, with a population of about 650,000 people. The port at Rotterdam has been a major European seaport since its opening in the 14th century and upheld its importance well into the beginning of the 1940s. Rotterdam opened the Netherlands to trade all over Europe and Asia, allowing the Dutch economy to blossom during the Dutch Golden Age (1588-1672). The port remains the largest in Europe today. The Germans understood its importance, and also knew that bombing it would send a strong message. Hitler and Hermann Goring, Hitler's deputy and right-hand man, had anticipated a swifter victory. When Dutch tenacity prolonged the fighting, Goring grew impatient and ordered General Rudolf Schmidt, Commander of the invading Germans, to attack. Schmidt delivered this ultimatum to the Dutch forces on May 14:

To the Commander of Rotterdam

To the Mayor and aldermen and the Governmental Authorities of Rotterdam

The continuing opposition to the offensive of German troops in the open city of Rotterdam forces me to take appropriate measures should this resistance not be ceased immediately. This may well result in the complete destruction of the city. I petition you - as a man of responsibility - to endeavour everything within your powers to prevent the town of having to bear such a huge price. As a token of agreement I request you to send us an authorised negotiator by return. Should within two hours after the hand-over of this ultimatum no official reply be received, I will be forced to execute the most extreme measures of destruction.

The commander of the German troops.⁷³

This demand shows the willingness of the Germans to level a major Dutch city with very little warning. Although Schmidt does threaten to destroy the city, he is reluctant to do so, as seen above. The Dutch refused their demand, largely because Schmidt had not signed the letter,

⁷³ Allert M.A. Goossens, "Rotterdam," *War Over Holland*, Archived from the original on 31 October 2020.

showing their strong resolve.⁷⁴ However, the mayor and the military officials were scared about the looming German threat and ordered the northern sector of the city to evacuate. The Dutch sent back a letter, saying that the ultimatum needed to be signed before it could be seriously considered. They sent a negotiator to Schmidt, who had already created a new ultimatum with his signature.

During this time, German bombers were on hold, awaiting the news. They were supposed to hold their attack if the German command fired flares into the skies, meaning the negotiations were ongoing.⁷⁵ This system had its flaws, as the area was cloudy and covered in smoke, making it difficult to see the flares. Schmidt decided to postpone the attack as the negotiations continued and the Dutch were planning on surrendering to save the city. Unfortunately, the flares signaling the bombers to wait were partially obstructed. A group of bombers saw the flares and turned around, but others failed to see the flares and began their attack. Those that attacked carpet-bombed the city center, killing 800-900, destroying close to 28,000 buildings, including homes and stores, and caused the homelessness of 80,000 people.⁷⁶ Surprisingly, almost all of the 10,000 Dutch military men within the city survived the bombing.

The Dutch military hierarchy was shellshocked by this ferocious bombing, and when the Germans threatened to destroy Utrecht in a similarly, General Winkelman, Commander of the Army and Navy, capitulated for the entire country.⁷⁷ Fighting continued in Zeeland due to the arrival of French forces. Winkelman had no control over the French, so they fought on, but they too ultimately surrendered on May 17. At this point, the Nazi forces occupied the entire country.

The casualties included approximately 2,300 Dutch soldiers and 2,000 Dutch civilians.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Helen Hill Miller, "Rotterdam - Reborn from Ruins," *National Geographic* 118 (4) October 1960: 526–553.

⁷⁷ Allert M.A. Goossens, "Capitulation," *War over Holland*, <http://www.waroverholland.nl/index.php?page=part-iii-capitulation>

Thousands of buildings were destroyed, and many civilians were displaced and injured during the conflict.⁷⁸ Queen Wilhelmina and the heads of the Dutch government escaped the onrushing Nazi forces and were able to spend the war in Britain, setting up a government-in-exile.

The brotherhood that Hitler had perceived between the two nations was not nearly as strong as he initially believed. Hitler had often thought of the Dutch as fellow members of the Aryan race, who could assist the German war effort.⁷⁹ Even though the Dutch Nazi party had over 100,000 members, the country generally resisted Aryanization. Yet, the Dutch surrender after only five days of fighting helped them avoid harsher punishments during the first year of occupation than Belgium or France, who endured tougher circumstances. It also suggests a level of compliance as well as a grudging acceptance of the new order, which proved catastrophic for the Dutch Jewry.

The Netherlands Under Occupation and the February Strike



Queen Wilhelmina addresses the Netherlands over Radio Orange, July 1940.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Samuel P. Oliner, *Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (Simon and Schuster, 1992) 33. ISBN 9781439105382.

After the German invasion, thousands of Dutch citizens and government officials fled the country.⁸⁰ With the government in exile and the nation reeling from the first attack on Dutch soil in years, Dutch citizens feared the worst. The Dutch government's refusal to return from exile led Hitler to appoint Arthur Seyes-Inquart as the Reichkommissar of the Netherlands. Seyss-Inquart was an Austrian lawyer who had helped draft the legal paperwork of the Anschluss in 1938.⁸¹ Later, as Reichskommissar, he had complete control over the new regime and answered to Hitler alone. Since the Dutch government was in exile, the Germans were able to fill top positions with German and Austrian Nazi officials, leaving the rest of the Dutch government directly under their control.⁸²

Seyss-Inquart began his tenure with the “velvet glove” approach. This meant that the Dutch citizens were not to be treated too roughly. The occupying government tried to work alongside the Dutch citizens “while economically linking the Netherlands as closely as possible to the Reich, but at the same time preserving their formal independence in order to maintain control over the Dutch- East Indian areas.”⁸³ Hitler saw the Netherlands as a vital source of economic strength for the Third Reich, which was fighting wars on several fronts. Throughout 1940, the Netherlands were put under civilian occupation meaning they were treated less harshly than Belgium and France which were under military occupation.⁸⁴ The banning of the Dutch

⁸⁰ Henry L. Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations: Jews in the Occupied Netherlands,” *Political Science Quarterly* 99, no. 2 (1984): 320, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2150408>.

⁸¹ “The Netherlands,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Accessed March 22, 2020. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-netherlands>.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Gerhard Hirschfeld, “Collaboration and Attentism in the Netherlands 1940-41,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 3 (1981): 471.

⁸⁴ “General Introduction Part II | Ehri Online Course in Holocaust Studies,” European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, Accessed March 22, 2020. <https://training.ehri-project.eu/general-introduction-part-ii>.

Communist and Socialist parties caused members of those groups to begin a small, limited resistance against Nazi rule, yet the majority of Dutch citizens carried on with life as usual.⁸⁵

Dutch Jews also hoped to go on as they normally would, since they remained unaware of future events, unlike the German Jews who fled to the Netherlands. These refugees were highly cognizant of the terror that awaited them and were more motivated to seek hiding places to survive.⁸⁶ However, from September through November of 1940, the anti-Semitism of the Nazi order became apparent. Jewish newspapers were shut down in September, followed by the dismissal of all Jewish civil servants in November.⁸⁷ At the end of 1940, all Jewish businesses were forced to register with the government. Following the creation of a Jewish Council by the beginning of the new year, all Dutch Jews were required to register as well.

The Jewish Council was created by the Nazi-headed government and was run under the direct supervision of two prominent Dutch Jews: Professor David Cohen, and businessman Abraham Asscher.⁸⁸ Both men had previously worked for the Committee of Jewish Refugees to help displaced Jews in the Netherlands, and they were told that the newly established Jewish Council was for the benefit of Dutch Jews. However, this Council helped find and convince thousands of Dutch Jews to comply, making their information available to the Nazi bureaucracy and allowing them to easily locate Dutch Jews when the deportations began in 1942.⁸⁹ At the time, many Dutch Jews were still unaware of the danger that awaited them, which mainly

⁸⁵ Jason Dawsey, "The Amsterdam General Strike of February 1941," The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, Accessed November 22, 2021.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/amsterdam-general-strike-february-1941>.

⁸⁶ Peter Tammes, "Jewish Immigrants in the Netherlands during the Nazi Occupation," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 37, no. 4 (2007): 545-547.

⁸⁷ Jason Dawsey, "The Amsterdam General Strike of February 1941."

⁸⁸ Mason, "Testing Human Bonds Within Nations," 326.

⁸⁹ BV, DE REE Archiefsystemen, "Oprichting En Organisatie van de Joodsche Raad Voor Amsterdam," NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies. Accessed November 30, 2021. <https://www.archieven.nl/nl/zoeken?mivast=0&mizig=210&miadt=298&miaet=1&micode=182&minr=3027670&miview=inv2>.

resulted from the initial velvet glove approach that Seyss-Inquart established.⁹⁰ By refraining from public shows of force and gradually oppressing the Jews instead of all at once, the Reichskommissar was able to lull Dutch Jews and civilians into a false sense of security. This changed after the February Strike and Operation Barbarossa in 1941.

Before the February Strike, protests on a much smaller scale had occurred, although these were largely done in schools and universities.⁹¹ These were in response to the first anti-Jewish measures being passed. Professors and their students protested both the initial forms distributed by the Nazis, asking people if they had any Jewish heritage and then another form making sure that professors were Aryan.⁹² Some of these protests included speeches, letters to the Reichskommissar, illegal newspapers started by students, and refusal to dismiss Jewish colleagues when that measure was passed later. Protests at the Universities of Leiden and Delft were so bothersome to the Germans that they closed them down.⁹³ All across the country, student and professor-led strikes resisted these new measures. Yet, Jewish professors were still forced out all the same, despite the best efforts of the students and colleagues. Some professors resigned in sympathy, but life went on while the Jewish professors had their dismissal upgraded to “suspension” to appease the crowd. This change of words meant nothing to the Germans, who achieved their first goal of ridding the schools of Jews.

Did these Dutch protests continue to rage when, even after months of their Jewish professors being “suspended”, they never came back? Unfortunately, what seems to have happened is that school closings and the forced labor of Dutch college students who refused to

⁹⁰ Proof of this comes from the fact that nearly every single Dutch Jew registered when asked too. By being in the system, the Nazi's were able to easily find the Dutch Jews and deport them, which, if they had known was their fate, they would have never complied. Tammes, “Jewish Immigrants in the Netherlands during the Nazi Occupation,” 548.

⁹¹ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 321.

⁹² Presser, 20-22.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

sign a loyalty oath caused all who had been protesting to disappear gradually until by 1943 there was almost no higher education going on in the Netherlands.⁹⁴ The protesting Dutch students were forced away, one way or another. Only 20 percent of Amsterdam students signed this loyalty oath, as well as only 25 percent of Delft students.⁹⁵ This does not necessarily mean that these students were protesting the anti-Semitic nature of the occupiers, as they may have been unbothered by the Jewish issues and more focused on the fact that their country was no longer under their control. Given the number of protests occurring in 1940 and 1941, this seems somewhat unlikely. Still, what we see is that groups were willing to stand up for the Dutch Jewry, and they frequently protested. However, the truly insidious nature of the German plan is revealed: By rooting out the causes of discontent and protest in the Netherlands, the Communists, professors, and students, the Germans were able to silence the vocal critics, making the majority of Dutch citizens either afraid to speak out for fear of what might happen to them or forcing them to look to the government for guidance. Both of these options resulted in Dutch passivity at best, or at worst, active collaboration.

Public Dutch protests reached their zenith with the February Strike of 1941, which were the only protests ever to occur on behalf of the Jewry in Europe during the Second World War, and was orchestrated entirely by Dutch Communists and Socialists, the groups most closely tied to the Jewish people. Two large incidents led to this strike, both of them occurring at the hands of Jews defending themselves. The first occurred because Dutch Nazis, drunk with power, decided to exert force and terror over local Jews by attacking a group in Amsterdam.⁹⁶ Young Jewish men fought back and killed one of the Dutch Nazis, enraging Seyss-Inquart. Dutch Jews were wary

⁹⁴ Annette Richardson, "Children, Youth and Schooling Disruption in the Netherlands During World War II," *Groniek* 148 (2000): 339, 341-342.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 339. As it turns out, almost everyone who signed a loyalty oath was sent to Germany anyways.

⁹⁶ Dawsey, "The Amsterdam General Strike of February 1941."

after this senseless attack by the Dutch Nazis, so when German police entered an ice cream parlor run by German-Jewish immigrant Erich Cahn on February 19, he was afraid that they were Dutch Nazis. As a result, he released an ammonium gas which injured the German police.⁹⁷ German authorities were outraged, largely due to the false reports which alleged that he “gnawed through an Aryan’s artery and then suck[ed] out his blood.”⁹⁸ For this, Cahn was tortured and executed. This also gave Seyss-Inquart an excuse to lash out at the Jewish population, and on February 22-23, the first recorded Jewish deportations in the Netherlands began. German police rounded up young men off the streets of Amsterdam, attacking and humiliating them all the while.⁹⁹ Non-Jews gathered to watch in horror, although there was little they could do. In total, 389 Amsterdam Jews got deported to Mauthausen, where almost all of them were killed by the Germans or committed suicide.¹⁰⁰

Angered by this disgusting display of violence and deportations, Dutch workers, led by the now-illegal Dutch Communist Party, started a strike on the 25th of February. This strike is best described by journalist Salomon de Vries in his diary on that date:

The news ran round through the city. “The Amsterdam Dry-dock Company, the shipbuilding industry, De Vries Lenz, Fokker - they're on strike everywhere! The ferryboats aren't running! The trams aren't running!” Empty streets. No trams, almost no cars. The workers and drivers of a very large number of shipping agents, large and small, had also laid down their work. Almost everywhere the shops were closed. Strike — a general strike! Against the persecution of the Jews, against inhumane treatment, against the “we're running the show” attitude of the WA and other Mussert gangsters.¹⁰¹

Anton Mussert, the man de Vries references, was the leader of the Dutch Nazis, and the WA was the paramilitary wing of the Dutch Nazis. They were the ones who started the first fighting

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Presser, 50. Presser got this from a primary document, however, the translation of *Ondergang* leaves out many of these crucial sources.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

¹⁰¹ “The February Strike,” Verzets Resistance Museum, Accessed November 22, 2021. <https://www.verzetsmuseum.org/en/kennisbank/the-february-strike>.

against the Dutch Jews in early February, which is part of where De Vries discerns this “we’re running the show attitude”: they were aggressive, confrontational, and unrestrained against Jews and other minorities. Dutch citizens were tired of these opportunists and traitors and showed their displeasure. Workers flooded the streets, stopping traffic while protesting. Another first-hand account comes from Mientje Meijer, a gentile seamstress, who said to her fellow employees:

Ladies, all of Amsterdam has come to a standstill because they’ve been rounding up Jews and taking them away. We’ve got to join in.’ To my surprise everyone took to the streets. I thought, “now I’m going to be sacked,” but even the boss went along! We went to the Noordermarkt and the procession just kept growing. It was overwhelming.¹⁰²

Dutch gentiles were more than willing to risk losing their job and suffering physical violence to stand up for Jewish rights. The February Strike reportedly had 300,000 participants in Amsterdam on the 25th, which spread to nearby cities such as Utrecht, Haarlem, and Zaandam the next day.¹⁰³ The strikers faced opposition from the Dutch SS and the Dutch police force, which were both under the control of either Dutch or German Nazis. These forces killed nine strikers and injured and arrested hundreds more.¹⁰⁴ Another source of opposition came from the Jewish Council, who were afraid that Seyss-Inquart and other Nazis would retaliate by deporting more Jews if they did not stop the strike.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Dawsey, “The Amsterdam General Strike of February 1941.” Here, “participating” is defined as both closing down stores and factories, as well as refusing to work or shop.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*



Police threatening Dutch Jews.

The strike finished on February 27th, two days after it began. Eighteen protestors who had been arrested were executed a month later. Twenty-Two suspected leaders of the strike were rounded up, with some given the death penalty and others were given life in prison.¹⁰⁶ The actual leaders of the strike, Communist Party members Jaap Brandenburg, Paul de Groot, Lou Jansen, and Jan Dieters were all forced into hiding.¹⁰⁷ Due to this lack of leaders, the Dutch Resistance was slow to start, with the established Resistance beginning in 1943. However, the February Strike briefly instilled hope into the Dutch Jewish community. Presser notes that for many Dutch Jews, this was the “greatest experience of the war.”¹⁰⁸ He goes on to say that “The reason for this was simple: for once, albeit for but a little while, they did not feel that their Dutch compatriots were leaving them in the lurch... [t]his group dared to brave a ruthless enemy, and was ready to

¹⁰⁶ Françoise Nuñez, “Wie Maakten de Februaristaking Mogelijk?” *Historiek*, Accessed February 21, 2022. <https://historiek.net/wie-maakten-de-februaristaking-mogelijk-ze-zijn-verzwegen-en-vergeten/76111/>.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Presser, 56.

sacrifice life and property-for them.”¹⁰⁹ The strike is significant, as it was the largest protest that supported the Jewish population during World War II, and one of the only ones to occur.

The brutal repression of the strike by the Nazis dampened the spirit of the protestors. It also resulted in the appointment of Sybren Tulp as head of police in Amsterdam.¹¹⁰ Tulp was a member of the Dutch Nazi party and an anti-Semite, who used the Dutch police to round up Jews.¹¹¹ He also used his power within the police department to root out the police officers who were involved in the burgeoning resistance movement. Another important effect of the strike was the removal of the Amsterdam and Zaandam mayors, who were replaced by men picked by the Germans. Thus the Nazis controlled Amsterdam, the largest city in the Netherlands and home to almost 80,000 Jews which was over half the country’s Jewish population. The tumultuous events of February 1941 led to large-scale deportations in the Netherlands the following year.

Gentiles in the Netherlands, especially the workers, ostensibly supported the Dutch Jewry at one point, as demonstrated by the February Strike. However, that does not explain why many of these same workers ignored, and in the case of the train drivers, helped deport the Dutch Jewry just a few years later. The swift and sure response from the German Occupiers certainly dissuaded future protests in support of Jews. Research suggests that the negative outcome of the strike made Dutch gentiles more willing to comply and support the new regime in fear of their lives. Does this show anti-Semitism? It seems harsh to blame those who were genuinely afraid for their lives, yet Resistance continued (albeit on a much smaller scale) showing that nothing could deter some gentiles. Others were ready to submit to the Germans and their anti-Semitic policies, which, while not readily anti-Semitic on the part of the gentiles, demonstrates a passive

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Anthony McElligott, Tim Kirk, and Ian Kershaw, *Working Towards the Führer: Essays in Honour of Sir Ian Kershaw* (Manchester University Press, 2003), 191.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 192-193.

acceptance of anti-Semitic law. I suggest that this reflects an indirect collaboration on the part of gentiles later in this thesis.

Deportations, 1942-1944

After the February Strike, the Nazis clamped down on the Dutch Jews, especially in Amsterdam. Dutch Jews were forced to stay in one location, with Jewish citizens segregated from the gentile population.¹¹² Foreign-born Jews were sent to Westerbork, a transit camp in the northeastern province of Drenthe in the Netherlands. Westerbork, as tragically ironic as it may seem, was set up by Dutch Jews in collaboration with the Dutch government in 1939. It initially served as a refugee camp for German Jews fleeing from Nazi Germany.¹¹³ Around 25,000 German Jews sought shelter in the Netherlands, and Dutch Jews wanted to find a place for their brethren to live safely.

German Jews sometimes struggled to integrate into the Netherlands and were often more likely to be subjected to anti-Semitism than Dutch-born Jews.¹¹⁴ Since Westerbork was set up by the Dutch government in 1939, the German Jews in the camp remained safe, and often took administrative positions inside.¹¹⁵ German Jews were so prominent in Westerbork that German was the language spoken in the camp.¹¹⁶ The Dutch held onto Westerbork as a refugee camp even after the occupation began, but not for long. Nazi officials had been looking for a suitable place to deport Dutch Jews to the East, and Westerbork proved ideal as it already held Jewish refugees.

¹¹² "The Netherlands," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Accessed March 22, 2020. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-netherlands>.

¹¹³ Erich Marx, "That's how it was: A report on Westerbork and Bergen Belsen (1945)," *Irish Pages* 9, no. 2 (2015): 73.

¹¹⁴ Peter Tammes, "Jewish Immigrants in the Netherlands during the Nazi Occupation," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 37, no. 4 (2007): 545.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 547.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Westerbork and its mostly German-Jewish population were thus handed over to Nazi officials when the Nazis started implementing the key phase of the Final Solution in July 1942.¹¹⁷

Seyss-Inquart and Nazi leaders in the Netherlands had been preparing for this stage of the Final Solution for Jewish destruction through a few key policies. These included the forced segregation of Jews either in Westerbork or Amsterdam, forcing Jews to wear the Star of David in April 1942, and finally, the takeover of Westerbork in July of 1942. Westerbork's importance to the Nazis was instrumental in the devastation they brought upon Dutch Jewry. Since the camp already had some facilities for holding large numbers of refugees, the Germans simply had to add more barracks and put up barbed wire for security.¹¹⁸

Westerbork was one of the only camps with adequate washing facilities such as washrooms and a bathhouse with forty showers.¹¹⁹ Medical care was also provided by trained doctors and staff.¹²⁰ Jews in the camps were also able to receive packages from the outside which helped prevent starvation: "Our official food rations consisted of a stew at lunchtime and a dark 'coffee' in the morning and the evening. We also received a 300g piece of bread, 10g margarine and some jam and cheese every day. Anyone trying to live on this alone would have certainly slowly died of starvation.," wrote Holocaust survivor Erich Marx, who was interned at Westerbork before surviving the death camp at Bergen-Belsen, Germany.¹²¹ However, these were the only "amenities" available.¹²² The Nazis also enforced far stricter rules than the Dutch and

¹¹⁷ "Westerbork," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Accessed September 23, 2021. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/westerbork>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Marx, "That's How it Was," 76.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Amenities are put into quotes because it is difficult to say that anything in a transit camp which takes you to your death is an amenity. It is true that this transit camp provided far more than anything the Jews would see in the East.

added both German and Dutch police to guard the camp. In Westerbork, Jews were often maintenance workers or industrial workers for the German war effort.¹²³

Dutch Jews were initially rounded up in July 1942. This was heavily aided by the registration that the German occupiers ordered a year prior. Very few Dutch Jews had refused to register, and the Dutch officials who registered them often believed they could keep the Jews safe since they were in Dutch hands.¹²⁴ In the summer of 1942, the German occupiers announced that the Dutch Jews were going to be transported to Westerbork, where they would wait to be transported to the east. The Germans implied that the Dutch Jews would be sent to work camps in German areas to help the war effort.¹²⁵ Those who ignored the summons were rounded up by both Dutch and German police, as well as by Dutch Nazis. These Jews, along with the ones who went into hiding, were threatened with deportation to Mauthausen, which Jews knew resulted in certain death.¹²⁶ By contrast, the transit camp of Westerbork taking them ostensibly to work camps in the east seemed much more preferable.

Dutch Jews began arriving en masse in Westerbork in July of 1942, where they anxiously waited. According to reports, Westerbork was not as awful as other comparable camps: “If it hadn't been for our loss of freedom, the ongoing horrors and our fears for the future, our stay in the camp would have been bearable, especially in comparison to so many other camps.”¹²⁷ Marx claimed that there were often between 6000-8000 people in the camp at a time, with about 500-800 people being sent east each week.¹²⁸ These numbers were later increased to 2000-3000 a week.¹²⁹ Marx noted that the Jews in Westerbork were largely unaware of their fate in the east,

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

¹²⁴ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 318.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ “General Introduction Part II | Ehri Online Course in Holocaust Studies,” Accessed March 22, 2020. <https://training.ehri-project.eu/general-introduction-part-ii>.

¹²⁷ Marx, “That’s How it Was,” 76.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

but were convinced that it was not good, and tried to prevent themselves from going east however they could.¹³⁰

How right Marx proved to be. The majority of Dutch Jews were sent east to Auschwitz and Sobibor death camps. By train, Auschwitz was 36 hours away from Westerbork, and Sobibor was 72 hours. At both of these camps, new arrivals were likely to be gassed immediately. Political scientist Henry Mason estimated that close to 72 percent of Dutch Jews at Auschwitz were gassed on arrival, and fourteen of the nineteen trains from Westerbork to Sobibor held passengers that faced the same fate.¹³¹ From July 1942 to September 1944, the trains from Westerbork and the other, smaller Dutch transit camps, Amersfoort and Vught, ran continuously. Reports are varied, but the most commonly accepted number of Dutch Jewish deaths is around 107,000.

Before the war, there were around 140,000 Jews in the country, including 25,000 German and Austrian immigrants. How did the occupying Germans manage to deport and kill so many Dutch Jews in such a quick time frame? Compared to other Western European countries, this number is frighteningly high. Italy had 58,000 Jews, with 8,000 (14%) Jewish deaths. Belgium had a population of 90,000 Jews and lost 24,000 (26%) at the hands of the Nazis. France had between 300,000-330,000 Jews, with 73,000 (22-24%) killed.

The percentage of Dutch Jews, by comparison, was almost three-quarters of the entire population of the Netherlands. This is comparable to the anti-Semitic regions of Eastern Europe such as Poland, which had a devastating loss of between 83-90 percent of their Jewry with between 2,770,000-3,000,000 slain out of an initial population of 3,350,000; or of Yugoslavia,

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Mason, "Testing Human Bonds Within Nations," 336.

which had 67,000 Jews slain out of an initial population of 82,000.¹³² Yet, as previously seen, the Netherlands had no history of pogroms and little to non-existent anti-Semitism, especially by the 20th century. Where had things gone wrong for the Dutch Jewry? We must examine the direct and indirect collaboration of the Dutch citizens and bureaucratic systems of power to show this hidden anti-Semitism.



Dutch Jews awaiting transportation.

¹³² All figures come courtesy of the United States Holocaust Museum: "Jewish Losses during the Holocaust," <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-losses-during-the-holocaust-by-country>.

Chapter Two: Perpetrators, Direct Collaborators, and Indirect Collaborators

The Dutch Paradox questions why so many Jewish people died in a country that has historically had little violent anti-Semitism. An answer to this paradox partially lies within the Dutch bureaucratic systems that remained in place after the German invasion occurred. Before the Germans conquered the Netherlands, the Dutch government never sought to cause harm to their Jewish population. After the German invasion, Dutch officials were quick to do what they could to help remove the Dutch Jews. The term “remove” is intentionally ambiguous, as scholars have debated what exactly Dutch collaborators knew. It was certainly known that the Germans wanted Jews sent to the east to ostensibly work in labor camps. Whether the Dutch population knew that “remove” meant exterminate is an issue up for debate. Regardless of what they knew, the Dutch working within the systems of institutional power actively collaborated with the Germans in implementing the Final Solution. Individual members within these systems perpetrated the Final Solution such as the leaders of the Colonne Henneicke, the bounty hunters who tracked down Dutch Jews in hiding. On a large scale, however, the Dutch were split between direct and indirect collaborators.

The terms perpetrator, direct collaborator, and indirect collaborator are fundamental to the arguments I will present throughout this paper. In Ervin Staub’s *The Roots of Evil*, he defines perpetrators as “decision makers who initiate, lead, give orders, and in most cases assume responsibility.”¹³³ Examples of individual perpetrators include men such as Wim Henneicke and Willem Breidé, who knowingly and maliciously sought to round up as many Dutch Jews, while simultaneously forcing others to act as collaborators in their acts of violence and deceit.¹³⁴ Systemic examples of perpetrators in the Netherlands include the German *Zentralstelle* office, responsible for rounding up Dutch Jews for deportation, and the *Hausraterfassung* office,

¹³³ Staub, 67.

¹³⁴ Henneicke and Breidé were leaders of the Colonne Henneicke, which I will discuss later.

initially designed to collect and sell Jewish goods left by the deported and slain Jews. This office eventually assumed the responsibility of tracking down Jews who had gone into hiding, giving Henneicke and Breidé their authority. Here, the German influence empowered perpetrators in the Netherlands on both an individual and systemic scale. However, the bulk of Dutch governmental officials and systems of power were direct and indirect collaborators.

According to Staub, bystanders are “members of society who are neither perpetrators nor victims, or outside individuals, organizations, and nations.”¹³⁵ The word “bystander” implies that witnesses to an event either ignore it (as a passive bystander) or act against it (as an active bystander). There are numerous examples of Dutch bystanders, and one could argue that every Dutch person who did not resist the Germans in some way was a bystander. The word “collaborator” presents a more negative connotation, and I define it as someone who willingly works with perpetrators. I identify two types of collaborators as part of my central argument: direct collaborators that did not initiate the atrocities committed against the Dutch Jewry but collaborated with the perpetrators, and indirect collaborators that were forced into working with the perpetrators through physical, mental, or economic coercion. Subsequently, I will explore examples of direct and indirect collaborators that directly impacted the destruction of the Dutch Jewry, showcasing the insidious casual anti-Semitism of the Dutch populace that emerged following the Occupation.

The Complicity of the Dutch Government

The Dutch government was in chaos during the initial German invasion of May 1940. Due to their neutrality during the Great War, both the Dutch military and monarchy were unprepared for the emergence of war. The official heads of state, including Queen Wilhemina, Prime Minister Pieter Gerbrandy, Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco Van Kleffens, and other

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

top-ranking officials fled to London to set up a government in exile and continue governance as best they could.¹³⁶ The bureaucracy they left behind was still intact, but without any leaders in vital positions. These vacancies were soon filled by Austrian and German Nazis loyal to Reichskommissar Seyes-Inquart. The Dutch government also left instructions for Dutch officials to remain in their offices and cooperate with their occupiers.¹³⁷ If the Dutch officials had resisted, the thinking was that they would all be replaced by Germans, meaning that there would be no one who had the Netherlands's best interests in office and that the situation would be even direr for the Dutch population. Leading Dutch officials wanted to have government officials stay to prevent this catastrophe from occurring, but without leadership telling them not to collaborate, Dutch officials followed German orders closely and never considered the scale of the anti-Semitic orders they were enforcing and complying with.

Throughout the end of 1940 and 1941, the German occupiers had their minds set on the registration of Dutch Jews, so that all of their information was readily available meaning they could be easily mobilized and deported. This information referred to their personal history, which was compiled to see who qualified as Jewish. The Germans decreed that you were Jewish if you had at least three Jewish grandparents, or if you had two Jewish grandparents that belonged to a Jewish religious community. They later changed this to if you had one Jewish grandparent in a Jewish religious community, which applied to people who no longer considered themselves Jewish, but had at one point been a member of a Jewish religious community. This expanded the net that the Germans cast.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Adrian F. Manning, "The Position of the Dutch Government in London up to 1942," *Journal of Contemporary History* 13, no. 1 (1978): 117–118.

¹³⁷ Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, "The Netherlands: The greatest number of Jewish victims in Western Europe," Anne Frank Website, <https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/netherlands-greatest-number-jewish-victims-western-europe/>.

¹³⁸ Presser, 35-36.

Almost every single Dutch Jew complied with the new registration by August of 1941, with 140,552 “full Jews”, along with 14,549 “half Jews” and 5,719 “quarter Jews” registered.¹³⁹

Why did so many comply? There are a few reasons that can explain this. Presser argues that “Dutch Jews had always lived in a well-regulated society, in which one’s name stood on all sorts of index cards and registers.”¹⁴⁰ This insinuates that the Dutch Jews did not understand the gravity of registering their information and that this was normal behavior within Dutch society.

Presser also conjectures that fear and defiance might have played a part, per Dutch Jewish historian Abel Herzberg’s findings.¹⁴¹ Both authors believed individuals remained proud of their Jewish heritage during this registration despite their fear of what might result in their compliance. However, this is mere speculation that was made by these scholars long after these events occurred.¹⁴² It seems likely that both Dutch Jews and the officials registering them may have been apprehensive. To counter this, scholars have posited that Dutch officials involved in the registration process convinced themselves that they would be protected by complying with the registration.¹⁴³ The Dutch officials, put at ease with this false assumption, were thus able to convince the Jewish population that they would be safe, remaining in Dutch hands.

Some of these Dutch hands were not so safe. J. L. Lentz, a dedicated Dutch civil servant and Head of the Census Office, created a system of population register in 1936 that was far more advanced than what the Netherlands had previously employed, and he won a medal for this

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 38. Half Jew means only two Jewish grandparents, and quarter Jew means one Jewish grandparent. As we can see here, they did distinguish some between these classifications. The given number of Dutch Jews is generally 140,000, which would account for all of the full Jews, but not half or quarter. Did that mean that the half and quarter Jews were in any less danger? Since they would have been identified on their identity cards as half or quarter (instead of the J they would have had a B I or a B II), this meant they were safer. Mason says that both mixed marriage Jews as well as half and quarter Jews very often survived, as the Nazi’s did not bother to kill them, although that might have been on the cards at one point, given that they were identified as part Jewish.

¹⁴⁰ Presser, 37.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 318.

feat.¹⁴⁴ This, along with the identity card that he created specifically for Jews, helped round up almost every single Dutch Jew.¹⁴⁵ The identity card issued was so effective because it was almost impossible to forge, and everyone in the Netherlands was issued one. The Jewish identification card came with a large black J on it.¹⁴⁶ Due to these actions, Lentz was tried and convicted of collaborating with the Germans and sentenced to three years in prison immediately after the war.

Lentz was not a Nazi nor a Nazi sympathizer. During his trial, his lawyer defended him by showing that Lentz did not have pro-German sentiments and was considered a kind and humane person by co-workers and acquaintances.¹⁴⁷ Was Lentz simply a hard worker, eager to please his new bosses? Or was he secretly glad to get rid of the Jews? Presser found a letter written from Lentz to the German authorities he had been working under, written in October of 1942, months after the initial roundups began: “For my part, I would like to express appreciation of the confidence you repose in myself and my staff. Thanks to this and to your co-operation, the Census Office was able to contrive ways and means of carrying out its often difficult task” [of identifying Jews].¹⁴⁸ This shows a willingness to find Jews and to help the Germans remove them from society.

All sectors of the Dutch population were told that Jews were being sent East to work in labor camps. However, Dutch historians Bart Van der Boom and Dienne Hondius argue that the Dutch were aware of the extermination taking place.¹⁴⁹ Van der Boom used diaries of both Jews and gentiles in the Netherlands, where he discovered that at least some members of the Dutch population understood that the Jewish fate was death. To draw this conclusion he references the

¹⁴⁴ Regina Gruter, “Verkeerde Liefde Voor Bevolkingsregisters,” *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, April 23, 2013, <https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/fatale-liefde-voor-bevolkingsregisters/>. Essentially, the system the Dutch employed was not uniform, and Lentz recreated it.

¹⁴⁵ Presser, 37-40.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Just full Jews got the J, half and quarter received a different indicator of their status.

¹⁴⁷ Gruter, “Verkeerde Liefde Voor Bevolkingsregisters.”

¹⁴⁸ Presser, 38. These are my brackets, added for clarity.

¹⁴⁹ Van der Boom, “The Auschwitz Reservation,” 391-393. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcx042>.

diaries of Etty Hillesum and Phillip Mechanicus, who were two Dutch Jews in Westerbork that wrote about their impending demise. However, Van der Boom also cites Gentile diaries, which used words such as “extermination” and “eradication” to describe the fate of the Dutch Jews.¹⁵⁰ Concurrently, we see an important section of the government working tirelessly with the occupiers in direct collaboration. Thanks to overzealous officials like Lentz, Dutch Jews were easily identified, all at the hands of their government. Lentz may not have been explicitly an anti-Semite and Nazi, but his and others’ refusal to question what the Germans wanted and why certainly led to many unnecessary deaths.

The Dutch Census Office, where Lentz worked, implemented German decrees as soon as they were passed, and these new measures proved detrimental to Dutch Jews. By November of 1940, the Census department complied with the German orders to have registration offices in every town with a Jewish population, with these offices staying open day and night to accomplish the task.¹⁵¹ Although the Dutch initially struggled with towns registering Jewish populations, Lentz blamed it on the Dutch burgomasters (mayors) not all having access to the decree, which came in a Dutch governmental weekly.¹⁵² After minimal German pressure, the burgomasters, who were ordered to check that the information received about the Jewish citizens were correct, immediately complied. Out of 1050 municipalities, 555 complied with the orders by May of 1941, with another 483 not having any Jews to register.¹⁵³ This meant that only 12 did not comply, and the reasons for this are unknown, although Presser speculates that they merely “lagged behind” and eventually got their information in.¹⁵⁴ By September, German officials had

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Presser, 37.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Presser used primary sources to gather all of his information, many supplied by the Dutch State Department. Alas the translated version eschewed many of these notes and where they were specifically gathered from.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, This was not a form of resistance, merely a slow undertaking.

complete access to information on who was Jewish in the Netherlands, and where they could be found. The Germans certainly thought very highly of the Dutch officials, whom they called “exemplary”.¹⁵⁵ This would not be the last time that Dutch officials were praised for their efficiency by the Germans.

As mentioned previously in this thesis, Seyss-Inquart and his fellow Nazis passed incisive anti-Semitic measures that were promptly followed by the Dutch government with little protest or hesitation. This included the removal of all Dutch Jews from government positions with almost no protest from gentile officials, followed by the Aryan declaration form which all non-Jews in the government had to sign.¹⁵⁶ Government officials complied with these orders, even though these were obvious anti-Semitic measures. Further dismissal of Jews from their jobs occurred not long after.

By 1942, Dutch Jews were incapable of enjoying any sort of amenities, had an enforced curfew, were only allowed to be on certain streets in certain areas, and could only attend all Jewish schools.¹⁵⁷ Numerous measures were continuously enforced to completely dehumanize the Dutch Jewry and strip them of all civic and human rights afforded to them, and all the while, the Dutch government continued to work entirely for the German occupiers without attempting to clandestinely or publicly show support for the Jewish population. Officials most likely felt some sympathy for the Jewry, yet there was no active support within the government, and the civil servants carried on as if “they were carrying out routine chores.”¹⁵⁸ This direct collaboration profoundly impacted Dutch Jews and helped the Germans achieve their hateful, anti-Semitic ends.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 322.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 323.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 325.

The Jewish Council

The Jewish Council was established after periods of Jewish unrest, caused by aggressive policing methods by both the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (NSB, also known as the Dutch Nazi Party) and German Police. The Jewish Council officially came into being on February 12 of 1941, just before the February Strike.¹⁵⁹ The leaders of the Jewish Council were Jewish, and they were led by two prominent Dutch Jews: Abraham Asscher, a leading diamond merchant, and Professor David Cohen, a history professor.¹⁶⁰ Rabbis of both the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Congregations were supposed to be involved as well, but they stepped down for unknown reasons. Other important Jewish leaders stepped up, and only one, Professor Frijda, refused because “the council would never be more than a tool for the Germans.”¹⁶¹

The Council took all of their orders from the Germans and was set up by the German occupiers to control the Jewry of Amsterdam at first. They were ordered to tell the Jewish community to surrender their weapons so that the Germans would not have to raid the community and take people away.¹⁶² In less than two weeks, the February Strike ensued, and German officials threatened to deport or shoot hundreds of Jews if the Jewish Council did not put an end to it.¹⁶³ Asscher used his influence as a merchant to talk with industrial leaders who participated in the strike and urged them to stop to save Jewish lives, which they agreed to do.¹⁶⁴ However, the Jewish Council was called upon continually by the Germans, and saving the Jewish population from their position got more difficult.

The Jewish Council had very little say in what the Germans told them to do. The Jewish Council members were threatened repeatedly with deportations (including their family and

¹⁵⁹ Presser, 47.

¹⁶⁰ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 326.

¹⁶¹ Presser, 48.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 48-49.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

friends) if they did not cooperate. At first, the Jewish Council was responsible for simply disarming the Jews of Amsterdam. Their orders soon escalated to keeping all Dutch Jews in Amsterdam and forbidding them to leave.¹⁶⁵ By complying with these demands, Asscher and Cohen thought that they were doing what they thought best for the Jewish population, especially since the Germans had already shown themselves capable of violence and destruction when necessary.¹⁶⁶

Besides these actions, the Jewish Council also created a weekly newspaper (at the behest of the Germans) called *Het Joodse Weekblad*.¹⁶⁷ This paper served as the propaganda from the Jewish Council to the Dutch Jewry. Jewish Council officials thought that they were helping the Jewish population, and the newspaper served as their advice, even though they passed down the German measures through the paper as well. Other media were forbidden from talking about the Jewish population, so Jews had to turn to *Het Joodse Weekblad*. The Jewish Council thus influenced most Jewish decisions until the deportations began, and even after the deportations, *Het Joodse Weekblad* would not print about raids occurring or deportations. Instead, it acted as a mask with advertisements for Jewish art and culture. Another act that the Jewish Council had to carry out was the distribution of yellow Stars of David, which all Dutch Jews were required to wear in public by the end of April 1942. Cohen and Asscher protested vehemently against this, in a similar manner to other orders imposed on them. However, they agreed to go along with it, as Asscher thought that the war would be over in a few months.¹⁶⁸ How mistaken he was.

By the summer of 1942, the Germans were ready to implement the Final Solution in the Netherlands and forced the Jewish Council to act as the catalyst. The Jewish Council was

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁶⁶ Hans Vanderwerff, "The Holocaust: Lest We Forget - Jewish Council," <http://www.holocaust-lestweforget.com/jewishcouncil.html>.

¹⁶⁷ This translates to The Jewish Weekly in English.

¹⁶⁸ Presser, 121.

ordered to help with the registration of those who were selected for deportation, as well as sending letters to the Jews that were picked to be deported. When that did not produce a response, they were ordered to put in “threatening editorials” in the Jewish Weekly.¹⁶⁹ Because very few Jews complied with these letters, the Germans dispatched Dutch and German police to round up those who refused to show up.¹⁷⁰

The Jewish Council was initially informed by the head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration, Ferdinand Aus der Funten, that the Jews would be sent East to work in labor camps, and that they would be in “livable conditions.”¹⁷¹ The Jewish Council was upset with this decision, and a few, notably MJ Pool, argued against cooperating anymore, as he thought they were “leading ourselves to slaughter.”¹⁷² Despite the anger that the Jewish Council expressed, they went ahead with the orders. Some on the Council assumed that the Germans would do the deportations themselves if the Council refused. They also thought that by assisting the Germans, they could protect “important” members of the Jewish community so that they could rebuild when this was all over.¹⁷³ The Jewish Council determined that to save the majority of Dutch Jews, they would have to sacrifice a few thousand. This plan backfired, as the Germans kept upping the numbers of Jews sent to the transit camps, including all of the members of the Jewish Council by October 1943. Only Asscher and Cohen are reported to have survived, thanks to the fact that they were sent to Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt respectively.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 329.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Erik Schumacher, *1942: Oorlog op alle fronten* (Spectrum: 2017). Excerpt from *Historiek*, “Het Dilemma van de Joodse Raad,” Accessed November 30, 2021, <https://historiek.net/joodse-raad-tweede-wereldoorlog/67779/>.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, The Jewish Council were secretly including themselves in this list of important Jews who had the capacity to rebuild the shattered Jewish structure, along with other important businessmen, merchants, and rabbis, presumably.

¹⁷⁴ Bergen-Belsen was sometimes thought of as a less deadly concentration camp because it housed prisoners who were to be exchanged, meaning that the conditions were not as deplorable. That is not to take away from the horrible conditions that took place in Bergen-Belsen, where over 50,000 people died.

Scholarly opinion on the Jewish Council is mixed due to their complicity with the Germans as well as the impossible position they were put into. Ido De Haan understands the difficult situation the Jewish Council was placed in, yet he does mention that the Jewish Council “willingly” put pressure on the Jewish population to acquiesce to the German demands.¹⁷⁵ Although De Haan argues that the Jewish Council was complicit, he acknowledges that the Dutch Jewish Council was established by the Germans and was under threat from the German occupiers, whereas the French and Belgian Jewish Councils were established by “Jewish initiative” and were able to remain more independent from the Germans.¹⁷⁶

Presser takes up a less accusatory but by no means sympathetic stance on the Jewish Council, particularly regarding the leaders Asscher and Cohen. Presser consistently shows them as conflicted between trying to mediate what the Germans want with what they think is best, with them repeatedly portrayed as protesting in vain and ultimately giving in to German demands. As time goes on, Presser sees their resolve weakened, especially when it came time for deportations to begin, and when the Germans ask for more and more Jews to be sent to transit camps and readied for deportations. Sam de Wolff, a Dutch Marxist and Zionist, wrote his thoughts on the Jewish Council in 1947 (referred to here as the *Judenrat*, the Dutch name), expressing the same mixed feelings other contemporary scholars have:

No other Jewish organization was allowed by the Nazis during the war years, hence it was out of necessity that the *Judenrat*, with all its ugly facets, was forced upon the Jewish community. A civil court judge cannot and may not sit in judgment over the question whether or not one can speak of a special Jewish guilt. Only the Jewish people may do so. As reprehensible as the involvement of the members of the *Judenrat* was, and that of Asscher and Cohen in particular, it is doubtful whether the Jewish community, after all these years, still demands punishment for their involvement. Regardless the failure of the

Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (Great Britain: Little, Brown, and Co. 2015), p.337.

¹⁷⁵ Ido De Haan, “The Holocaust In The Netherlands: National Differences in a Western European Context,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2019): 92. doi:10.1353/imp.2019.0031.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Judenrat to have been of help or even of assistance to the doomed Jews in Holland, willing collaborators they were not.¹⁷⁷ De Wolff was a politician as well as a journalist who was sent to Westerbork and survived after he was exchanged for a German prisoner of war. He understands firsthand the complicit nature of the Jewish Council, as their actions sent him and thousands of other Dutch Jews to transit camps. He knows that what Asscher, Cohen, and the other members of the Jewish Council did was “reprehensible”, but that they were coerced and that the situation may have been worse if left solely to the Germans. De Wolff is neither sympathetic nor in a rush to welcome them back into the Jewish community, but he is also not ready to condemn them to death, like the other Dutch collaborators.

I partially agree with what scholars have been arguing about the Jewish Council, as it is a gray area. Asscher and Cohen stepped up in a time of crisis, as they thought of themselves as leaders of the Jewish community and that they could make a difference. No matter what, the Germans were going to persist in their efforts to destroy the Dutch Jewry one way or another. Did the Jewish Council’s pleas to obey the Germans “and it will all be for the better” make things worse than if the Germans had started off using force? We will never know for sure. What we do know is that the Jewish Council played a huge role in gathering up the Dutch Jewry into one location, and repeatedly telling people that they were being sent east to the labor camps and not to worry. The contradictions to this argument appeared as soon as the infirm, the elderly, and children were requested to be sent east to do hard manual labor.

However, others understood as well that the Jewish Council might not be telling the full truth. Etty Hillesum, who worked as a typist for the Jewish Council and wrote a memoir about her life during this time, had this to say on June 27th, 1942, days before the deportations truly

¹⁷⁷ Cited by Hans Vanderwerff, “The Holocaust: Lest We Forget - Jewish Council,” <http://www.holocaust-lestweforget.com/jewishcouncil.html>.

began: “The latest news is that all Jews will be transported out of Holland through Drenthe Province [where Westerbork Transit camp is located] and then on to Poland. And the English Radio has reported that 700,000 Jews perished last year alone, in Germany and the occupied territories.”¹⁷⁸ Hillesum became a famous diarist when her diaries and letters were found after her death in Auschwitz, and she gave a clear insight into what life was like both before and after the deportations began. Here, her fear is palpable, as well as a sense of doom. There was no public mention of deportations when she wrote this, but the reports that had gotten out were terrifying.

Clearly, some people were aware that more than labor might be happening in the east. The Jewish Council certainly could have questioned more vehemently why certain demographics of Dutch Jews (i.e. the sick and elderly) were sent to do work. The Jewish Council failed their fellow Jews, and by thinking of some of them as disposable, opened the door for all of them to be considered that way regardless of what the Council thought. There were instances where they could have protested more yet fear for their lives took hold and forced them to continue. The Jewish Council acted as indirect collaborators in this circumstance, as they were threatened with death and forced to assist with the persecution of Dutch Jews. Although they may have had good intentions at the start, manipulation by the Germans and fear of death caused the Jewish Council to be a steady tool used for the destruction of the Dutch Jewry.

The Dutch Police

The Dutch police were readily used by the Germans in whatever capacity they asked, whether that was assisting in rounding Jews up or enforcing anti-Semitic laws. This included a crackdown on the few Jews who attempted to evade the identity card. According to the official police report, there were only three Jews who attempted this, and all three were caught and dealt

¹⁷⁸ Hillesum, 150. Brackets in quote are mine.

with. An infraction this small may have warranted a slap on the wrist or a small fine, but the Dutch police thought otherwise. Presser states that “From the tone in which this matter was discussed by Dutch officials and from the way the Dutch police apprehended the culprit, we might suppose that they considered him a dangerous criminal.”¹⁷⁹ The Dutch police were not the main perpetrators nor instigators of the horrific actions occurring, yet they were at the disposal of those who did perpetrate these crimes against humanity, making them direct collaborators.

By November 1941, Dutch police had been ordered by the German officials to assist in anti-Semitic activities: closing Jewish shops, searching Jewish homes, as well as attending raids.¹⁸⁰ The Germans also set up the PBA (Police Battalion Amsterdam) which was a front for Dutch National Socialists to act as a police force and help round up Jews. Not all Dutch police acquiesced to German demands, and some resisted, either in small acts of sabotage or in refusing to capture Jews entirely. Presser speaks of 180 police officers who supported the actions of several Dutch police who refused to round up Jews because of orders from the Catholic Church, however, German pressure forced all but 23 of these men to cave in and return to work.¹⁸¹ The rest went underground during the war. Not all Dutch police were willing to collaborate, as evidenced by this resistance, but this was not the norm.

Dutch police may have complained about their tasks involving capturing Jews who refused to report to the transit camps, yet they rarely protested. Etty Hillesum wrote briefly about a conversation she had with a Dutch policeman who guarded the transports: “A young, sad Dutch police officer told me one transport night, ‘I lose two kilos during a night like this, and all I have to do is to listen, look, and keep my mouth shut.’”¹⁸² This officer was certainly upset about the

¹⁷⁹ Presser, 40.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 350-352.

¹⁸² Hillesum, 294.

weight of his actions, yet he persisted nonetheless. Many officers were in similar situations and also continued with their jobs despite the assignments given. According to reports, some 90 percent of Amsterdam police were involved in some way in the Jewish deportations.¹⁸³ Some of the primary documents that Dutch officers left are disturbing: “Caught 8 Jews tonight. Later, with G. and De V., caught a further twenty-four Jews in Wespier Street. (New Date) Jew-hunt tonight; a very successful evening. Must have bagged several hundreds of them during the past few weeks. Got home at 3:30 a.m.”¹⁸⁴ We have seen examples of men standing up to the Germans, yet we also have examples of men who enjoyed the work that they were doing.

Besides their cooperation with the German Police, Dutch officers assisted in leading the Dutch Jewry to their destruction as they guarded the transports to Westerbork.¹⁸⁵ Dutch involvement went even further, according to Westerbork detainee Erich Marx: “The camp was guarded by the Dutch *Marechaussee* [Royal Military Constabulary]”.¹⁸⁶ The *Marechaussee* was a part military, part police force used by the Dutch government for various purposes, including guarding Royal palaces and rounding up German-Jewish refugees, and returning them to Germany after *Kristallnacht* to prevent further refugees from entering the country.¹⁸⁷

Loe de Jong wrote that few police chiefs and mayors resisted any of the German demands, allowing for consistent support from the Dutch officials which helped deportations operate smoothly and efficiently.¹⁸⁸ However, we do see examples of German frustration with the Dutch Police, as oftentimes the Dutch police worked too slowly for the liking of their occupiers.

¹⁸³ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 327.

¹⁸⁴ Presser, 354-355. This policeman was an auxiliary policeman, a Dutchman specifically picked by the Germans because of his affiliations with the Dutch Nazi party and his anti-Semitic views.

¹⁸⁵ Mason, “Testing Human Bonds Within Nations,” 327.

¹⁸⁶ Erich Marx, “That’s How it Was,” 77.

¹⁸⁷ Loe De Jong, *The Kingdom of the Netherlands During World War II*, Vol. 1, p. 496. Since this text is entirely in Dutch, I relied on Google Translate for translations, however the text stated that “The police in our large municipalities do not know what their course of action should be towards these - sometimes paperless - Jews. Many can legally be deported.”

¹⁸⁸ Loe De Jong, *The Kingdom of the Netherlands During World War II*, Vol. 6, p. 29-36, 232-240.

This frustration led to the dismissal of Dutch police in their role in capturing Jews at the start of 1943. Replacing them were Dutch volunteers, who the Germans found no shortage of: “In Amsterdam alone, 1047 such volunteers offered their services,” writes Presser.¹⁸⁹ In the Netherlands, groups of citizens banded together under the new regime to help rid the country of Jews, oftentimes for money. The previous actions of both the government and the police allowed for these groups to go almost unchecked, as there was little resistance on a grand, unified scale.

Bounty Hunters

This next section relies heavily on the scholarly works of Ad Van Liempt, an investigative journalist who made it his mission to report on the activity of the Dutch bounty hunters. Many scholarly sources on the Dutch paradox, including Presser, De Jong, and De Haan, all mention the bounty hunters of the Colonne Henneicke, yet none go into great detail on the subject. Van Liempt mentions in his preface that the official documents about the “political delinquents” (bounty hunters) were transferred to the National Archive from the Ministry of Justice in 2000, which we can surmise meant that they were hidden from scholars for almost seven decades and were only recently made available.¹⁹⁰ The primary sources that he uses to create this book include official police transcripts, letters, interviews, police files, and receipts of money paid to the bounty hunters who turned Jews in. These sources all contribute to the portrait of Dutch perpetrators and collaborators in the destruction of Dutch Jewry.

An office was established in Amsterdam during the early days of the German Occupation which eventually served as the main office for finding and sending Dutch Jews to the transit camps. This office was called the *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*, which translates to The Central Bureau for Jewish Emigration. At first, this office was simply concerned with where Jews were allowed to travel within the Netherlands, but their role grew much greater as the

¹⁸⁹ Presser, 354.

¹⁹⁰ Van Liempt, ix.

implementation of the Final Solution grew nearer. The *Zentralstelle* (as we will call them from now on) was responsible for finding the Jews that were supposed to be sent to the transit camps. This office, run by the German occupiers, instructed the Jewish Council on how many people were to be sent for deportation. The Jewish Council then relayed these orders to the Dutch Jews when it was their time to go. Most Jews showed up when first ordered too. However, some refused and went into hiding. The Dutch Police and German Police were initially called on to find these individuals, but in 1943, Willi Lages, the German head of the *Zentralstelle*, turned to a new and more effective method of finding missing Jews: offering premiums to police at the Bureau of Jewish Affairs and civil servants who worked in the *Zentralstelle*, who were all Dutch save for one.¹⁹¹ These ordinary citizens took it upon themselves to hunt down missing Jews and use whatever methods available to turn in Dutch Jews, all for profit.

Lages organized a group of Jewish bounty hunters out of one of the sections of the *Zentralstelle*: The Colonne Henneicke, a group responsible for tracking down missing Jewish goods. Colonne essentially means group or column, and Henneicke refers to Wim Henneicke, the man in charge of this group. Henneicke was a small-time criminal and auto mechanic who joined this section of the *Zentralstelle* known as the *Hausraterfassung*, an administrative center that was responsible for compiling lists of Jewish goods that were left by deported Jews. The Colonne Henneicke was the investigative division of the *Hausraterfassung*.¹⁹² The *Hausraterfassung* got almost all of their employees from unemployment offices, and they specifically chose people who were members of the Dutch Nazi Party (NSB).¹⁹³ From October 1942 to March 1943, Henneicke led his group and largely used tips and violence to find missing or stolen Jewish goods, a job for which he was well suited given his connections to crime and his associates in the

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

Dutch underworld.¹⁹⁴ This task was carried out efficiently by the members of the Colonne, no thanks to the fact that their salaries were paid largely by the goods they brought in. Because of this success, Lages hand-picked the Colonne Henneicke for his next, and cruelest assignment: bringing in Jews who failed to appear for deportation in exchange for *kopgeld* (head money), 7.50 guilders for each Jew (about \$50 in today's money).



Wim Henneicke, leader of the Colonne Henneicke.

The members of the Colonne Henneicke were fanatical and worked diligently to round up as many Jews as they possibly could, using whatever means necessary. Within the Colonne itself, there were 54 members, many of whom were members of the NSB. The group was sometimes accompanied by Dutch police, but they largely worked based on their tips and informants. The Colonne offered a substantial amount of money for information, which meant that trusting people as a Dutch Jew became more and more difficult. When these processes went too slowly, Henneicke and others would simply patrol the streets of Amsterdam, on the lookout for any possible Jews.¹⁹⁵ The members of the Colonne Henneicke were not the only ones to arrest Jews

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

and collect money, although they did the majority of arrests. Employees in other divisions of the *Hausraterfassung* were sometimes authorized or ordered to make arrests, including bookkeepers and inventory takers.¹⁹⁶ This greatly expanded how many Dutch citizens might have participated in arresting and finding Jews for money, meaning we will never be sure how many took part for sure. Van Liempt estimates that more than the 50 men were involved in some way with the Colonne, with the number probably rising into the hundreds. These men may not have repeatedly hunted down Dutch Jews like the official members of the Colonne Henneicke, but they did make arrests and turn in Jews for money.

The bounty hunters did not discriminate by sex, age, or health status. Henneicke specifically had a man who would hunt for sick Jews. This practice was strongly discouraged by leaders at the *Zentralstelle*, most likely because the German occupiers practiced subtler means of rounding up Dutch Jews to avoid the outrage of Dutch gentiles. They got around this German guideline by assuring sick Jews that they would be sent an ambulance that would take them to a hospital for treatment. However, the ambulance carried them instead to the Dutch Theater in Amsterdam, the designated round-up point where they waited until deportation.¹⁹⁷ Besides this deplorable practice, Van Liempt illustrates numerous instances of Henneicke's men forcing Dutch families (who fostered Jewish children to keep them safe while their parents were deported or hiding) to turn in their hidden children, oftentimes under the age of six. One such story shows how low the bounty hunters would stoop to capture Jews, even children. The same man who used the ambulance to capture sick Jews also went to the house of one of his colleagues in the medical sector based on suspicions that they were hiding two young Jews. Despite the close connections he held, this bounty hunter ordered the arrest of the children, who were not

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

quite three years old, as well as the detainment of his wife. The children were killed at Sobibor.¹⁹⁸ They were not the only ones either, as Van Liempt estimates that hundreds of toddlers were captured by the Colonne Henneicke and sent east for execution.¹⁹⁹

The Colonne Henneicke, despite being organized at first by the German officials in the *Zentralstelle*, was fully run and carried out by Dutch citizens, chief among them Wim Henneicke. They were used at various times as an auxiliary police force to help with large-scale raids, such as the raids of June 1943 where around 5,500 Jews were captured by members of the German Green Police with assistance from members of the *Zentralstelle* including the Colonne Henneicke.²⁰⁰ These men were not paid for their part in the raids, and soon after, returned to their normal occupation of hunting for Jews in hiding.

Mention must be made of the notorious Dries Riphagen, another member of the Colonne Henneicke. Riphagen had a similar background to the leaders of the Colonne, except that he was even more steeped in crime and anti-Semitism. When the Germans came into power, Riphagen recognized his opportunity to make money and simultaneously demonstrate his rampant anti-Semitism. He established a corrupt system in which he offered to protect Jewish property for Jews going into hiding. Riphagen then turned those same Jews into authorities before they had a chance to hide, selling their goods afterward. He turned in an estimated 200 Jews through this system.²⁰¹ There are documented reports of Riphagen's violent anti-Semitism, showing that he was not simply in it for the money like most of the underlings in the Colonne Henneicke. In response to a Jewish man calling Riphagen a "filthy pimp", Riphagen hunted him down and attacked him, as shown by an interview with a bartender who spoke with Riphagen after the

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁰¹ Bart Middelburg and René ter Steege, *Riphagen* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1990): 18.

event: “Now listen, I just punched that dirty k*** in the face and I’m warning you again not to let that dirty k*** back in here, because I’m from the SD, and if I see him here, he’s a dead man.”²⁰² Riphagen’s greed and amoral nature allowed him to downright steal and have people killed. Ultimately, he knew that he would have to pay for his crimes, and fled the Netherlands for Spain, where he escaped capture and left again for South America. He showed his bold nature by returning to Europe several times to get his dirty money, before he eventually died in Switzerland in 1973, avoiding capture for almost twenty years.²⁰³



Dries Riphagen.

Overall, the Colonne Henneicke reportedly helped capture an additional 8,500 Jews with just about 50 men working for them. The column did its work from March through October of 1943, eventually ending with the deportation of the final members of the Jewish Council:

Asscher and Cohen.²⁰⁴ Their column was dismantled because by this point, they had captured

²⁰² Van Liempt, 163. Riphagen mentions that he is from the SD, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, the intelligence wing of the SS. It is possible that he simply turned in Jews to the SD, but this threat still would have carried a lot of weight. Also, Riphagen was a pimp prior to his anti-Semitic activities.

²⁰³ Van Liempt, 164.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

and deported almost all of the Jewish population who was not already interned at Westerbork, and their job was complete. Henneicke and the other leaders were reassigned, whereas the others largely joined Nazi organizations and continued their work in other ways, such as by tracking down resistance members.²⁰⁵

Why were there so many willing perpetrators who were ready to turn in and arrest their fellow citizens for money? As has been stated before, overt anti-Semitism in the Netherlands was almost nonexistent prior to the German invasion.²⁰⁶ To begin, we can look at the NSB, the Dutch Nazi Party, as a main source of collaboration. Both Henneicke and his comrade, Willem Briedé, who handled much of the day-to-day operations, were members, and Briedé was a friend of Anton Mussert, the leader of the NSB.²⁰⁷ Although the NSB was not founded on the same anti-Semitic policies that the German Nazi party held so closely, they came to share that same anti-Semitism, with many instances of derogatory language being used against the Jews while they were captured.²⁰⁸ Here, Briedé showcased this aggressive language: “(Briedé) said to fifty-three-year-old businessman Jacob Rubens, who lived to tell the tale: ‘If you say another word, you dirty Jew, I’ll fill you full of lead’. And that’s not all. According to Rubens... Briedé had said during the arrest: ‘I’ll be straight with you, since you’re going to be gassed anyway. You’re going right to Germany, and you won’t be coming back.’”²⁰⁹ Being able to display this sort of blatant anti-Semitism and hatred might have been very appealing, especially for a group of men who would not have been able to showcase their hatred in other socio-political climates. Their anti-Semitism did not make them outcasts in the eyes of the German occupiers, rather it worked in their favor.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Henneicke was killed by members of the Dutch Resistance in 1944.

²⁰⁶ Ido De Haan, “The Holocaust In The Netherlands,” 86.

²⁰⁷ Van Liempt, 79.

²⁰⁸ Jews were allowed to be members of the NSB until 1939.

²⁰⁹ Van Liempt, 80.

Besides anti-Semitism, money was a motivating factor for many of the men involved. The 7.50 guilders paid per Jew was certainly enticing, as well as the fact that they were paid a salary ranging from 200-250 guilders per month, which was a comfortable living at the time.²¹⁰ According to a man who worked at the Bureau of Jewish Affairs (which also hunted Jews), the incentives ran up from 7.50 to almost 40 per person by the end of the Colonne Henneicke's reign of terror.²¹¹ This much money was enough to move the men out of lower-class status and into a more luxurious lifestyle, all for betraying and sending their Dutch compatriots to death. Henneicke's leadership and murderous determination to capture as many Jews as possible led others to follow suit. Most of his men were in their twenties and thirties, with only a few of them completing high school education. Van Liempt characterizes many of these men as impoverished individuals, who were hit hard by the Depression. As van Liempt says, "Time and again, in the dossiers of Jew hunters, we find instances of out-of-work men being referred to the *Hausraterfassung* by the Municipal Employment office. This happened so often that it was clearly official policy."²¹² The incentive of money and a life lifted out of poverty was enough to convince many men to join the ranks of the *Hausraterfassung*, with some willing to trade people's lives for it.

However, if the bounty hunters were ever apprehensive about what they were doing, the leadership would coerce them into continuing the work. According to Van Liempt, Henneicke and Willem Briedé threatened their coworkers who were showing less zeal to capture Jews, sometimes with threats of being sent to concentration camps themselves.²¹³ This truly shows the fanatical nature of the Henneicke Colonne. Henneicke was described by many as ruthlessly

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 201.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

efficient and cold, willing to turn in his downstairs Jewish neighbors (which he did). He was not afraid to threaten and arrest his men along with people he had close contact with, as long as he got results.

All in all, the Colonne Henneicke shows the deplorable nature of what people are willing to do to make ends meet, even sacrificing fellow Dutch citizens. This leads me to conclude that the leaders of the column, Henneicke and Breidé, were active perpetrators against the Dutch Jewry as they took responsibility and led the Colonne Henneicke. That leaves the rest as direct collaborators, who chose to involve themselves with the Colonne Henneicke for anti-Semitic reasons and easy money. It is possible to argue that some bounty hunters were only indirect collaborators because they were coerced either through threats or because their economic condition forced them into a position where they had to make money unscrupulously. However, there are examples of men in other circumstances who were forced under pain of torture and death to collaborate who refused and instead joined the Resistance or fled. If money was the motivator for impoverished individuals, it was the allure of easy money and the thrill of holding power over their fellow man that gave them the ability to partake in these reprehensible actions, rather than on account of not being able to find money elsewhere. Other impoverished individuals made do without betraying their fellow Dutchmen and sending them to their doom.

Dutch Railways

One last, important area of direct collaboration and anti-Semitism comes from the Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch Railways), the national railways of the Netherlands. The efficiency of the Dutch Railways allowed the Germans to quickly move over 100,000 Dutch Jews from the Netherlands into the death camps of the East within two years: from the summer of 1942 to the summer of 1944. In England, the Dutch government-in-exile demanded that the

Dutch Railway workers go on strike, which they duly complied with. However, this action occurred in the fall of 1944, after all of the Dutch Jews had been transported to the concentration camps.²¹⁴ No rail workers protested against the tasks handed down by the Germans save for one individual. He refused and was replaced by a willing driver, suffering no repercussions.²¹⁵ A few others, according to the Nederlandse Spoorwegen historian Guus Veenendaal, asked G. Joustra, the chairman of the railway workers union, what they should do in their situation, to which he said it was better not to refuse what was being asked of them.²¹⁶ Dutch railroad workers were switched out with their German counterparts once they reached the border of the Netherlands.

Although they did not drive them directly to the camps, the Dutch railway personnel transported them from their native land, where the rail workers and Jews were recently considered to be citizens of the same status, to the land of the occupier. It seems likely that the drivers and other workers knew what was happening, based on the other reports and rumors going around at the time. Whether they chose to believe what was happening is a different case. This willful ignorance is a clear sign of anti-Semitism, as many chose to ignore the harsh reality and comply rather than do anything to protest or help the Dutch Jewry.

Recently, in 2005, the Nederlandse Spoorwegen apologized for their collaboration with the Germans and their role in the deaths of over 100,000 Dutch Jews, along with the resistance members, homosexuals, disabled people, and Roma they also transported to their deaths. In 2018, the company decided that it would compensate survivors and family members with between \$5,500 and-16,000 available per person.²¹⁷ This small sum of money in return for the

²¹⁴ Nina Siegal, "Dutch Railroad Reckons With Holocaust Shame, 70 Years Later," *The New York Times*, September 28, 2019, sec. World.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/28/world/europe/ns-dutch-railway-holocaust.html>.

²¹⁵ Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Apologies For Holocaust Behavior and Refusal to do so: The Dutch Case in an International Context," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 18, no. 3/4 (2006): 40.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Siegal, "Dutch Railroad Reckons with Holocaust Shame."

lives of so many lost is hardly fair or considerate, yet the acknowledgment of their collaboration is a step in the right direction in coming to terms with their horrendous past.

Chapter Three: Voices

When the Netherlands and the Holocaust are brought up together, an instant connection is made to Anne Frank, the brave young diarist who continued to write while in hiding from the Nazi terror. Due to the widespread success of her diary after the war and the heartwarming messages of perseverance and positivity, *The Diary of a Young Girl* became an incredible success, as it was a “symbol of universal suffering”.²¹⁸ Thanks to this success, the Netherlands gained an “invincible reputation for its stance against the Nazis” and many associated the Dutch during World War II as stalwarts for protecting the Jewry.²¹⁹ Yet, as we have discussed, this is a misconception. The promotion of individual success stories showing Jews being saved by gallant Dutch citizens, including the enduring popularity of Anne Frank, has allowed the Dutch citizens to hide behind this faux shield instead of confronting the fact that the majority of Dutch citizens were direct or indirect collaborators in the devastation of the Dutch Jewry. This shows the passive anti-Semitism on the part of the Dutch that allowed them to comply and cooperate with an enemy that made clear their anti-Semitic intentions.²²⁰

For this chapter, I will explore the accounts of the Dutch Jews and gentiles who collaborated, directly or indirectly, with the German occupiers, as well as those who were victimized by the actions of collaborators. I have already given an account of the State-sponsored collaboration, with the Dutch directly allowing collaboration to occur through active

²¹⁸ Bovenkerk, 238.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ The Dutch taking credit and basing their savior mythology on Anne Frank is strange for a number of reasons. Firstly, she was German, and moved to the Netherlands as a refugee, something the Dutch Gentile and Jewish authorities disliked in principle (hence the initial building of Westerbork). Next, the man who helped the Franks find hiding was an Austrian named Miep Gies. Finally, if the Franks were betrayed, it has been theorized that it was most likely a Dutch citizen who betrayed them.

participation on the part of the government. In this next section, I want to delve deeper into the voices of those affected by this betrayal on the part of the Dutch citizens. The government acquiesced to the demands of the Germans and allowed access to their personal information which made rounding up the Dutch Jewry that much easier. These violations convinced the Germans that the Dutch would collaborate if ordered to, which is exactly what happened with the Colonne Henniecke. The bounty hunters were active perpetrators, and they coerced direct and indirect collaboration out of ordinary Dutch citizens, sometimes leading them into committing horrific acts of treason. This next section will interpret and analyze primary source accounts of betrayal and direct and indirect collaboration by Gentiles as well as Jews who were forced into collaborating. Many of the sources come from interviews with survivors, as well as accounts that were taken from the work of scholars who had access to interviews.²²¹

Etty Hillesum



Although *The Diary of a Young Girl* is the most recognizable wartime diary in both the Netherlands and the world, Etty Hillesum's account of her life during the German occupation of the Netherlands as well as her subsequent letters from her time in Westerbork are equally important in understanding the firsthand suffering and thoughts of Dutch Jews. Hillesum's *An Interrupted Life and Letters From Westerbork* is a powerful, thought-provoking documentation

²²¹ Such as Van Liempt and Van der Boom.

of the life of a Dutch Jew struggling to come to grips with the changing world around her while still living her life as a woman in her late twenties. Throughout the diaries, the personal growth of Hillesum, as well as the development of her religious and philosophical views, are readily apparent. Hillesum was born in the Netherlands in 1914 and was a gifted child. She came from an intellectual family that encouraged independent and unique learning, leading her to become involved with a group of leftist-leaning friends who worked closely with the resistance.²²² To make money, Hillesum worked as a housekeeper, as well as giving Russian lessons to aspiring pupils.²²³

Throughout the first part of her diaries, the war going on around her and the gradual stripping of Jewish rights is not at the forefront of Hillesum's thoughts. However, the degradation of the imposition of the Star of David on Jews had a profound impact on her:

8:00 p.m. (April 29, 1942): There seemed to be a touch of nervousness just now in his [S., her lover's] voice, when he asked me somewhat ironically on the telephone, 'Well, are you coming over here with your yellow star?' Only a few months ago I still believed that politics did not touch me and wondered if that was 'unworldliness', a lack of real understanding. Now I don't ask such questions anymore. I have grown so much stronger...²²⁴

This diary was written on April 29, 1942, the date that the yellow star became mandatory for Dutch Jews to wear out in public. A change in Hillesum is noticeable at this point, as she admits. At first, she was not as concerned with what was going on around her, but this new measure which stripped the individuality of Jews into an easily recognizable target made her realize the present danger she was in. The next few months show a change in Hillesum which at first seems fatalistic. A few days away from the first scheduled deportations to Westerbork, Hillesum wrote "I must admit a new insight into my life and find a place for it: what is at stake is our impending destruction and annihilation, we can have no more illusions about that. They are out to destroy us

²²² Hillesum, xvi-xvii.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.

completely, we must accept that and go on from there.”²²⁵ While writing her diary, Hillesum referred to individual German soldiers, yet never spoke about the complicity of the Dutch citizens, except in more cryptic language: “I shall not be bitter if others fail to grasp what is happening to us Jews.”²²⁶ These last two quotes offer us incredibly poignant insight into the thoughts of the Dutch Jewry at a critical time. Hillesum and other Jews likely began to realize the insidious nature of the German plan to “relocate” the Dutch Jews to the east. Yet, they are also aware of the oblivious nature of Dutch gentiles, as Hillesum understood that “others fail to grasp what is happening”. This shows the culpability of the Dutch as collaborators, whether they knew it at the time or not. So many Dutch gentiles worked in sectors of the government concerned with creating a registry of Dutch Jews, as well as identifying them as Jews, yet never once protested or spoke out about what they were doing.

Besides the direct collaboration of these government workers, numerous degrading measures were also passed, which Hillesum mentioned frequently: “Why this mood at this particular moment? Is it because... so many people have had sore feet ever since they were stopped from using the trams?... Because Liesl stood in a queue and didn’t get any vegetables at all?”²²⁷ Here, she mentioned two anti-Semitic measures passed: the inability for Jews to use public transportation and the denial of shopping at greengrocers. Was it possible for Dutch citizens to not notice their fellow Jewish citizens subjected to anti-Semitic actions in public, and then not notice their complete removal from society itself? No, it was not possible. This was willful ignorance. As Presser strongly states,

Did not the officials of Dutch municipalities collaborate in the registration of Jews and in placing the letter ‘J’ on Jewish identity cards? Did not virtually all government employees sign the declaration of Aryan descent? Did not the Dutch authorities

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 153-154.

collaborate in dismissing Jewish civil servants? The judiciary in dispensing German justice? The Department of Social Affairs, the municipalities and the District Labour Offices in allowing themselves to be used to deport Jews to the work camps? The municipal authorities of Amsterdam in concentrating all Jews in their city? The streetcars, the railways and the police, in helping during the deportations, and the gendarmerie in guarding Westerbork camp?²²⁸

Presser concludes his deconstruction of the ways the Dutch actively collaborated by saying “What non-Jew has a clear conscience? And what Jew, for that matter?”²²⁹ Clearly, Dutch gentiles witnessed a systematically organized genocide, with some taking a direct part. What Hillesum referred to are the witnesses, who chose to ignore what was going on around them. Criminologist Frank Bovenkerk posits three reasons as to why the Dutch may have been apathetic and willfully ignorant bystanders: one, there are so many other people who could do something; two, problems identifying with the Jews to sympathize; and three, difficulty in thinking that one can effectively intervene, especially given the strength of their Nazi adversaries.²³⁰ Despite the bystander nature of those around her, Hillesum refused to be bitter and instead chose to focus on the meaningfulness of life.²³¹

Closer to the actual deportations, the acute fear of what will happen next is evident in Jewish conversation, as Hillesum is criticized for not going into hiding by other Jews: “Many accuse me of indifference and passivity when I refuse to go into hiding; they say I have given up. They say everyone who can must try to stay out of their clutches, it's our bounden duty to try. But that argument is specious. For while everyone tries to save himself, vast numbers are nevertheless disappearing.”²³² Here is where Hillesum displayed fatalistic and depressive tendencies, yet given the situation, it is entirely appropriate. Factors not widely known at the

²²⁸ Presser, 273-274.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 274.

²³⁰ Bovenkerk, “The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story,” 248-249.

²³¹ Hillesum, 154. Full quote: “I shall not be bitter if others fail to grasp what is happening to us Jews. I work and continue to live with the same conviction, and I find life meaningful--yes, meaningful-- although I hardly dare say so in company these days.”

²³² *Ibid.*, 176.

time made hiding difficult; this includes the registration of Jews, the bounty hunters, and the general cooperation of the gentiles. Others are planning and ready to go into hiding, yet Hillesum had every intention of facing whatever fate has in store for her.

The other factor involved in her decision to not go into hiding was Hillesum's burgeoning foray back into the folds of Judaism. Hillesum said in defense of not trying to save herself, "I don't feel in anybody's clutches; I feel safe in God's arms..."²³³ Hillesum readily accepted God as an almighty protector and savior. She believed in the faith and deliverance of God, and so did not attempt to go into hiding like others in her situation. However, those Jews did not reckon with the antipathy and fear that caused so many that went into hiding to be caught, turned in by vicious, amoral bounty hunters as well as intimidated and spineless gentiles.

Despite Hillesum's choice to not go into hiding, she was granted a boon that so many other Amsterdam Jews desperately desired: a job working at the Jewish Council as a typist. "And I have been recommended for some sort of job with the Jewish Council. They had permission to hire 180 people last week, and the desperate are thronging there in droves," Hillesum wrote, "...But that is as far as I am prepared to go, and beyond that I am not willing to pull any strings. In any case, the Jewish Council seems to have become a hotbed of intrigue, and resentment against this strange agency is growing by the hour. And sooner or later it will be their turn to go, anyway."²³⁴ Hillesum does not have a high opinion of the work being done by the Jewish Council, as their selective picking of who they decided went to Westerbork and who remained undoubtedly sparked anger and confusion. She did not apply for this job; a friend recommended her. As she mentioned, people were desperate to receive the deferment that working at the Jewish Council granted, even though Hillesum prophetically predicted the eventual fate of this

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

organization, as well as the resentment that they generated from choosing who was to be deported.

Working in this job did not fill Hillesum with joy; in fact, she despised the work that she was tasked with doing and immediately recognized the larger picture: “But yesterday afternoon, it struck me how depressing, dreary, demeaning, and without any real point this whole business is: ‘I humbly beg for exemption from labor service in Germany, because I am already working for the Wehrmacht here and am indispensable.’ The whole thing is hopeless.”²³⁵ Although the Jewish Council liked to believe that the work they were doing was saving the Dutch Jewry, Hillesum understood that they were only delaying inevitable destruction. Perhaps Asscher and Cohen thought that they were buying time for the Dutch Jews by cooperating and asking others to cooperate in *Het Joodse Weekblad*.²³⁶ In this quote, we see the return of Hillesum’s fatalistic tendencies as well as her bitterly joking that she “already (is) working for the Wehrmacht”, which goes to show the cruel malevolence of the German tactics: forcing Dutch Jews to assist with the round-up of other Dutch Jews as a way of temporarily avoiding fate, then finally capturing the last Jews remaining in the Jewish Council.

Hillesum’s devastating words on this subject ring out like an epitaph: “Nothing can ever atone for the fact, of course, that one section of the Jewish population is helping to transport the majority out of the country. History will pass judgment in due course.”²³⁷ Hillesum believed that the Jewish Council was partially responsible for the deportation of the Dutch Jewry, and as a firsthand witness, trusting her verdict makes sense. She bore witness to the decisions that were made, then typed them up and helped those decisions get executed. Despite this, I still believe

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 193.

²³⁶ Erik Schumacher, *1942: Oorlog op alle fronten* (Spectrum: 2017). Excerpt from *Historiek*, “Het Dilemma van de Joodse Raad,” Accessed November 30, 2021, <https://historiek.net/joodse-raad-tweede-wereldoorlog/67779/>.

²³⁷ Hillesum, 196.

that the psychological manipulation the German occupiers employed by having the Jews bear responsibility for who got deported, as well as the complete cooperation of the Dutch government and passive bystanders, bears the brunt of responsibility for the evil that occurred. The Germans wanted the Dutch Jews to turn on each other and believed that they were the ones to blame, and the Dutch government and police were willing to help out with no questions asked. Hillesum and others were placed in impossible positions, doomed either way thanks to the perpetration of the anti-Semitic German officials as well as the direct collaboration of the passively anti-Semitic Dutch government.

Hillesum quit working for the Jewish Council just two weeks after she started, and began a new job where she accompanied the first group going to Westerbork. She did this to bring whatever help she could, and in her letters, she included how she would cheer up the depressed, help the sick, and find more food for the hungry.²³⁸ Hillesum was allowed to travel between Amsterdam and Westerbork for a short time due to the nature of her work before she was finally confined to Westerbork permanently. After spending a little more than a year in Westerbork, she was chosen as one of the thousand Jews that week to go east. Little is known about what happened in the interim after she arrived in Auschwitz, other than that her mother and father were killed immediately. The Red Cross reports that Etty Hillesum was killed on November 30, 1943. Hillesum's writing offers us valuable insight into the mind of a young woman facing persecution and eventual death. What we can glean from her powerful writing is how the actions of those in systems of power affected her and others' last months before deportation, as well as helping us understand the desperate situation Dutch Jews found themselves in. In the end,

²³⁸ One such example comes from page 323. Etty talks about how most people in Westerbork have no love of their fellow man, and Etty feels differently: "Love for one's fellow man is like an elemental glow that sustains you. The fellow man himself has hardly anything to do with it. Oh Maria, it's a little bit bare of love here, and I myself feel so inexpressibly rich; I cannot explain it." Hillesum, 323.

Hillesum, much like Anne Frank, remained convinced of the goodness of humanity, despite all of the horrible actions of men and women around her.

Alfred Münzer

Our introduction began with a retelling of how the sisters of Alfred Münzer may have been captured by the Nazis. In it, I employed historical fiction to describe the feelings and terror innocent children could have felt in their situation. Much of what we know about the Münzer sisters comes from Alfred Münzer, their younger brother who survived by being hidden by a Dutch-Indonesian family. Münzer moved to America after the war with his mother where he became a physician. In recent years, Münzer has given talks about his early life and the hardships he and his family had to endure, including his birth: “In 1941, my mother realized she was pregnant again. Her obstetrician told her it would be immoral to bring another Jewish life into the world and urged her to have an abortion. But my mother ignored the doctor's advice.”²³⁹ This quote shows us how deplorable the Jewish condition was in the Netherlands. Doctors told mothers to kill their children instead of having to face life in the Netherlands, even before the announcement of the deportations East.

When it came time for the Münzer patriarch to report to the train station for transportation to Westerbork, the family solution was almost as drastic as the doctor's. “Simcha [Alfred's father] faked a suicide attempt in order to be committed to a psychiatric hospital near The Hague,” reports the United States Holocaust Museum.²⁴⁰ “Meanwhile, Gisele [Alfred's mother] sold the family's possessions and settled her children with friends and neighbors before joining Simcha at the hospital as a nurse's assistant.”²⁴¹ Unfortunately, this plan failed due to the

²³⁹ “Eyewitness to History: Alfred (Al) Münzer,” Accessed August 31, 2021, [//www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/eyewitness-to-history/alfred-munzer](https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/eyewitness-to-history/alfred-munzer)

²⁴⁰ “Alfred (Al) Münzer — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” Accessed April 8, 2022, <https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-survivors/volunteers/alfred-muenzer>.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

ruthlessness of the German and Dutch police, who did not care who they were rounding up, even if they were psychiatric patients in a hospital: “My parents only succeeded in hiding at the psychiatric hospital for three months...on New Year's Day 1943, all the Jews who had been hiding in the hospital were arrested by the SS.”²⁴² This is similar to the Colonne Henneicke bounty hunters who would capture sick and injured Dutch Jews even though German authorities disliked this practice initially. As time went on, the German opinion on the matter changed. German officials in the Netherlands established that every Jewish man, woman, and child, regardless of condition or status, was to be deported, even to the surprise of Nazi officials like Adolf Eichmann, who had not expected that many deportations to occur.²⁴³



Al Münzer and his nanny Mima Saïna.

Fortunately for the youngest Münzer, his protectors cared greatly for him and were willing to do anything to keep him safe, including his Indonesian nanny who slept with a knife in case someone tried to take him in the night.²⁴⁴ However, his sisters were not so lucky. Münzer's mother told him stories about how kind and sweet his sisters were, yet that did not prevent a Dutch collaborator who was supposed to protect them from betraying them. Münzer emotionally recalls what happened to his sisters:

²⁴² Eyewitness to History: Al Münzer.

²⁴³ Bovenkerk, “The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story,” 239.

²⁴⁴ Eyewitness to History: Al Münzer.

Sadly, my sisters met an entirely different fate. After a year with the two Catholic neighbors, they were placed in what was assumed to be a safer home. But there, the husband of the woman who had agreed to shelter my sisters denounced his wife and my sisters to the Nazis. His wife was sent to a concentration camp where she developed typhus, but survived. My sisters, however, were taken to Auschwitz where they were killed, February 11, 1944. They were seven and five years old.²⁴⁵

Children deemed too young or not fit enough to work in Auschwitz were killed immediately. The fates of Eva and Leah Münzer were sealed even before they got to Westerbork, as they were essentially killed by the Dutch man who, instead of attempting to protect them like his wife, turned them in for whatever monstrous reason he had.

After the War: Interviews with Surviving Dutch Jews

Numerous interviews with surviving Dutch Jews have emerged long after the war's conclusion. This is largely because Dutch society as a whole struggled to come to grips with their role in an event that caused so many of their fellow citizens their lives, and for the most part, did not come to terms with what happened in the Netherlands until new scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s showed the complicity of Dutch gentiles. The return of Dutch Jews from the extermination camps after liberation prompted incomprehension and a lack of understanding from gentiles, as one surviving woman reports: "For years I did not tell anyone anything about my experiences during the war. My lips were sealed. People don't understand, or they don't believe you."²⁴⁶ However, given the recent change in attitude in the Netherlands, survivors of the Holocaust have become more comfortable sharing their experiences. Many of the following interviews come from men and women who were children during the war.

The interviews of survivors each emphasize different aspects of their experiences during the war. For instance, survivor Dukie Gelber largely spoke about the difficulties of going into hiding for his family. He talked briefly about his grandmother and aunt, who attempted to go into

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Hondius, 56.

hiding but were betrayed by Dutch Nazis and sent to Sobibor.²⁴⁷ Gelber emphasizes the lack of knowledge available in 1942, a key factor for why many did not go into hiding: “We didn’t know about Auschwitz. We never heard the name Treblinka, Sobibor, nothing. So we didn’t know. Perhaps if they would have known about the extermination in the east they may have taken another decision, but that is hypothetical.”²⁴⁸ The concentration camps were far in the east, in an area where Polish and Slavic Jews were being killed rapidly. Information getting back to the Netherlands took some time, although by 1943 there were reports of Dutch Nazis (such as members of the Colonne Henneicke) telling Jews that they would be going east to die. The fact that the leaders of the Jewish Council and members of the government, more knowledgeable than the rest of the Jewish population, said nothing to warn the Dutch Jewry, shows the extent of their culpability and collaboration. Their fear of the Germans, as well as their willingness to cooperate without question, led many like Gelber to follow their orders until it was too late. Still, Gelber and others clearly could not imagine what might happen. He also said that geographical isolation made hiding more difficult, as in the east and north was Germany, in the south was occupied Belgium, and in the west was the North Sea separating the Netherlands from England.²⁴⁹ This feeling of isolation and a lack of options seems apparent among many of the Dutch Jews, who had very little choice and very little help.²⁵⁰

Another survivor of the war, Henry Fenichel, talked about the collaboration of the Dutch police. “When they invaded Holland, they didn’t immediately round up the Jews. They were very smart about what they did...But then all of a sudden, the cop on the street corner, instead of being a Dutch cop, would be a Nazi cop or a Dutch collaborator – and there were plenty of

²⁴⁷ “Interview with Dukie Gelber, Survivor from Holland,” Accessed October 8, 2021, <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/interviews/duky.html>.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Gelber was only 7 when the occupation began, and was 12 when he was liberated from Bergen-Belsen.

those.”²⁵¹ Fenichel noticed the insidious nature of the Germans, who avoided the violent razzias that occurred in Belgium and Eastern Europe which might have sparked more outrage from the Dutch gentiles, and opted for a stealthier approach by slowly stripping Jewish rights.²⁵² He also mentions the willingness of Dutch collaborators, who were many in number. Fenichel says that the Nazis found him and his family in hiding, and placed the blame on himself: “For all I know, I was responsible for it. You know, if they come and ask a kid a question or two, I might have divulged something.”²⁵³ As Van Liempt continually mentions, the Nazis were not averse to doing whatever it took to get information, even if that meant going after vulnerable children. Fenichel does not mention whether it was Dutch or German Nazis, but we know enough from both that each would use underhanded tactics to achieve their goals.

Finally, a video interview of Dutch survivors talks about their wartime experience, especially with Dutch collaborators. At first, when Dutch Jews got their initial summons to report for transportation, many believed that their destination was labor camps in the east and nothing more. However, as one woman says, “But later on, when they started sending orders to old people and children to report, people finally understood that they were not being sent to work-for who sends an 80-year-old to work?”²⁵⁴ This point has been emphasized earlier, and it is important to bring it back, as this was when the Dutch Jews fully understood that they were not going to work in Germany. Did the gentiles realize this at the same time? It is hard to fully know, as many seemingly distanced themselves from the entire situation for fear of what might happen

²⁵¹ DutchNews.nl., “‘They Were Proud of What They Were Doing’. A Dutch Holocaust Survivor’s Story,” April 13, 2020, <https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2020/04/they-were-proud-of-what-they-were-doing-a-dutch-holocaust-survivors-story/>.

²⁵² Razzias refer to violent and often public attacks or raids.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ Yad Vashem, *Holocaust Survivor Testimonies: The Netherlands*, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbDnQQtsQs>.

to themselves or because they felt no close connection to the Jewish population, meaning that they did not concern themselves with their problems.

Dutch Jews noticed whenever gentiles *did* get involved. They emotionally recalled the betrayal of their friends and neighbors, as one elderly woman did in this interview: “There were good Dutch people, there were very good Dutch people. But there were bad ones too. How can you sell a Jew for seven guilders?,”... “They kept on raising the price to encourage people to inform. But many did it for free.”²⁵⁵ Here we see the full scope of betrayal in the Netherlands. There were collaborators solely in it for the money, however, there were also Nazi sympathizers and anti-Semites who did it because of their hatred of Jews and for no other reason. The lack of anti-Semitic activity in the Netherlands before the Holocaust does not hide that there must have been an anti-Semitic feeling amongst the gentiles, either in full-blown hatred, or more commonly, casual anti-Semitism throughout the country, which did not get fully realized until the persecution of the Jews began at the hands of outsiders. The Dutch did not start this process of Jewish elimination, but they were willing to help, and sometimes more than just help.

Betrayal of the Hidden Jews

Unfortunately, the Münzer sisters were not the only ones betrayed by other Dutch citizens, including ones who were originally supposed to protect them. Besides documenting the heinous crimes of the Colonne Henneicke, Ad van Liempt also looks into the betrayal of hidden Jews in the Netherlands. He found that the Colonne oftentimes recorded how they captured Dutch Jews, written in German as “*Der Arier hat die Juden selbst gemeldet*,” which translates as “the Aryan turned in the Jew himself.”²⁵⁶ What this refers to is the method of Dutch gentiles purposefully telling Jewish citizens that they would be safe with them, and then alerting bounty

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Van Liempt, 49.

hunters and turning them in for a profit or out of pure anti-Semitism. One such story refers to the wife of a sailor who took in the Wegloops, a Jewish family of five. After the war, the wife reportedly said that “the Jews were making her life so difficult that she just couldn’t take it anymore” and turned in the family.²⁵⁷ Another example of a case within the Colonne Henneicke with the words “*Der Arier hat die Juden selbst gemeldet*” written on the file is with a woman in Amsterdam who sheltered six men and women, the ages ranging from a fifteen-year-old boy to an eighty-year-old woman.²⁵⁸ It is not known how much money this woman got for her ruthless betrayal, but it was probably a princely sum, given the willingness of the Colonne to spend a lot to get tips and information. These are examples of direct collaboration, similar to the bounty hunters, that display an intense hatred of the Jewish population. Although they did not kill them personally, they collaborated with the perpetrators and sent them to their death.

One of the most horrific examples of Jewish betrayal is in the so-called “Jew Trap” boarding home. Here, the proprietor worked in conjunction with the bounty hunters, offering rooms while simultaneously letting Henneicke and his men know that there were Jews to be captured. A young Jewish woman named Elfriede Heinemann reported on this man after she barely escaped from his clutches.²⁵⁹ Her family had already hidden from an anti-Semitic landlady before this next ordeal. She managed to escape and emigrate to America, but her family was not as fortunate and died at Auschwitz.²⁶⁰ This man, only known as P., claimed to have been forced into this position by members of the Colonne Henniecke, who reportedly threatened to arrest him and send him to Westerbork. P. denied receiving any money from the bounty hunters, yet he certainly kept the money he charged his Jewish tenants.²⁶¹ He also admitted to calling the

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ Van Liempt, 49-50.

²⁵⁹ Heinemann reported this after she escaped from the Netherlands and settled in New York. She reported this in a letter to New York authorities in a letter.

²⁶⁰ Van Liempt, 50-51.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

Colonne Henneicke for the sole purpose of letting them know that he had Jews in his house, although again he blamed the duress put on him by the bounty hunters.²⁶² P. continued to betray Dutch Jews, and was apprehended by the Special Court after the war, where he was sentenced to three years in prison for treason.²⁶³

It is worth mentioning that the records found came from the office of the bounty hunters. Is it possible that they tampered with evidence to make it look like they were less culpable, and in doing so, placed some of the blame on Dutch citizens?²⁶⁴ I would guess that this is unlikely to occur. Their office was disbanded on German orders once the bounty hunters captured almost all of the Dutch Jews, unlike other government offices which tried to burn evidence once it was clear that the war was almost over and the Germans had lost. Also, the heads of the Colonne Henneicke, Wim Henneicke and Willem Breidé, were passionate anti-Semites who took pride in their work. It is unlikely that they would try to cover it up, however, given the amount of coercion and force they used to find Jews, it is possible that some of these cases are not as open and shut as they initially appear. Still, what we see here are the lesser-known stories of Dutch citizens betraying the Jews to make money, as well as cooperating with the Colonne Henneicke. Through their collaborative actions, Dutch citizens could profit by betraying Jews. Not all Dutch citizens participated in as despicable and calculated actions as those featured above, but there was certainly a level of apathy and cooperation throughout the population that allowed the continued deportations of Dutch Jews.

Apathy and Cooperation of Dutch Citizens

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ I am talking about the cases of Dutch citizens willingly turning Jews in to the bounty hunters, and the bounty hunters trying to shift some of the blame since they had access to the records.

Although there are numerous instances of Dutch gentiles selflessly risking their lives for Dutch Jews, the majority of the country looked on at the continued removal of their fellow countrymen and did nothing, or worse yet, helped the Germans in acts of collaboration. Diaries recovered from the war help to show us these actions of ordinary Dutch citizens. One such diary was recovered from a Red Cross nurse who was a vehement supporter of the Germans even though she was Dutch. She had this to say following the invasion by the Germans: “The way the Germans acted was so proper, so magnificent, so disciplined; they command nothing but respect. The locals could learn a lot from the Germans...they’re big and sturdy and very neat, making you think, inadvertently, some army the Dutch have! The people here are so rude and impolite, while the Germans are so proper and polite! It’s easy to see the difference.”²⁶⁵ This woman, while not outwardly anti-Semitic, professes a love of the Germans and Germanic culture similar to that of the NSB. Initially, the NSB structured themselves on the fascist policies of the Germans and Italians but did not seek to emulate their anti-Semitism until much closer to the occupation of the Netherlands.²⁶⁶ This unnamed woman later quotes directly from NSB policy, making it likely that she was a member of the Dutch Nazi party.²⁶⁷ By the time of the occupation, the NSB membership leaped from 30,000 to close to 100,000 members, many of them opportunists seeking to advance their social standing.²⁶⁸ Dutch Nazis are riddled all over the pages of collaboration, as they often volunteered in whatever way the German occupiers needed them.

²⁶⁵ Nina Siegal and Josephine Sedgwick, “The Lost Diaries of War,” *The New York Times*, April 16, 2020, sec. Arts. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/15/arts/dutch-war-diaries.html>.

²⁶⁶ J. M. Damsma, “Nazi’s in the Netherlands: A Social History of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945,” PHD diss., (University of Amsterdam 2013): 10.

²⁶⁷ This woman remains unnamed as her family is still alive and wished for privacy on this sensitive topic.

²⁶⁸ Josje Damsma and Erik Schumacher, “De Strijd Om Amsterdam’. Een Nieuwe Benadering in Het Onderzoek Naar De NSB,” *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 124 (3) 2009: 329-48. <https://doi.org/10.18352/bmgn-lchr.7009>.

Besides members of the NSB, Dutch citizens showed their collaboration in other, less visible ways. Mirjam Bolle, a Jewish woman, recalls the difficulties of hiding, especially with sick relatives who were easy to take away to Westerbork:

When the ambulance pulled up at their doorstep, neighborhood women rushed out to ask what was happening. Lea said: ‘My aunt has become unwell, and because she can’t stay with us we have to have her picked up in this way. And would you please excuse me now, for Mother isn’t at home either.’ This is the kind of act you have to put on because it would be unwise to reveal too much. Well-intentioned gossip could fall on the wrong ears.²⁶⁹

Bolle and her relatives were worried about regular people gossiping and resulting in a collaborator learning about their location and turning them in. Thanks to the presence of the bloodthirsty Colonne Henneicke as well as the ultra efficient government, there were people everywhere who would have willingly turned the Jewish population in, given the opportunity. Bolle did end up getting deported to Westerbork and later Bergen-Belsen, where she was eventually released as part of an exchange with German POWs.²⁷⁰ This demonstrates how so many Dutch citizens could be indirect collaborators, as the wrong word to the wrong person, even if it was unintentional, could result in deportations. Simply gossiping to a friend could cost people their lives.

Almost no one could be trusted, as Van Liempt shows in the case of a desperate woman, stylized as “Mrs. D” for privacy. Her husband was Jewish and had been sheltering his Jewish mother, meaning that he was arrested even though he was married to a non-Jew.²⁷¹ Mrs. D contacted a Colonne Henneicke member named Van der Kraal, who in turn said that if she gave him names of hidden Jewish people she knew, he would help her husband (who was going to be

²⁶⁹ Siegal, “Lost Diaries of the War.”

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I am not sure if she was turned in, however, her and her family were clearly found by someone who had them arrested, meaning it is very likely that she was turned in.

²⁷¹ Van Liempt, 53.

sent to Westerbork).²⁷² Mrs. D turned in every hidden Jew she could think of, including a family that had been hiding with her. However, Van der Kral reneged on his word and did nothing for her husband, who died at the concentration camps.²⁷³ All around, people were willing to take advantage of those who were vulnerable, demonstrating the amount of anti-Semitism that permeated through the Netherlands.

The apathy of Dutch citizens and their feeling of an inability to help is shown within the diary of gentile Cornelis Komen, who commented on one of the largest roundups of Dutch Jews while he and his family were away on a vacation:

Many people on the train don't even know what's going on in Amsterdam. The last Jews are being up. Herded together and taken away like cattle. From hearth and home to foreign parts. First, they're taken to Vught, then they're transported to Poland — oh, the misery these people must be going through. Separated from their wives and children. They may not be a pleasant people, but they're still human beings. How can the Good God allow this?... in Amsterdam, the Jews are herded together like cattle. Carrying their bundles on their backs. Their blankets. They packed their things days in advance. Still, how hard their departure must have been. Parting from their familiar living rooms, their friends and acquaintances. While we are eating cherries, one basket after another. Lazing around. How lovely this place is.²⁷⁴

Here, we get an understanding of the suffering of the Dutch Jews from a gentile, who vividly recounts what is happening to the Jewish population, including the fact that their final destination was Poland. Other Dutch diarists reported similar things, as evidenced by Bart Van der Boom, who wrote that “no fewer than sixty-seven out of 164 diarists used phrases like ‘extermination,’ ‘destruction,’ ‘mass murder,’ ‘slaughter,’ ‘certain death, and so on.’”²⁷⁵ Komen demonstrated some casual anti-Semitism while describing the Jews, yet he still seems to feel moved by their

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Siegal, “Lost Diaries of the War.”

²⁷⁵ Van der Boom, 392. The number he is talking about is the diaries he himself researched, which he says are not representative of the population as a whole due to the limited amount of people who chose to keep diaries. Most of the diaries are from affluent and well-educated people, who may have had more idea of what was going on? That is not necessarily clear, and Van der Boom argues that representation is not necessarily needed in this case.

plight, a feeling most likely shared by other Dutch citizens. Yet he kept these thoughts to himself, hidden away in his diary. He wrote nothing that suggested that he would take any steps to help the Jewish community, instead, he is glad that it is happening to them and not his family. Komen is certainly unhappy about the deportations taking place, but not enough to truly do anything about it. He sits by passively, eating his cherries and feeling sorry.



Dutch Jews awaiting orders.

Sympathy there may have been for the Dutch Jews, but not from all of the bystanders. Art collector Van Rede expressed skepticism at the whole affair after interacting with German soldiers and watching Jews get ready to be deported:

[Van Rede] correctly believed German rule in the Netherlands relatively mild, and found it hard to imagine the German soldiers he met—"decent young men"—would perpetrate such gruesome crimes elsewhere. And he more than once noted that local Jews did not behave as if they were facing mass murder. When in April 1943 he saw Jews leave for the Vught transit camp, packed as if they were going on a journey, he thought they clearly

were not too worried: “And they usually are well informed. Are we being fed atrocity stories?... They sometimes actually look happy. That is impossible, if their departure means death”.²⁷⁶

Van Rede, similarly to Komen, shows anti-Semitism in his writing, but he seemed to have genuinely believed that the Jews would be fine and that the Germans would not exterminate them. Here is where we come to a conundrum. The Dutch, for the most part, heard about the deaths in the East, as Van der Boom says that the BBC, Radio Orange, and illegal German media all reported to some degree the Jewish deaths in the East, as well as the Allied declaration on the persecution of Jews, which was released in 1942 that mentioned the extermination of European Jewry.²⁷⁷ The Dutch also wrote about it in diaries and even witnessed the transportations happening. Yet, the Dutch remained passive bystanders. It starts at the top, with the government-in-exile refusing to do more for the Dutch Jewish citizens, even when directly confronted with the fate of the Dutch Jews from sources coming straight from the concentration camps.²⁷⁸ That, along with the fact that although the Jewish in the Netherlands were accepted into society, they were never fully assimilated into one of the large pillars of Dutch society, keeping them as eternal outsiders no matter what happened. This distance made it that much easier for Dutch citizens like Komen and Rede to look at what was happening and choose to remain passive about it. This passive stance, while on the surface benign, is completely anti-Semitic, and is reflected throughout the majority of Dutch society. The rest of Dutch society, while not many in number, did form a resistance movement. It did not truly form as a cohesive unit until April of 1943, when it was focused more on the deportations of gentiles to Germany

²⁷⁶ Van der Boom, 394.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 392-394

²⁷⁸ Bovenkerk, “The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story,” 242.

for labor in factories.²⁷⁹ However, there was some Dutch Resistance that succeeded in saving members of the Dutch Jewry.

Dutch Resistance

In Jacob Presser's chapter on Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, he says almost right away that "there can be no doubt that resistance by Jews was proportionately greater than that of other Dutchman."²⁸⁰ Presser is undoubtedly correct in this assessment, which agrees with my argument that the Dutch willingly collaborated with the Nazis in multiple ways and were passively anti-Semitic through the war. Nevertheless, it is an unfair statement to say that all Dutch citizens were complicit with the Nazi regime. Indeed, the government, police, bounty hunters, railways, and many passive bystanders allowed and oftentimes collaborated with the Nazi perpetrators; however, that is not the case for all Dutch citizens. In fact, the Dutch have the second-highest number of names in the Righteous Among the Nations, with 5,910 Dutch citizens honored as "non-Jews who took great risks to save Jews during the Holocaust."²⁸¹ This in itself is a part of the Dutch Paradox, as one would expect a country with so many honored as righteous rescuers to have a much lower death rate amongst Jews as well as fewer collaborators. Although this thesis argues that the majority of Dutch citizens were collaborators, it is important to recognize that not all Dutch citizens acted this way.

Throughout the Netherlands, one major facet of resistance emerged from the Church, particularly the Catholic denomination. The Church was one of the few major organizations that outwardly decried the deportation of Jews, as well as the actions of those who supported the Nazi

²⁷⁹ Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, "The Netherlands: The greatest number of Jewish victims in Western Europe," Anne Frank Website, September 28, 2018, <https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/netherlands-greatest-number-jewish-victims-western-europe/>.

²⁸⁰ Presser, 279.

²⁸¹ "About the Righteous," Accessed April 25, 2022, <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/about-the-righteous.html>. This number is as of January 1, 2021.

regime.²⁸² They helped set up networks to allow Jews to go into hiding in safe homes and connect them with people who could take care of them. Researcher Robert Braun discovered that Jews in Catholic regions of the country, as well as Jews near Catholic Churches even in Protestant regions, were more likely to be rescued and protected.²⁸³ Part of this can be chalked down to the Catholic Church's overwhelming disapproval of Nazis. At one point, the Dutch Church strongly discouraged Dutch Catholics from joining the NSB. Some Catholic priests directly tried to help, with one named B.J. Ader who traveled to Amsterdam from the distant Northwest to convince Jewish doctors to go with him in hiding.²⁸⁴ The majority of the Northern regions of the Netherlands are rural, Catholic areas, which had strong community ties and bonds. This helped prevent people from turning each other in, unlike in the larger, secular cities.²⁸⁵ Some people were inspired by the priests to help rescue Jews. A young couple from the Hague, Berendina Eman and Hein Sietsma organized a group of gentiles to help take care of and hide 60 Jews from the Nazis.²⁸⁶ The men in the group disguised themselves as clergymen, since clergymen were exempt from forced labor, and tried to rescue Jews. Sietsma was later arrested for his actions and sent to Dachau concentration camp, where he died.²⁸⁷

Christians were not the only ones to group up and attempt to rescue the Dutch Jewry. Four groups, two Christian organizations, and two run by students helped rescue close to 1,100 Jewish children across the Netherlands during the Holocaust.²⁸⁸ One of these groups was the

²⁸² Robert Braun, "Religious Minorities and Resistance to Genocide: The Collective Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust," *American Political Science Association* 110, No. 1 (February 2016): 130.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁸⁴ Yad Vashem, "Rescue and Righteous Among the Nations in Holland," Accessed April 25, 2022. <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/resources/rescue-and-righteous-among-the-nations-in-holland.html>.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ IHRA, "Yad Vashem and the Netherlands Sign Agreement for Contribution to Digitization of Righteous Among the Nations Material," Accessed April 25, 2022. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/news-archive/yad-vashem-and-netherlands-sign-agreement-contribution-digitization-righteous-among>.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Yad Vashem, "Rescue and Righteous Among the Nations in Holland."

Children Committee, a group formed by Utrecht students and partially funded by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht.²⁸⁹ A “socialist teacher and conscientious objector” named Joop Westerweel is also frequently mentioned for his actions in rescuing Dutch Jews.²⁹⁰ Westerweel answered a call to help a group of Dutch Jews named the *halutzim*, or pioneers, a group of young Jews whose aim was to eventually settle in Palestine. He helped find hiding places for them and helped some cross into France and Belgium, where they would be safer.²⁹¹ Unfortunately, Westerweel was caught trying to smuggle two girls across the border to Belgium.²⁹² Westerweel was tortured and, when he refused to give up information about the pioneers, he was executed. It is estimated that Westerweel helped over 200 Jews get into safe locations. Another famous Resistance member was Willem Arondeus, a homosexual artist. Arondeus joined the Resistance early on. He helped falsify identity papers for Dutch Jews so they could avoid deportation.²⁹³ On March 27, 1943, Arondeus led a group that set fire to the registration building in Amsterdam, which destroyed thousands of records.²⁹⁴ However, he and his group were betrayed, and Arondeus and eleven others were executed.



Willem Arondeus, Resistance fighter.

The Dutch Resistance efforts during the war consisted of different groups of people, however, they were largely spearheaded by Jewish, Communist, and Socialist sectors of the Dutch populace. The repercussions of the February Strike damaged the burgeoning

²⁸⁹ Ben Braber, “Deportation (July 1942 – September 1944),” In *This Cannot Happen Here, Integration and Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, 1940-1945*, (Amsterdam University Press, 2013): 124. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp7hh.10>.

²⁹⁰ Presser, 282-283.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² Yad Vashem, “Rescue and Righteous Among the Nations in Holland.”

²⁹³ “Willem Arondeus,” Accessed April 25, 2022.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/willem-arondeus>.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

resistance, as many influential leaders were either killed or forced into hiding. Another aspect of the strike being crushed was that it scared people who may have been willing to help. This is compounded by the fact that in the Netherlands, unlike in France and Belgium, rescuers who were caught helping Jews could be executed or sent to the concentration camps, where survival was slim. Those who chose to rescue and support the Dutch Jewry were truly incredible and brave humans, who sacrificed their lives to try and save others. Ultimately, around 45,000 Dutch citizens participated in the Resistance (or 4 percent of the total population), with 10,000 losing their lives.²⁹⁵ However, many people not directly affected by the Nazi decrees chose to do nothing, which explains Presser's quote as to why the Resistance was made up of so many Jews. As he says, "there was no branch of the Dutch Resistance in which Jewish men and women were not active in."²⁹⁶ Although the Dutch gentiles did often support, indirectly or directly with the perpetration of the Dutch Jewry, there was a small number who risked their lives with Jewish compatriots to save other Dutch Jews.

Conclusion

After the liberation of the Netherlands was completed in May 1945, the 5,000 Dutch Jews who survived the horrors of the concentration camps started returning home. They were not expecting to receive the treatment that occurred once they returned. Dutch historian Dienke Hondius specifically looked into the attitudes of Dutch citizens towards the returning Dutch Jewry, and what he found showed ignorance and rising anti-Semitism by Dutch gentiles, who were not sympathetic when the Jewish population returned. Some Jews were greeted with appalling selfishness on the part of the Dutch gentiles: "Rita Koopman... described how she went to reclaim her fur coat. 'The first thing this woman said, was: 'Well, quite a lot of your kind

²⁹⁵ J.H.M De Groen et al., "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Male and Female Dutch Resistance Veterans of World War II in Relation to Trait Anxiety and Depression," *Psychological Reports* 74, no. 1 (1994): 277.

²⁹⁶ Presser, 283.

came back. Just be happy that you were not here! We were so hungry!’”²⁹⁷ This statement showcases the cluelessness that the surviving Dutch Jews were faced with on return. Nothing about listening or empathizing with the survivors of an incredibly traumatic incident, just an ill-informed and anti-Semitic sentiment that tried to downplay the destruction of the Jewry and instead focus on the Dutch starvation. The *Hongerwinter*, or Dutch Famine of 1944-45, was an incredibly traumatic event in its own right, which caused the deaths of close to 20,000 Dutch citizens as well as malnutrition that had negative effects on future generations.²⁹⁸ However, it does not compare to the sheer scale and devastation wrought by the Holocaust.

Besides facing insensitivity and selfishness, the Dutch Jewry was expected to be thankful to their “saviors”, the Dutch majority. An unbelievably tone-deaf writer in the July 1945 issue of *De Patriot*, a resistance magazine, had this to say about the Jews postwar:

...all the Jews who have come out of hiding owe their lives to Dutch people who sheltered them for humanitarian reasons...The returning Jews may thank God for this assistance, and feel humbled...Now the Jews must abstain from excesses, and they should be constantly aware that they need to be thankful. They should demonstrate their gratitude by assuming responsibility for making amends to those who became victims themselves for helping Jews. They may thank God for their survival. It is also possible to lose one’s sympathy...Truly, they are not the only ones who had a hard time and suffered.²⁹⁹

Clearly, some Dutch citizens considered themselves to be the real victims in this situation, and truly wanted the Jews to make amends for the Dutch gentiles who sacrificed themselves to save the Jewry. The Jews are made out to be a burden to the Dutch. This fully encapsulates the passive anti-Semitic feeling that permeated the Netherlands throughout the Occupation, and borders on active anti-Semitism. Another example of insensitivity and disrespect occurred when the Dutch Theater, which had housed thousands of Jews awaiting

²⁹⁷ Hondius, “A Cold Reception”, 57.

²⁹⁸ Laura C. Schulz, “The Dutch Hunger Winter and the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107, no. 39 (2010): 16757–58.

²⁹⁹ Hondius, “A Cold Reception,” 59.

deportation to Westerbork, was reopened in November 1945.³⁰⁰ The remaining Dutch Jews were deeply offended by this and fought to have it shut down.³⁰¹ It took thirteen years before the Amsterdam city council established a commemorative site for victims of the Holocaust there instead.³⁰² Anti-Semitic feeling was rising within the Netherlands postwar as evidenced by these reluctant and downright disrespectful actions on the part of Dutch gentiles. Because of this, the main literature on this subject, Presser's *Ashes in the Wind*, was commissioned in 1950 by the Dutch Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies.³⁰³

These sort of interactions that Rita Koopman and others experienced following liberation demonstrate the anti-Semitism that was apparent throughout the Occupation of the Netherlands and even afterward. The Netherlands proclaimed itself to be a tolerant and welcoming country for centuries, especially to those of the Jewish faith. Although Jews were never entirely assimilated into the fabric of Dutch society, anti-Semitism was rare and almost completely non-violent, allowing Jews to become fairly successful within societal, political, and economic spheres. However, Hondius notes that there was certainly a distinction between who was Jewish and who was non-Jewish within the Netherlands: "In spite of the general integration of Dutch Jews into society, the awareness of a distance between the Jews and non-Jews was clearly present, and became explicit, for example, in remarks about the strangeness of Jewish religious customs, and also about the necessity for non-Jews to show extra caution when doing business

³⁰⁰ Kata Bohus, Atina Grossmann, Werner Hanak, and Mirjam Wenzel, *Our Courage – Jews in Europe 1945–48*, (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2020): 278.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf Dekker, "Jacques Presser, Egodocuments and the Personal Turn in Historiography," *European Journal of Life Writing* 7 August 2018: CP90–110. <https://doi.org/10.5463/ejlw.7.263>. Presser's *The Destruction of the Dutch Jewry* is considered to be the seminal work on this subject, along with Loe De Jong's broader and more encompassing *The History of the Netherlands During the Second World War*.

with Jews.”³⁰⁴ Here, it is shown that the Dutch gentiles were wary of their Jewish neighbors prior to the Holocaust.

The German Occupation presented the opportunity for the full extent of the Dutch insidious anti-Semitism to show itself: Dutch citizens, except for the leaders of the *Colonne Henneick*, were not perpetrators of the atrocities, yet they were direct and indirect collaborators with the Germans. Dutch citizens supported the German actions through active collaboration and also through passive bystanding. One might counter this statement by suggesting that passive bystanding is not as awful as it is made out in this argument. Some might defend it, for the reasons being that Dutch citizens had plenty to worry about besides what was happening to the Jewish population; it was not their responsibility, it was the fault of the government and police; and since some Dutch citizens did not actively support German actions, how was them not helping Dutch Jews just as bad? In this thesis, I argue that since the Dutch population had some idea of what was going on, based on the gentiles diaries, as well as the numerous reports given by the news and the Jews who escaped, they chose to ignore the gradual stripping of Jewish rights and ultimately the deportations that happened in broad daylight. As Otto Bene, the representative in the Netherlands for the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, “The Dutch population as a whole is against the transports, but from the outside, publicly, it shows a general lack of interest in them.”³⁰⁵ The Dutch citizens, for the most part, could not be bothered to help their struggling Jewish compatriots. This demonstrates passive anti-Semitism in its own right. Dutch gentiles saw the oppression taking place, and many simply thought “it is what it is” and did nothing more.

³⁰⁴ Hondius, “A Cold Reception,” 48.

³⁰⁵ Hondius, “A Cold Reception,” 51.

Over 100,000 Dutch Jews were deported and sent to concentration camps, where almost all of them were exterminated. Dutch citizens, while not the instigators, were direct and indirect collaborators with the Germans, and allowed the destruction of the Dutch Jewry to occur. This collaboration shows a level of anti-Semitism that was not thought to be present in Dutch society. However, the war brought out this hidden anti-Semitism and it manifested itself in direct ways such as the tracking down of Jewish individuals by the government and police, the selling and betrayal of Jews by citizens, and the transportation of Jews by the Dutch Railways. Indirect collaboration showed a level of anti-Semitism as well, as it consisted of citizens ignoring the crisis occurring all around them. Overall, the Dutch citizens passively stood by, and in some cases directly helped remove the Jewish population from the Netherlands, demonstrating an anti-Semitic attitude when confronted with three options: Resist, which a small percentage chose, collaborate, which some did, or do nothing, damning the Jewish citizens with their inaction, which most did.

There is much that has unfortunately been omitted in this argument. This is an incredibly broad, far-reaching topic that merits as much research and discussion as possible. I am aware that the argument made throughout is controversial and may seem unduly harsh on the citizens of the Netherlands during this period. As I have repeatedly stated throughout, the fault rests first and foremost with the German aggressors, who systematically planned the destruction of the Dutch and European Jewry. This is a fact. What is controversial is the role that the Dutch played in assisting with this destruction. How culpable is someone through indirect collaboration, especially considering the coercion and lack of options many felt they had? After the war, several indirect collaborators were tried and sentenced to prison. Asscher and Cohen, leaders of the Jewish Council, were both removed from the Jewish community, with many wanting to press

charges against them.³⁰⁶ Based on this, indirect collaborators, whether coerced or not, are criminals in the eyes of the court and community. Many government officials, while ordered to remain in their posts and not provoke the wrath of the Occupiers, did violate a document written by Prime Minister Gerbrandy (in exile at the time) in 1943 which explicitly stated that government officials should not cooperate with the occupying force in the destruction of the Dutch Jewry.³⁰⁷ This announcement came years after the initial Occupation and after the majority of Dutch Jews had been removed. Yet, what is shown is thousands of government officials committing treason. Almost none of them were tried, except for more visible figures like J. L. Lentz, creator of the registration system. In the eyes of the Dutch government, all of these officials should have been tried for helping the occupying force.³⁰⁸ They were not, as running the country afterward would have been impossible, which goes to show the full weight of the collaboration and anti-Semitic feeling that allowed so many to ignore what they saw in front of their own eyes.

³⁰⁶ They were denied the ability to hold any Jewish related office and were effectively kicked out of the Jewish community. Asscher even chose to not be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

³⁰⁷ Bovenkerk, "The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story," 241.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Constitution.org. "Union of Utrecht 1579"

https://constitution.org/1-Constitution/cons/dutch/Union_Utrecht_1579.html

DutchNews. "'They Were Proud of What They Were Doing'. A Dutch Holocaust Survivor's Story," April 13, 2020.

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2020/04/they-were-proud-of-what-they-were-doing-a-dutch-holocaust-survivors-story/>

Hillesum, Etty. *An Interrupted Life: The Diaries, 1941-1943 and Letters from Westerbork*. New York: Holt, 1996.

Marx, Erich. "That's how it was: A report on Westerbork and Bergen Belsen (1945)." *Irish Pages* 9, no. 2 (2015): 72-101.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "A Life in a Box." Accessed December 8, 2021.

<https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/echoes-of-memory/a-life-in-a-box>.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Eyewitness to History: Alfred (Al) Münzer." Accessed August 31, 2021.

[//www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/eyewitness-to-history/alfred-munzer](https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/eyewitness-to-history/alfred-munzer).

Yad Vashem. *Holocaust Survivor Testimonies: The Netherlands*. 2010.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbDnQQotsQs>.

Yad Vashem. "Interview with Dukie Gelber, Survivor from Holland." Accessed October 8, 2021.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/interviews/duky.html>.

Secondary Sources

Baggerman, Arianne and Rudolf Dekker. "Jacques Presser, Egodocuments and the Personal Turn in Historiography." *European Journal of Life Writing* 7 (August 13, 2018): 90-110.

<https://doi.org/10.5463/ejlw.7.263>.

Bank, Jan and Maaren van Buuren. *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: 1900, The Age of Bourgeois Culture*. Assen, NL: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

- Boas, Henriëtte. "Jews and the Amsterdam Diamond Trade." Edited by S. Lipschitz, Siegfried E. van Praag, Jozeph Michman, and Simona Edelman. *Studia Rosenthaliana* 26, no. 1/2 (1992): 214-223.
- Bohus, Kata, Atina Grossmann, Werner Hanak, and Mirjam Wenzel. *Our Courage – Jews in Europe 1945–48*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2020.
- Bovenkerk, Frank. "The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story: The Dutch Role in the Persecution of the Jews in World War Two." *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 34 (2000): 237-258.
- Braber, Ben. "Deportation (July 1942 – September 1944)." In *This Cannot Happen Here, Integration and Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, 1940-1945*. Amsterdam University Press, 2013: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp7hh.10>.
- Braun, Robert. "Religious Minorities and Resistance to Genocide: The Collective Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust." *American Political Science Association* 110, No. 1 (February 2016): 127-151.
- Daalder, Hans. "Dutch Jews in a segmented society." *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* X, (1978):
- Damsma, J. M. "Nazi's in the Netherlands: A Social History of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945." Ph.D. diss. University of Amsterdam, 2013.
- Damsma, Josje and Erik Schumacher, "'De Strijd Om Amsterdam'. Een Nieuwe Benadering in Het Onderzoek Naar De NSB." *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 124 (3) 2009: 329-48. <https://doi.org/10.18352/bmgn-lchr.7009>.
- Dawsey, Jason. "The Amsterdam General Strike of February 1941." The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. Accessed November 22, 2021.
- De Groen, J.H.M et al. "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Male and Female Dutch Resistance Veterans of World War II in Relation to Trait Anxiety and Depression." *Psychological Reports* 74, no. 1 (1994): 275-285.
- De Haan, Ido. "The Holocaust in the Netherlands." Oxford Bibliographies. Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199840731/obo-9780199840731-0050.xml>
- De Haan, Ido. "The Holocaust In The Netherlands: National Differences in a Western European Context." *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2019): 83-93.
- De Haan, Ido. "Imperialism, Colonialism, Genocide. The Dutch Case for an International History of the Holocaust." *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review*, 125 (2-3) 2010: 301-327.

De Jong, Louis. *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 1969.

Dekker, Paul. "From Pillarized Active Membership to Populist Active Citizenship: The Dutch Do Democracy." *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 30, no. 1 (February 2019): 74-85.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-00058-4>.

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure. "General Introduction Part II | Ehri Online Course in Holocaust Studies." Accessed March 22, 2020.
<https://training.ehri-project.eu/general-introduction-part-ii>.

Fein, Helen. *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust*. New York, 1979.

Goossens, Allert M.A. "War over Holland". <http://www.waroverholland.nl/index.php>?

Griffioen, Pim and Ron Zeller. "The Netherlands: The greatest number of Jewish victims in Western Europe." Anne Frank Website.
<https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/netherlands-greatest-number-jewish-victims-western-europe/>.

Gruter, Regina. "Verkeerde Liefde Voor Bevolkingsregisters." *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, April 23, 2013. <https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/fatale-liefde-voor-bevolkingsregisters/>.

Gerstenfeld, Manfred. "Apologies For Holocaust Behavior and Refusal to do so: The Dutch Case in an International Context." *Jewish Political Studies Review* 18, no. 3/4 (2006): 31-49.

Hirschfeld, Gerhard. "Collaboration and Attentism in the Netherlands 1940-41." *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 3 (1981): 467-486.

Hondius, Dienne. "A cold reception: Holocaust survivors in the Netherlands and their return." *Patterns of Prejudice* 28, no. 1 (1994): 47-65.

IHRA. "Yad Vashem and the Netherlands Sign Agreement for Contribution to Digitization of Righteous Among the Nations Material." Accessed April 25, 2022.
<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/news-archive/yad-vashem-and-netherlands-sign-agreement-contribution-digitization-righteous-among>.

Jewish Virtual Library. "The Netherlands (Holland) Virtual Jewish History Tour." Accessed April 7, 2021.
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-netherlands-virtual-jewish-history-tour>.

- Joods Cultureel Kwartier. "Amsterdam, City of Diamonds - Jewish Cultural Quarter." Accessed October 12, 2021. <https://jck.nl/en/exhibition/amsterdam-city-diamonds>.
- Joods Cultureel Kwartier. Utrecht - Jewish Cultural Quarter." Accessed September 23, 2021. <https://jck.nl/en/page/utrecht>.
- Klooster, Wim. "Communities of Port Jews and Their Contacts in the Dutch Atlantic World." *Jewish History* 20, no. 2 (2006): 129-145.
- Knippenberg, Hans. "Assimilating Jews in Dutch Nation-Building: The Missing 'Pillar.'" *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 93 (2002): 191-208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9663.00194>.
- Manning, Adrian F. "The Position of the Dutch Government in London up to 1942." *Journal of Contemporary History* 13, no. 1 (1978): 117-135.
- Mason, Henry L. "Testing Human Bonds Within Nations: Jews in the Occupied Netherlands." *Political Science Quarterly* 99, no. 2 (1984): 315-343.. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2150408>.
- McElligott, Anthony; Tim Kirk, and Ian Kershaw. *Working Towards the Führer: Essays in Honour of Sir Ian Kershaw*. Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Middelburg, Bart and René ter Steege. *Riphagen*. Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1990.
- Miller, Helen Hill. "Rotterdam - Reborn from Ruins". *National Geographic*. 118 (4): (October 1960) 526–553.
- NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies. BV, DE REE Archiefsystemen. "Oprichting En Organisatie van de Joodse Raad Voor Amsterdam." Accessed November 30, 2021. <https://www.archieven.nl/nl/zoeken?mivast=0&mizig=210&miadt=298&miaet=1&micode=182&minr=3027670&miview=inv2>.
- Núñez, Françoise. "Wie Maakten de Februaristaking Mogelijk?" *Historiek*, Accessed February 21, 2022. <https://historiek.net/wie-maakten-de-februaristaking-mogelijk-ze-zijn-verzwegen-en-vergeten/76111/>.
- Oliner, Samuel P. *Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. Simon and Schuster, 1992. ISBN 9781439105382.
- Presser, Jacob. *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry*. Amsterdam: Souvenir Press, 2010.

- Richardson, Annette. "Children, Youth and Schooling Disruption in the Netherlands During World War II." *Groniek* 148 (2000): 325-346.
- Rosenberg, A. "The Adoption of the Dutch Language by Dutch Jewry." *Studia Rosenthaliana* 30, no. 1 (1996): 151-163.
- Schoffer, I. "The Jews in the Netherlands: The Position of a Minority Through Three Centuries." *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15, no. 1 (March, 1981): 85-100.
- Schulz, Laura C. "The Dutch Hunger Winter and the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107, no. 39 (2010): 16757-16758.
- Schumacher, Erik. *1942: Oorlog op alle fronten*. Spectrum: 2017.
- Siegal, Nina. "Dutch Railroad Reckons With Holocaust Shame, 70 Years Later." *The New York Times*. September 28, 2019, sec. World.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/28/world/europe/ns-dutch-railway-holocaust.html>.
- Siegal, Nina, and Josephine Sedgwick. "The Lost Diaries of War." *The New York Times*. April 16, 2020, sec. Arts.
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/15/arts/dutch-war-diaries.html>.
- Staub, Ervin. *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1989.
- Tammes, Peter. "Jewish Immigrants in the Netherlands during the Nazi Occupation." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 37, no. 4 (2007): 543-562.
- Tammes, Peter and Peter Scholten. "Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands: A Historical-Sociological Analysis of Pre-World War II Jews and Contemporary Muslims." *Social Science History* 41, no. 3 (2017): 477-504.
- Ultee, Wout & Henk Flap. "De Nederlandse paradox: waarom overleefden zoveel Nederlandse joden de Tweede Wereldoorlog?" Published in Wippler, Reinhard, Hermanus Bernardus Gerardus Ganzeboom, and S. Lindenberg, eds. *Verklarende sociologie: opstellen voor Reinhard Wippler*. Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1996.
- United States Holocaust Museum. "Jewish Losses during the Holocaust."
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-losses-during-the-holocaust-by-country>.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The Netherlands." Accessed March 22, 2020.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-netherlands>.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Westerbork." Accessed September 23, 2021.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/westerbork>.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Willem Arondeus." Accessed April 25, 2022.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/willem-arondeus>.

Van der Boom, Bart. "'The Auschwitz Reservation': Dutch Victims and Bystanders and Their Knowledge of the Holocaust." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 31, no. 3 (December 1, 2017): 385–407. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcx042>.

Van Liempt, Ad. *Hitler's Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews*. New York: Berg, 2005.

Vanderwerff, Hans. "The Holocaust: Lest We Forget - Jewish Council." <http://www.holocaust-lestweforget.com/jewishcouncil.html>.

Verzets Resistance Museum. "The February Strike." Accessed November 22, 2021.
<https://www.verzetmuseum.org/en/kennisbank/the-february-strike>.

Wachsmann, Nikolaus. *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*. Great Britain: Little, Brown, and Co., 2015.

Yad Vashem. "About the Righteous." Accessed April 25, 2022.
<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/about-the-righteous.html>.

Yad Vashem. "Rescue and Righteous Among the Nations in Holland." Accessed April 25, 2022.
<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/resources/rescue-and-righteous-among-the-nations-in-holland.html>.