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This Cannot Happen Here

Integration and Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, 1940-1945

Ben Braber

Amsterdam University Press
2013

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Cover illustration: In February 1941 the Germans rounded up several hundred Jewish men in Amsterdam as a reprisal for street fighting, during which a National Socialist was fatally wounded, and an incident, during which allegedly shots were fired at a German patrol. Most of the captured men were killed soon after the round-up. Photograph Beeldbank WO2 – NIOD.

Cover design: Jos Hendrix, Groningen
Lay-out: Hanneke Kossen, Amsterdam

Amsterdam University Press English-language titles are distributed in the US and Canada by the University of Chicago Press.

ISBN 978 90 8964 583 8
e-ISBN 978 90 4851 997 2 (pdf)
e-ISBN 978 90 4851 998 9 (ePub)
NUR 688 / 716

For Finn

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research for their financial support, which enabled me to work for a year as a part-time Researcher in the Research Department of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies on the completion of the manuscript for this book.

I would also like to thank Peter Romijn, Conny Kristel, Dan Michman, Hans Blom, Madelon de Keizer and Norma Braber-McKinney, who read early drafts of the manuscript.

Introduction

In one of the first books on the history of Jews in the Netherlands during the Second World War, published in 1946, Sam de Wolff described how people reacted to being deported. He depicted an early morning scene in Amsterdam – it's 1942, two years after the Germans invaded the country, and the Nazis have started the deportation of the Jews from the Dutch capital. A group of Jews is getting ready for transportation to a concentration camp. One of them, a young man, starts singing and others join in:

> Red dawn. Your sacred glow
> has always brought us the day.
> Come, you light renewer
> into man's dark night.
>
> Let your glory give hope
> to those who struggle in the night.
> Give them courage in stepping forward
> until they reach daylight.[1]

The idea that good prevails over evil returned in De Wolff's 1954 memoirs when he quoted a poem seen on a mural in the building of the General Dutch Union of Workers in the Diamond Industry: "From misery the flame of resistance arises / The flame of resistance will devour the misery".[2] De Wolff mentioned this quote in his memoirs to explain how it was expected during the first half of the twentieth century that resistance to social misery would result in a regeneration of the Jewish masses. The idea of ending misery was of course also used to encourage the organisation of Jewish workers into trade unions and to promote Socialism. However, both quotations emphasise contemporary hopes, in the case of the first quote a Jewish revival, in the second a rise from social deprivation.

1 De Wolff, *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland*, p. 95. Compare Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 576. Apart from where indicated differently, the author has translated the text quoted in this book from Dutch and German sources.

2 De Wolff, *Voor het Land van Belofte*, p. 113. The poem is by Henriëtte Roland Holst.

De Wolff's quotes raise numerous questions, including the following. Did suffering automatically cause resistance? What forms did that resistance take? Why did it take these forms? Where they influenced by group traits or individual conditions? And, more specifically, how were Jewish reactions to persecution during the German occupation of the Netherlands determined by the social position of the Jews? This book aims to provide at least part of the answer to that last question by examining Jewish resistance in the Netherlands during the Second World War within the context of the integration of Jews[3] into Dutch society and the personal circumstances of those who took part in Jewish resistance.

Historiography and definition of Jewish resistance

This book uses a wide and inclusive definition of Jewish resistance. In doing so, it follows the existing literature. That historiography stretches back to the first years after the Second World War. Initially, it concentrated on armed uprisings. Then history writing moved on from an emotional and political debate with entrenched notions about how much resistance there was to a consensus among historians that Jewish resistance should be defined in broad terms. Views gradually became more balanced, enabling us, as Stone has written, to discuss Jewish resistance without over-emphasising its occurrence or, by implication, denigrating those who could or would not take part.[4] Furthermore, rather than in isolation, resistance is now usually examined within the context of an exploration of the life of Jews under National Socialist domination.

Establishing a consensus on a definition of Jewish resistance has taken several decades. Shortly after the Second World War popular writing dedicated to this subject centred mostly on ghetto uprisings and armed struggles in Eastern Europe. It often glorified individual and group acts in contrast to alleged collaboration or what was perceived as the passive behaviour of those who did not resist. During the next decade several academic historians joined the discussion. In his 1957 contribution, Dinur suggested that the National Socialists overestimated Jewish

3 To determine who can be regarded as a Jew, this book follows Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, pp. 1-2, who has defined as Jewish any person who considered or considers him or herself to be such, or who was or is regarded as such by his or her contemporaries. Compare Schöffer, "Introduction", p. 11.

4 Stone, "Introduction", p. 5. See also Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity*, pp. vii, x, 246-247. The overview of the historiography of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust in this book is not comprehensive and concentrates on literature on Western Europe. Where possible it uses books and articles accessible to an English-speaking audience. For a comprehensive review of the historiography see Rozett, "Jewish Resistance", in Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust*. See also Bloxham, Kushner (eds), *The Holocaust*. For works on general resistance, see Hawes, White (eds), *Resistance in Europe, 1939-1945*; Moore (ed.), *Resistance in Western Europe*; Semelin, *Unarmed against Hitler*.

participation in general resistance, while the Allies trivialised the participation of Jews in the fight against the Axis powers. A year later Friedman stressed the need for a broad definition of resistance, which surpassed acts of self-interest and included spiritual courage. In 1960 Dinur illustrated his earlier suggestion by listing examples of resistance.[5]

Initially, Dinur's and Friedman's work did not have a great public impact. However, in the early 1960s three publications brought the debate to a head: Bettelheim's *The Informed Heart*, Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* and Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.[6] These three works stressed the passiveness of the victims of the Holocaust. Hilberg, for example, noted an almost complete lack of resistance. He explained that Jews were unprepared and had unlearned the art of resistance during two thousand years of ghetto existence. Hilberg concluded that the Jewish reaction pattern consisted of an "attempt to avert action and, failing that, automatic compliance with orders."[7] One of Hilberg's main opponents was Robinson. He did not regard armed struggle as the sole form of resistance and argued that resistance should be more widely defined as an attempt to save human life and dignity.[8] Scholars such as Suhl and Steinberg[9] also refuted Hilberg's assertion. The controversy returned during the 1968 Yad Vashem conference on manifestations of Jewish resistance.[10] One of the outcomes of this conference was an ongoing discussion,[11] which has resulted in new definitions of Jewish resistance.

The continuous character of the debate on Jewish resistance can be illustrated by the work of Bauer.[12] In 1973 he tried to clarify different Jewish responses to the Nazi persecution, using the term "sanctification of life". This was not achieved by arms, but by life-affirming means and spirituality that defied persecution by "keeping body and soul together" and "bearing witness to faith".[13] Six years later, Bauer formulated a definition of Jewish resistance as any group action consciously taken in opposition to known or surmised laws, actions or intentions directed against

5 For Dinur and Friedman see Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, pp. 119-120.
6 Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*; Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*; Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.
7 Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, p. 666. The third edition of Hilberg's work was published in three volumes in 2003, but without major changes to this conclusion (see vol. III, pp. 1104-1118). See also Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, especially pp. 174-185 for his discussion of different forms of Jewish resistance.
8 For Robinson see Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, p. 125.
9 Suhl (ed.), *They Fought Back*; Steinberg, *La Révolte des justes*.
10 Kohn, Grubstein (eds), *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust*. See also Michel, "Jewish Resistance and the European Resistance Movement".
11 See, for example, Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews, 1933-1945*; Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*.
12 Bauer, *They Chose Life*; idem, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness*; idem, *A History of the Holocaust*; idem, *Jewish Reactions to the Holocaust*; idem, *Rethinking the Holocaust*.
13 Bauer, *They Chose Life*, pp. 32-33.

the Jews by Germans and their supporters.[14] However, in 2001 he questioned the validity of his 1979 definition because it omitted individual acts.[15] In addition to Bauer, during the 1970s and 1980s several scholarly studies[16] attempted to formulate what should be regarded as Jewish resistance, resistance by Jews or Jewish participation in general resistance.

Michman and Marrus formulated a more approximate and inclusive definition by stressing that Jewish resistance took many forms and worked on different levels. Michman summarised the discussion in 1995,[17] drawing parallels to similar debates about general resistance in the historiography of the Second World War, but explaining differences between Jews and non-Jews. He also clarified the Hebrew term *amidah* (stand or steadfastness), which was used increasingly to represent all forms of Jewish resistance. Michman argued that *amidah* encompasses three broad categories: armed, conscious and committed resistance, such as ghetto uprisings; non-violent resistance that was active, organised, committed and conscious, such as rescue efforts; and non-violent resistance that was unorganised and intuitive, such as self-preservation and the sanctification of life.

To elucidate different types of Jewish resistance, Marrus suggested the application of a slightly more detailed classification, first presented by Rings[18] in relation to general resistance. It encompasses symbolic, polemic, defensive, offensive and enchained resistance. In the categories suggested by Marrus, symbolic resistance consists of gestures and expressions, including spiritual acts and the sanctification of life, which showed that people refused to be terrorised in everyday life and remained committed to their religion or culture. Polemic resistance goes further as people raised their voice in protest, usually at great risk to themselves, for example, through public statements and clandestine publications. This category also includes going into hiding and committing suicide as the ultimate act of defiance. Defensive resistance is comprised of giving aid to others and the defence of lives and values by individuals and groups, initially through permitted activity but increasingly through clandestine work. Offensive resistance consists of armed acts. Jewish participation in the general (that is, not specifically Jewish) resistance falls in the polemic, defensive and offensive resistance categories. In contrast, enchained resistance is the desperate fight of those Jews who were cut off, for

14 Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness*, p. 27.

15 Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, p. 119.

16 For an overview of these studies, see Rozett, "Jewish Resistance", in Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, p. 352. A later study on this subject is Poznanski, "Reflections of Jewish Resistance and Jewish Resistants in France". See also Rozett, "Jewish Resistance", in Gutman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*; Rohrlich, "Introduction", p. 1.

17 See Michman, *Holocaust Historiography*, pp. 217-248, which contains a translation of the 1995 article, originally published in Hebrew.

18 Rings, *Life with the Enemy*.

example, in ghettos and camps, to defend their honour or fight for the future, without help and practically no hope of survival.[19]

Following Michman and Marrus, historians explored the subject of Jewish resistance within the totality of Jewish life under the Nazis.[20] Comparative studies also offered insights into the ways in which forms of Jewish resistance developed. For example, as Moore[21] indicated, Jewish rescue and aid efforts across Western Europe could only succeed with non-Jewish assistance, which was, among other factors, influenced by pre-war relationships between Jewish communities and non-Jewish populations. The international debate also developed into a review of Jewish resistance within the framework of integration of Jews into the societies of the countries in which they lived. With groundbreaking studies that concentrate on France and relate Jewish resistance to issues such as social position, group traits and urbanisation, Poznanski has been an outstanding exponent of this new direction.[22] Although, according to Stone,[23] the resulting literature is not as large as one might imagine, we have gained a greater understanding of Jewish resistance in Western Europe.

Dutch historiography of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands

Meanwhile, despite several relatively early publications on the wartime fate of the Jews in the Netherlands, Jewish resistance has been a somewhat neglected topic in Dutch historiography. With *Geschiedenis der joden in Nederland: Laatste Bedrijf* in 1946 De Wolff was one of the first to broach this subject. Despite his description of a reaction to deportation (quoted at the start of this introduction), De Wolff mainly related resistance to the uprisings in Warsaw and other Polish towns, which did not occur in the Netherlands, but in his opinion would have been more honourable than the passiveness he had witnessed in his own country. De Wolff's book was followed by *De oorlog die Hitler won* by Wielek,[24] an attempt to document and describe the wartime persecution without elaborating on the subject

19 Marrus, "Varieties of Jewish Resistance". See also Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust", pp. 92-103.

20 See, for example, Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*, and *Volume 2: The Years of Extermination, 1939-1945*; Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance*; Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity*; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*; Tzur, "Resistance in Western Europe"; Yahil, *The Holocaust*. See also Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust*; Tec, *Jewish Resistance*. Glass' work is on Eastern Europe, but it provides useful insights.

21 Moore, "The Rescue of Jews from Nazi Persecution"; idem, *Survivors*.

22 A useful introduction is Poznanski, "The Geopolitics of Jewish Resistance in France". See also Poznanski, *Jews in France during World War II*; idem, *Propagandes et persécutions*. Compare Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*.

23 Stone, *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, p. 5.

24 Wielek, *De oorlog die Hitler won*.

of Jewish resistance. These two books were supplemented in 1950 by Herzberg's *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging 1940-1945*.[25] During the same year Presser started the work that resulted in 1965 in his *Ondergang: De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom 1940-1945*.[26] Four years later De Jong began publishing the volumes of his *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*.[27] In their studies of the Jews in the Netherlands during the war or, in the case of De Jong, the Dutch kingdom as a whole. Herzberg, Presser and De Jong also dealt with Jewish resistance.

Kristel has examined the background against which Herzberg, Presser and De Jong produced their studies, including the international debate on Jewish resistance described above.[28] She has pointed out that Herzberg was the first of the trio to discuss the themes of passiveness and resistance, well before the controversy of the early 1960s caused by the publications from Bettelheim, Hilberg and Arendt. Herzberg concluded that there were no opportunities for armed or organised resistance for the Dutch Jews during the war. Instead, he highlighted their spiritual mobilisation, the flourishing of Jewish cultural life and the return of many to Judaism as reactions to the persecution.[29] In his later work, during and after the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961, Herzberg returned to these themes, mentioning the attempts of victims and their spiritual leaders to maintain dignity as a traditional defence mechanism that was re-applied during the Holocaust.

The Eichmann trial motivated Presser to publish two provocative theses on Jewish resistance in the Netherlands. Writing in a newspaper in 1961, Presser utilised the work of Dinur and Friedman. He asserted that the resistance of Jews in the Netherlands during the Second World War was as much overestimated by the Germans as the Dutch underestimated it, and that the resistance of Jews in the Netherlands relatively exceeded that of non-Jews. Presser also stressed the importance of spiritual resistance. In *Ondergang* he revisited this subject, mentioning various instances of resistance, conducted by individuals and groups.[30]

Like Herzberg, De Jong found that armed resistance against the deportations was impossible, but he argued that this does not imply a general passive attitude among the Jews. De Jong regularly pointed at the large numbers of Jews who ignored the summons for deportation, fled the Netherlands or went into hiding. Unlike Herzberg and Presser, De Jong did not discuss spiritual resistance. Instead, throughout his vast work De Jong mentioned the participation of Jews

25 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging, 1940-1945*.
26 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 5.
27 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. In several of these volumes, notably vol. VIII, *Gevangenen en gedeporteerden*, De Jong has dealt with the persecution of the Jews.
28 Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, pp. 85-134.
29 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging, 1940-1945*, pp. 226-230.
30 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, pp. 3-18.

in the general resistance and gave detailed descriptions of the background and activity of individuals.

Several publications dedicated to Jewish resistance in the Netherlands appeared during the 1980s and early 1990s. Using a variety of primary sources, Avni, Brasz, Daams, Ofek, Keny and Pinkhof, and Regenhardt and Groot reconstructed the activity of young Zionists, while Van de Kar described his own resistance work as well as the activity of others who rescued Jewish children, and who have also been the subjects of research by Roegholt and Wiedeman and Schellekens.[31] Although the conclusions of these authors contain useful information, they mostly examined individual Jews, single groups or specific locations – in contrast to my own more comprehensive work.[32] However, after the publications of the early 1990s, the attention for Jewish resistance in the Netherlands ebbed away and with the exception of Michman and Moore,[33] the novel approaches to Jewish resistance attempted internationally have not been adopted for the Netherlands. Recent additions to the historiography of the Jews in the Netherlands by Moore and Romijn[34] incorporated the existing literature on Jewish resistance without offering new views on this topic.

The lack of ongoing attention among historians and the general public for the subject of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands remains largely unexplained. Although it does not lie within the scope of this book to find an explanation, some clarification can be obtained from De Haan's remarks about Dutch recollection of the persecution of the Jews during the war. De Haan has suggested that in the Netherlands a national post-war perspective influenced the historiography on wartime persecution, which gave Jews few opportunities to bear witness. In order to be heard after the war, Jews often had to adopt the role of passive victims.[35] Social memory, a theoretical concept used by social scientists such as Fentress

31 Avni, "Zionist Underground in Holland and France and the Escape to Spain"; Brasz, Daams Czn, Ofek, Keny, Pinkhof, *De jeugdalijah van het Paviljoen Loosdrechtse Rade 1939-1945*; Van de Kar, *Joods Verzet*; Regenhardt, Groot, *Om nooit te vergeten*; Roegholt, Wiedeman, *Walter Suskind and a Theatre in Holland*; Schellekens, "Op zoek naar Walter Süskind. See also Cohen, Cochavi (eds), *Studies on the Shoah*.

32 Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*. Part of the research for that book was funded by the Jewish Resistance Committee, which was founded in 1986, causing a brief public debate in the Netherlands about Jewish resistance (see C. Kristel, "Het Monument Joods Verzet 1940-1945").

33 Michman, *Holocaust Historiography*; Moore, *Survivors*. Both studies are not solely dedicated to the Netherlands. Moore offers an understanding of why and how Jews in different countries developed strategies for survival in terms of rescue and aid work, but he does not deal with other forms of resistance.

34 Moore, *Victims and Survivors*; Romijn, "The War, 1940-1945".

35 De Haan, *Na de Ondergang*. This is confirmed by the findings of a study by H. Grünfeld of press articles from 1946 to 1988, which was reported in the *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad*, 10/11/1989. During the 1940s and 1950s, the general press offered a very one-sided picture of Jews as victims, which became more diverse during the 1960s with more attention for Jewish culture and resistance during the war but after 1972 once again portrayed Jews solely as victims. See also Brasz, "After the Second World War", notably pp. 385-390.

and Wickham,[36] may have played a role in that development. According to this idea about how information is transmitted among individuals and groups and from one generation to another, much of what people remember is attached to membership of social groups. In the case of the Jews in the post-war Netherlands, their recollection of wartime events could have been bound up with their position in Dutch society after the war, while non-Jews contrasted what they saw as Jewish powerlessness to the alleged power of the general resistance, which was acclaimed after 1945. This suggests that as Jews were regarded mainly as passive victims, there was less interest in their resistance. However, while not fully explained, the prolonged lack of attention for Jewish resistance in the Netherlands continues to obscure our view of the Dutch past.

This book wants to reinvigorate the debate about Jewish resistance in the Netherlands. The historiographical changes in the international discourse outlined above have shown that a focus on the relationship between integration and resistance and a comparative approach can broaden our understanding of Jewish resistance. That line of enquiry has not yet been explored thoroughly and comprehensively for the study of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands. This book wants to correct that oversight. However, an in-depth appreciation of Jewish resistance can only be achieved when the focus on integration and a comparative approach are combined with attention for individual circumstances such as the personal life and character of those who took part in Jewish resistance. Like most history, the study of Jewish resistance is about people. The motivation for people's actions does not necessarily arise from their place in society and group membership, but it can also be born out of their personal conditions. A combination of a focus on integration, a comparative approach and a biographical method therefore enables us to analyse more fully the factors that shaped the forms of individual acts of resistance and the activity of members of resistance groups.

Integration: a conceptual framework

So, this book wants to further the debate about Jewish resistance in the Netherlands by examining this subject against the background of the integration of Jews into the Dutch society, and while reviewing group traits, it also pays attention to individual circumstances that influenced the men and women in the Jewish resistance. This book does not have the intention to make a contribution to the theoretical discussion about processes of integration of minorities into modern

36 Fentress, Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 7.

Western European societies, which is also the subject of an ongoing and often heated political and public debate.[37] Instead, it utilises a specially designed conceptual framework to examine the social position of the Jews in the Netherlands before 1940. In this methodological approach integration is defined as a process through which a minority group becomes part of a society without necessarily losing the group's original identity and characteristics, and during which the wider society itself undergoes changes by absorbing the minority.

Many factors can influence such a process of integration. These factors include the attitudes and behaviour of the general population towards members of the integrating group and their repercussions for the behaviour of that group. Integration can also depend on other factors. These encompass the cohesion of the integrating group and the wider society as well as the preparedness and readiness of the general population and the integrating group to undergo changes. Other factors include the economic, social, political and cultural developments of the society in which integration takes place. Furthermore, the education of children can help to determine the speed and course of integration. Some of these factors can influence each other, while others occur independently. There can be interaction as well as a lack of contact between the general population and members of the integrating group. The result is usually a multi-layered, non-linear and long-term process.

During a process of integration assimilation and acculturation can take place. Jewish assimilation remains difficult to define,[38] but it ranges from absorption and incorporation of one or more non-Jewish ideas or influences to Jews becoming like non-Jews and the submergence of Jews in non-Jewish groups. Jewish acculturation can be more simply defined as the adoption of or adaptation to non-Jewish culture by Jews. However, in contrast to assimilation and acculturation, integration suggests a two-way process with cultural transfer between general population and integrating group. As the mutual influence between Jews and non-Jews becomes apparent in this book, it uses a concept of integration rather than assimilation or acculturation.[39]

The integration of Jews into Dutch society before 1940 is subject of an ongoing debate. De Haan, Leydesdorff and Schöffer have recently made contributions to this discussion, questioning whether Jews were integrated, while earlier Boas had

37 See, for example, Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*.

38 The term assimilation has also acquired negative connotations. For a recent discussion of this concept in Dutch Jewish historiography, see Gans, *De weg terug*.

39 I have utilised this concept in Braber, *Jews in Glasgow, 1879-1939*. A similar concept is used in Schöffer, "Introduction" (see p. 11). For a discussion of theories on integration in a wider perspective, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Banton, *Racial Theories*; Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*; Hutchinson, Smith (eds), *Nationalism*; Okely, *Own or Other Culture*.

suggested that integration had been apparent rather than real.[40] This book does not take sides in that debate, but to review the position of the Jews in the pre-war Netherlands, it examines the following three yardsticks to measure the speed and course of the process of integration of Jews into Dutch society: the attitudes and behaviour of the general Dutch population towards Jews and Jewish responses; the participation of Jews in the economic, political and artistic life of the Netherlands; and the changes in Dutch Jewish rituals, habits and lifestyles.

The study of this subject is complicated as the integration of Jews took place in a changing society.[41] In themselves, some of the changes in the Dutch society were outcomes of other integration processes. The economy of the Netherlands was becoming an integrated part of a wider Western European and eventually global entity. There were growing cultural contacts with other countries. Within Dutch society religious minorities such as the Roman Catholics were integrating. The middle and working classes were on their way to emancipation. The role of women in all areas of society grew. Just as the process of integration of Jews, the integration of religious minorities, working classes and women into Dutch society had many facets, did not develop in a straight line and took place over a long period of time, being by no means complete on the eve of the Second World War. Furthermore, groups such as the Dutch Socialists and Communists formed part of international movements. Similarly, Orthodox, Liberal and Zionist Jews in the Netherlands were part of international Jewish movements. Integration into these movements was therefore an option for individuals and groups. As Dutch citizens, participants in the economy, trade unionists, political players and contributors to culture, Jews participated in all these processes. However, the manner of participation differed for individuals and groups, because the Jewish population of the Netherlands before 1940 cannot be regarded as a monolithic block. As this book will show, there were marked differences in ethnic origin, religious adherence, education, age, residence, economic position and social standing.

Brief international comparisons

To bring out what was specifically Dutch, this book makes brief comparisons with developments in Germany and two other Western European countries that

40 Boas, "The Persecution and Destruction of Dutch Jewry, 1940-1945"; De Haan, *Na de Ondergang*, pp. 227-232; Leydesdorff, "The Veil of History"; Schöffer, "Introduction". See also Schöffer, "Nederland en de joden in de jaren dertig in historisch perspectief".

41 For overviews of the changes in Dutch society, see Blom, *Crisis, Bezetting en Herstel*; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 1; De Keizer (with Roels), *Staat van veiligheid*; Kossman, *The Low Countries, 1780-1940*.

were occupied during the war – Belgium and France, while some consideration is given to Italy.[42] This comparison, based on a selection of publications,[43] concerns both integration and Jewish resistance, with, for example, attention for the

42 This comparison could be extended to Denmark and Norway. However, these countries are omitted here, because the numbers of Jews in these two countries were relatively very small (respectively some 7,500 and just over 2,000) and the Danish and Norwegian circumstances differed too much from those in the selected Western European countries to make such a comparison feasible. For Denmark, see N. Bamberger, *The Viking Jews: A History of the Jews of Denmark*, New York, 1983; A. Buckser, *After the Rescue: Jewish Identity and Community in Contemporary Denmark*, New York, 2003; L. Goldberger (ed.), *The Rescue of the Danish Jews: Moral Courage under Stress*, New York, 1987; J. Haestrup, *Passage to Palestine: Young Jews in Denmark*, Odense, 1983; E. Levine, *Darkness over Denmark: The Danish Resistance and the Rescue of the Jews*, New York, 2000; E.E. Werner, *A Conspiracy of Decency: The Rescue of the Danish Jews during World War Two*, Westview, 2003; L. Yahil, "Methods of Persecution: A Comparison of the 'Final Solution' in Holland and Denmark", *Scripta Hierosylimitana*, vol. XXIII, 1972, pp. 279-300; idem, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy*, Philadelphia, 1969. For Norway, see Gutman, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, vol. III, pp. 1066-1067; R. Ulstein, *Svensketraffiken. Flyktinger till Sverige 1940-43*, Oslo, 1974.

43 The following secondary sources have been used for these comparisons.
– Belgium Jewry: Abicht, "Antwerp: the Jerusalem of the West"; idem, *De joden van Antwerpen*; idem, *De joden van België*; Doorslaer, Debruyne, Seberechts, Wouters (Saerens), *La Belgique docile*; Meinen, *Die Shoah in Belgien*; Michman (ed.), *Belgium and the Holocaust*; Saerens, *Vreemdelingen in een wereldstad*; Schreiber, Van Doorslaer (eds), *Les curateurs du ghetto*.
– Jewish resistance in Belgium: Briey, *Le Comité de Défense des Juifs*; Steinberg, *Le Comité de Défense des Juifs en Belgique 1942-1944*; Steinberg, *L'Etoile et le Fusil*; idem, *Extermination, Souvetage et Résistance de Juifs en Belgique*.
– French Jewry: Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution*; Cohen, *The Burden of Conscience*; Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*; Graetz, *The Jews in nineteenth-century France*; Malino, Wasserstein (eds), *The Jews in Modern France*; Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*; Marrus, Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*.
– Jewish resistance in France: Diamant, *Les Juifs dans la résistance francaise 1940-1944*; Kieval, "Legality and Resistance in Vichy France. The Rescue of Jewish Children"; Latour, *The Jewish Resistance in France 1940-1944*; Lazare, *La Résistance juive en France*; idem, *Le Livre des Justes*; idem, *Rescue as Resistance*; Levy, "La résistance juive en France: de l'enjeu de mémoire a l'histoire critique"; Poznanski, "A Methodological Approach to the Study of Jewish Resistance in France"; idem, "Anti-Semitism and the Rescue of Jews in France. An Odd Couple?"; idem, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*; idem, *Propagandes et persécutions*; idem, "Reflections on Jewish Resistance and Jewish Resistants in France"; idem, "The Geopolitics of Jewish Resistance in France".
– German Jewry: Berkowitz, "Zion's Cities. Projections of Urbanism and German-Jewish Self-Consciousness, 1906-1933"; Hecht, *Deutsche Juden und Antisemitismus in der Weimarer Republik*; Jud, "Zwischen Integration and Ausgrenzung. Zur ambivalenten Situation der judischen Bevolkerung Berlins während der Endphase der Weimarer Republik 1930 bis 1933"; Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918-1933*; Meyer, Brenner (eds), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*; Mosse, *Germans and Jews;* Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Elite 1820-1935*; Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany;* Paucker (ed.), *Die Juden in nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*; Pulzer, *Jews and the German State*; Volkov, *Germans, Jews and Antisemites*; Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*; Zimmermann, *Deutsche gegen Deutsche*.
– Jewish resistance in Germany: Eschwege, "Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime"; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*; Kwiet, Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*; Lamberti, "The Jewish Defense in Germany after the National-Socialist Seizure of Power"; Nicosia, "Resistance and Self-Defence: Zionism and Antisemitism in Inter-war Germany"; Niewyk, "Self-Defence and German-Jewish Identities"; Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance 1933-1945*; idem, "Some Notes on Resistance"; idem, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*; Stolzfus, *Resistance of the Heart*.

ways in which expressions of attitudes towards Jews in the wider population were expressed or the forms that Jewish resistance took in different countries. Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Italy came at different times under the rule of the National Socialists and the anti-Jewish policies and measures in these countries varied, as Griffioen and Zeller[44] have demonstrated. Nevertheless, some parallels can be drawn and dissimilarities can be pointed out. However, because of space restrictions, this book cannot review developments and events in Germany, Belgium, France and Italy in great detail. After all, the reason for the comparison is simply to establish which elements of integration and Jewish resistance in the Netherlands can be regarded as specifically Dutch.

It is also not the purpose of this book to explain why the loss of Jewish life during the Holocaust was relatively very high in the Netherlands compared to other occupied countries in Western Europe. Vital has compiled a comparison of national figures on the percentage of Jews that did not survive the war. They show that in the Netherlands 71 per cent perished, compared to 44 per cent in Belgium and 22 per cent in France.[45] Other studies[46] have sought to answer the question why so many Jews were deported from the Netherlands and died in slave labour and death camps. They argue that national conditions, and differences in the German command structures and deportation policies caused the variations and suggest that Jewish resistance in the Netherlands could achieve very little in terms of saving significant numbers of people in an environment of overwhelming German force, collaboration, willingness of local authorities to ignore or support the persecution of the Jews, late emergence of large general resistance movements, and lack of hiding places, escape routes and assistance from non-Jews.

– Italian Jewry: DiNapoli (ed.), *The Italian Jewish Experience*; Ellwood, *Italy 1943-1945*; Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy 1943-1988*; Hughes, *Prisoners of Hope*; Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews*; Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy*.

– Jewish resistance in Italy: Cooke (ed.), *The Italian Resistance*; Zimmerman (ed.), *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1922-1945*; Zucotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust*.

For a comprehensive study of European Jewry before 1939, see B. Wasserstein, *On the Eve*.

44 Griffioen, Zeller, *Vergelijking van Jodenvervolging in Nederland, Frankrijk en België, 1940-1945*.

45 Vital, *A People Apart*, p. 897. Vital's figures are possibly too low, notably for the Netherlands. For a wider perspective, see Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War*; idem, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*.

46 Blom, "The Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands; Croes, "The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival"; Griffioen, Zeller, "A Comparative Analysis of the Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands and Belgium during the Second World War"; idem, "Anti-Jewish Policy and Organization of the Deportations in France and the Netherlands, 1940-1944"; idem, *Vergelijking van Jodenvervolging in Nederland, Frankrijk en België, 1940-1945*; Sijes, "Several Observations Concerning the Position of the Jews in Occupied Holland during World War II". See also Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*; Seibel, "The Strength of Perpetrators".

Secondary sources and biographical material

The analysis in this book is largely based on secondary sources. There is a substantial body of work on Jewish history in the Netherlands during the modern era. Recent authors on this subject include: Blom, Fuks-Mansfeld and Schöffer; Daalder; M.H. Gans; Leydesdorff; Meijer; Michman, Beem and Michman; and E.E. Gans.[47] These historians have used different approaches. Meijer has been rather negative about the Jewish establishment and developments within Dutch Jewry. M.H. Gans has provided a more positive picture. Gans as well as Michman, Beem and Michman have resurrected in the historical memory the Jewish communities that were lost during the war. Leydesdorff has concentrated on the Jewish proletariat in Amsterdam. Daalder has pioneered the place of the Jews within the segmented Dutch population. Blom, Fuks-Mansfeld and Schöffer have presented a broad canvass, although their study dwells on the minority status of the Jews in the Netherlands and processes of integration, assimilation and acculturation. E.E. Gans has reviewed identity issues for Jewish Socialists and Socialist Zionists.[48] With all their differences, these works provide many useful insights into the process of integration.

Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive study of Jews in the Netherlands under German occupation comparable with Kaplan's study of daily life for the Jews in Nazi Germany.[49] It is not the purpose of this book to fill that gap, because this is a subject that warrants a separate treatment. However, sufficient quantity and quality of evidence to facilitate an analysis of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands is provided by the secondary sources highlighted above as well as the already mentioned publications by De Wolff, Herzberg, Presser, De Jong and others such as Avni, Brasz, Daams, Ofek, Keny and Pinkhof, Regenhardt and Groot, Roegholt and Wiedeman, Schellekens, Moore and myself.

This book also uses information from biographies, memoirs and recollections of survivors. Problems with the use of this type of material are well documented – memories, for example, may be tainted by experiences gained later in life and

47 Blom, Fuks-Mansfeld, Schöffer (eds), *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands*; Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society"; Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*; idem, *Memorboek*; Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*; Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*; Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken". New research and conference publications continuously add to the literature on the history of the Jews in the Netherlands. See, for example, collections of essays such as Brasz, Kaplan (eds), *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others*; Israel, Salverda (eds), *Dutch Jewry*; Michman, Levie (eds), *Dutch Jewish History*.

48 See also Gans, *Gojse nijd & joods narcisme*; idem, *Jaap en Ischa Meijer*. The first work is an extended essay on anti-Semitism in the Netherlands, which concentrates on the period after 1945. The second title forms the first part of a double biography of the historian Jaap Meijer and his son Ischa, a well-known publicist.

49 Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*.

can form part of attempts to make sense of what had happened in the past.[50] Nevertheless, when treated with care, biographies, memoirs and recollections can be fruitful sources for information about decisive events and other developments that steered a person's life in a specific direction. Furthermore, they provide us with useful examples to illustrate different forms of resistance.

In summary, this book aims to answer the question whether and how the integration of Jews into Dutch society influenced their resistance to persecution during the German occupation of the Netherlands in the Second World War. If it cannot be found that social position and group traits determined Jewish resistance, this study wants to highlight other factors, such as individual circumstances, that influenced resistance. For this purpose, it uses the broad and inclusive definition of Jewish resistance formulated by Michman and distinguishes the different forms of resistance categorised by Marrus. It applies a specially designed conceptual framework of integration and three yardsticks to measure the speed and direction of the integration process: attitudes towards Jews in the general population and Jewish responses; participation of Jews in the wider economy, politics and art world; and changes in Jewish ritual, habits and lifestyles. It makes brief international comparisons to bring out what were typically Dutch phenomena. It critically engages with the existing literature and biographical material to further the debate about Jewish resistance. In short, this book sets out to review integration, determine what was specifically Dutch, explain how different forms of Jewish resistance came into being in the Netherlands, and ask how integration and personal circumstances shaped that resistance.

50 For a discussion of the problems and use of oral testimony and written memoirs for the history of Jews in the Netherlands, see Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, pp. 25-57.

PART I

Integration

1 Attitudes towards Jews and Jewish responses

In 1916 the Socialist trade union leader Isaäc Goudsmit asked to be present at the founding meeting of a local branch of the Dutch Roman Catholic Union of Bakers and Workers in the Cacao, Chocolate and Sugar Industry. His request was refused, because it was said about him: "[...] *aan 's mans neus kunt gij zien, dat hij niet van 't houtje is*" (Looking at his nose will tell you he is not a Roman Catholic).[1] This reference to a person's Jewishness, of which the shape of his nose was said to bear witness, was typical of negative attitudes towards Jews in the general Dutch population. These attitudes developed over time, sometimes quickly and notably so during the 1930s when they once again made Jews stand out.

A numerically declining and ageing group

Jews formed only a very small, yet highly concentrated proportion of the Dutch population. It was also a numerically declining and ageing group. The last pre-war census in 1930 recorded 111,917 persons in the Netherlands as members of a Jewish religious congregation.[2] That was about 3,000 fewer than in 1920. The Jewish proportion of the total Dutch population had fallen too – from 2.15 per cent in 1889 to 1.41 per cent in 1930. Among the factors that caused the numerical and proportional decline was a birth rate that fell quicker among Jews than non-Jews. On the eve of the Second World War the Jews in the Netherlands also constituted an ageing group. The share of the cohort consisting of persons up to 10 years old in the Jewish population fell from 16 per cent in 1920 to 14 per cent in 1930, while in the total population it declined from 23 to 21 per cent. Most of the Jews in

1 Quoted in Schrover, *Het vette, het zoete en het wederzijdse profijt*, p. 213.

2 The census figures, collected and presented by the statistician and politician Emanuel Boekman, have been summarised and expanded in Cohen, "Boekman's Legacy". Historians have expressed doubt about the use of these figures, for example, because in the case of the Jews they only include members of religious congregations. See Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, p. 69. See also Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society", p. 47; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, p. 417; Kruijt, "Het Jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving"; idem, *De onkerkelijkheid in Nederland*.

the Netherlands in 1930 were native born.[3] However, by 1940 their number was increased by some 15,000 refugees from Germany, Austria and German-occupied countries, who had found a place of residence in the Netherlands.[4]

In terms of size, proportion of the total population and composition the Jews in the Netherlands differed from Jews in Germany, Belgium, France and Italy. In 1939 an estimated 70,000 Jews lived in Belgium and about 300,000 in France (both less than 1 per cent of the total population). In 1933 some 500,000 Jews resided in Germany (also less than 1 per cent of the total population), and the figure dropped to 240,000 in 1939. In that year about 44,500 Jews lived in Italy (just over 0.1 per cent of the total population).[5] With the exception of Germany, which lost areas with significant Jewish populations as a result of the First World War, between the start of the twentieth century and the start of the Second World War the Jewish populations of these countries had grown. In 1900 there had been about 12,000 Jews in Belgium, almost 90,000 in France and just over 34,000 in Italy, with almost 600,000 in Germany.

The indigenous Jewish populations in these countries, notably Germany, showed similar patterns of demographic transition as in the Netherlands, with, for example, declining fertility figures. However, unlike the Netherlands – and Italy for that matter – Germany, France and Belgium were all major places of settlement for relatively large numbers of Jews who left Eastern Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century – a population movement that was reinforced during the First World War and lasted well into the twentieth century, including refugees from persecution, pogroms and war in Poland and Russia. In Germany recent immigrants made up about one-fifth of the Jewish population by 1933. Two-thirds of the Jews in France in 1940 were of foreign birth. Only between 5 to 10 per cent of the Jews in Belgium had Belgian nationality. After 1933 France and Belgium, like the Netherlands, became temporary safe havens for many Jews who fled Germany and Austria.

Concentration and urbanisation

Concentration characterised Dutch Jewry and urbanisation among Jews in the Netherlands was much more intensive than among non-Jews. About 80 per cent of all Jews in the Netherlands in 1930 resided in the two western provinces of

3 Cohen, "Boekman's Legacy", p. 521. Compare Hofmeester, *Van Talmoed tot Statuut*, pp. 15-18; Michman, Beem, Michman, pp. 125, 382-383.

4 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. v, 496; Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 831; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, pp. 64, 418.

5 Compare Vital, *A People Apart*, p. 897.

North and South Holland. In North Holland the main place of Jewish residence was Amsterdam – some 65,000 Jews lived in the capital (58 per cent of the Jewish total; in contrast, just under 10 per cent of the total Dutch population was concentrated in Amsterdam). However, the number also declined here – it decreased with more than 3,000 in the years between 1920 and 1930 (the Jewish share of the Amsterdam population dropped from 12 per cent in 1900 to 9 per cent in 1930). Only one-fifth of Dutch Jewry resided in places with less than 100,000 inhabitants. Outside the capital there were several towns with sizeable Jewish populations. Rotterdam and The Hague, both in the province of South Holland, each had about 10,000 Jewish inhabitants. Elsewhere, Groningen had 2,000 Jewish residents and Arnhem, Utrecht and Apeldoorn each 1,000.[6]

Concentration and urbanisation also occurred in the other countries. Before 1933 urbanisation had become an outstanding feature of German Jewry. When Hitler came to power some 160,000 Jews lived in Berlin, about one-third of German Jewry, and about 26,000 resided in Frankfurt, with lesser but still significant numbers in Breslau, Hamburg, Cologne and Leipzig. In 1940 about 29,500 Jews, 54 per cent of the total Jewish population in Belgium, could be found in Antwerp. Some 21,000 Jews lived in the capital, Brussels, and relatively large groups resided in Liège and Charleroi. At the start of the war the vast majority of French Jewry lived in Paris; in 1940 an estimated two-thirds of all Jews in France stayed in the French capital, with smaller numbers in provincial towns, such as Lyons, Toulouse and Bordeaux. Jews in Italy traditionally lived in cities, including Rome, Turin, Milan, Bologna, Venice and Trieste, although the number of Jews in Rome was relatively small compared to the Dutch, French and German capitals, which followed the expulsion of the Jews from the papal estates in the early modern era. Therefore, the concentration of Jews in Amsterdam was significant when compared to Rome and Berlin, but it was less pronounced than in Paris and was only marginally larger than in Antwerp.

A general Western European tradition

Negative feelings about Jews expressed in the Netherlands were part of a general Western European tradition. It had roots in Christian teaching and medieval superstition, resulting in age-long exclusion of Jews from mainstream society. In the Christian liturgy, on Good Friday priests condemned the Jews for having demanded that Jesus Christ was killed. From the Middle Ages people also heard the infamous ritual murder or blood libel accusation about Jews abducting, tortur-

6 Cohen, "Boekman's Legacy", pp. 532-539; Kruijt, "Het Jodendom in de nederlandse samenleving", p. 199; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 130; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, pp. 401-417.

ing and crucifying Christian children. Traditional society saw the Jews as outsiders. However, Jews were tolerated as they performed prescribed roles. Economically, for example, they often undertook much needed tasks that non-Jews could or would not carry out, such as money lending, hawking or the collection of rags, but they were barred from membership of the guilds on which the economy was built.

Secularisation, notably the Enlightenment, weakened these traditional attitudes. In France the 1789 revolution brought the first emancipation of Jews in Europe in the form of full civic rights. Other European countries followed. The emancipation occurred more or less simultaneously in Western Europe; first in France, then in what was later to become Belgium and the Netherlands,[7] and parts of Germany and Italy, and finally in unified Italy and Germany. However, it did not take an identical course in every country. The historical background differed, the number of Jews per country was dissimilar, the Jewish percentage of the total population was not the same and the composition of the Jewish population varied. The national economies were disparate and each country had its own legal, political and social institutions. However, in general, legal changes did not immediately transform general patterns of thought and behaviour. Change came about slowly and was often not tremendously beneficial to the Jews. Whereas in the past Jews were outcasts for religious reasons, they could still be singled out because of their perceived characteristics, which were first ascribed to nature and upbringing and later to race or political conviction. This resulted in discrimination and anti-Jewish violence.[8]

During the nineteenth century anti-Jewish sentiments across Western Europe were marshalled into organised parties and political movements, notably towards the end of the century. In 1879 the German Wilhelm Marr coined the phrase 'anti-Semitism',[9] which gave name to a current that increased in power during the final decennia of the century. In France the phenomenon raised its head during the affair that started with the arrest of Captain Alfred Dreyfus in 1894, on the charge of espionage for Germany, and formally ended with his rehabilitation in 1906. Like Dreyfus, other Jews in France were perceived as potential traitors, but as Birnbaum has pointed out, they were also seen as manipulative financers or dangerous revolutionaries.[10] After the affair French anti-Semitism subsided, but it returned with a vengeance during the 1930s as it did across most of Western Europe, even gaining political power in Germany.[11] In addition to specifically

7 For a recent study on the Netherlands, see Wallet, *Nieuwe Nederlanders*.

8 For different interpretations of the emancipation process, see Birnbaum, Katznelson, (eds), *Paths of Emancipation*; Frankel, Zipperstein (eds), *Assimilation and Community*; Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*.

9 Nowadays, anti-Semitism is usually defined as dislike of and prejudice against Jews as Jews.

10 Birnbaum, "Between Social and Political Assimilation", p. 110.

11 For overviews of the history of anti-Semitism, see Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*; Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*; Wistrich, *Antisemitism*; idem, *Between Redemption and Perdition*.

German factors, this was related to the relatively late and difficult emancipation of Jews in Germany.

M.H. Gans has stated that the sentiments of the Dreyfus affair appeared in more moderate forms in the Netherlands than in France.[12] Similarly, other historians of Dutch Jewry have shared the consensus view that negative feelings about Jews were widespread in the Dutch population but were never as extreme as in countries such as France and Germany.[13] This is supported by the lack of evidence on official persecution or large-scale anti-Jewish violence in the Netherlands before the Second World War.[14] Nevertheless, it can also be argued that anti-Jewish sentiments severely influenced the process of integration of Jews into Dutch society. This already happened during the emancipation of Jews in the Netherlands. The decision of the National Assembly of the Batavian Republic to grant Jews full civil rights in 1796 was controversial and resisted.[15] Furthermore, the new freedom initially affected only a narrow stratum of Jews who could take advantage of the access to wider society that was now on offer.[16] The national change in legal status also did not immediately end all anti-Jewish restrictions that existed locally. Prejudices were even harder to overcome and in some instances received a new lease of life, for instance, because of the competition that the legal change brought about in trades and professions.

Assumed racial traits, religious differences and political association

As the example of the comment about Goudsmit shows, Dutch bias against Jews in the first half of the twentieth century contained elements of assumed racial traits, religious differences and the association of Jews with radical politics such as Socialism. By the 1930s the Dutch language had acquired many words and

12 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 599.

13 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", pp. 230-295 (see also Blom, "Dutch Jews, Jewish Dutchmen and Jews in the Netherlands", p. 220); Fuks-Mansfeld, "Arduous Adaptation, 1814-1870", pp. 226-227; Leydesdorff, "The Veil of History", p. 229; Schöffer, "Nederland en de joden in de jaren dertig in historisch perspectief", p. 82. For a recent study that concentrates on the post-1945 period but contains useful insights into the origins of stereotypes, see Gans, *Gojse nijd & joods narcisme*.

14 This is not to say there was no violence between Jews and non-Jews. Apart from individual fist-ups, pupils from a Jewish school would occasionally fight pupils from a Christian or non-denominational school in Amsterdam. There were street fights too. In Amsterdam the boys from one neighbourhood squared up against those from another area. These neighbourhood fights were common throughout the Netherlands, where the bridges across the canals often marked the border of a territory. What made a difference in Amsterdam was that some of these territories were regarded as Jewish.

15 Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society", pp. 42-43; Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, p. 74.

16 Birnbaum, Katznelson, "Emancipation and the Liberal Offer", p. 6.

phrases that alluded to supposedly common characteristics in the appearance of Jews, such as the word *jodenneus* (literally Jewish nose, but really meaning a bent nose). Other prejudices had different backgrounds. The idea that Jews were shrewd businessmen who gladly swindled people out of their money was sometimes motivated by jealousy and expressed in words like *smous* (sheeny), *jodenfooi* (a mere pittance), *jodenlijm* (spittle) and *jodenstreek* (dirty trick). *Voddejood* (old-clothes-man) was perhaps more innocent yet remained hurtful. It referred to what was thought to be a traditional Jewish occupation – the collection and sale of rags and second-hand clothing. The perception[17] of this occupation was easily combined with a widespread belief about Jewish dirtiness and fear of Jews spreading diseases.[18]

The term *Wandelende Jood* (Wandering Jew) or *Ahasverus*, the legendary person who was condemned by Christ to wander restlessly until the end of the world, was clearly of religious origin. A *jodenkerk* (literally a Jewish church, but in reality meaning a scene of mad confusion) demoted apparently disruptive synagogue rituals, which were supposed to be in contrast to the decorum of Christian church services. Similarly, perceived Jewish practices could be combined with their supposed association with Socialism. In 1892 a popular weekly published a cartoon that portrayed a rowdy crowd at a Jewish Socialist meeting coming to fisticuffs, with a well-known Jew commenting: "God bless you, Sir, they share everything, including a beating."[19]

These examples show that anti-Jewishness in the Netherlands took many different forms. Sporadically, expressions of anti-Jewish opinions were accompanied by violence against individual Jews. It was usually expressed in name-calling and jokes, and could be motivated by a multitude of reasons, including economic competition, cultural differences, political thought, religious belief, jealousy or ideas about class and racism. As the size of the Jewish population in the Netherlands was relatively small, notably outside Amsterdam, these expressions were rarely based on personal contacts but on contemporary stereotypes that changed from group to group within the general population.

17 This does not mean that Jewish activity in trade always contributed towards a negative stereotype. In general, trading was perceived as a positive activity in the Netherlands.

18 See, for example, Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, pp. 61, 103, 113, 125.

19 Reproduced in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 578.

Protestants

The pre-war Dutch society can be characterised by the term *verzuiling* (segregation or compartmentalisation along socio-political lines).[20] The population consisted largely of four segments, based on religious beliefs and political convictions: Protestantism, Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism. Members of these segments tended to perceive all non-members as strangers, while often regarding themselves as isolated and to some extent persecuted communities. Catholics, for example, felt secluded as a result of traditional anti-Catholicism. Meanwhile, Protestant minority groups such as the orthodox Calvinists equally felt discriminated by the traditional elites. The four segments had internal divisions, for instance, on social issues, but by and large religion and political conviction created the main differences between population groups well into the twentieth century.

After having been a majority at the time of the Dutch Republic, the Protestants formed the largest segment of the population of the Netherlands in the first half of the twentieth century. The census of 1930 recorded more than 42 per cent of the Dutch as Protestants. Members of the Lutheran Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed or Calvinist churches constituted the main groups within this segment, respectively 34 and 8 per cent of the total population. The political allegiance of the first group was mostly with the Christian Historical Union, the second usually supported the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

Traditionally, orthodox Protestants in the Netherlands, especially the Calvinists, had been interested in the Jews as the chosen people of the Old Testament.[21] Some Protestant theologists were also attracted to rabbinical knowledge and the study of Hebrew. However, relations between Protestants and Jews were strained. Protestants believed that because the Jews had rejected Christ as the Messiah, they suffered in the Diaspora. Nevertheless, Protestants expected that on the Day of the Second Coming the Jews would recognise Christ as God's Son and an end would come to their suffering. Meanwhile, many Protestants prayed for the conversion of Jews and tried to save individual Jews by baptism. Across Europe, Protestants held similar ideas and their missionaries attempted to fulfil the prediction of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans: "And so all Israel will be saved" (11:26) – an event which had been linked to the final judgement and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. It formed one of the corner stones of the mission to the Jews organised by Calvinist churches.[22]

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20 There is a vast literature on segregation in the pre-war Dutch society. A useful introduction is Blom, "Nederland in de jaren dertig". For a recent overview, see De Keizer (with Roels), *Staat van veiligheid*.

21 Fuks-Mansfeld, "Arduous Adaptation", pp. 225, 228.

22 Braber, *Jews in Glasgow, 1879-1939*, pp. 18-19.

The relatively benign Protestant perception of Jews in the Netherlands changed during the 1870s under the influence of Abraham Kuyper, a church minister and for several decennia the spiritual and political leader of the orthodox Protestants. Kuyper left the Dutch Reformed Church and was one of the founders of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. In 1874 he won a seat in the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament. Kuyper founded the Anti-Revolutionary Party in 1879 (it was the first of the new Christian political parties). Despite an initial setback, he grew to be a towering figure in Dutch politics, eventually becoming prime minister. His tenure came to an end in 1905. Kuyper aired his views on Jews early in his political career, but then fell silent on the subject and returned to it in public only once.[23]

In 1875 and 1878 Kuyper wrote two series of newspaper articles on Jews (the second series was reprinted as a pamphlet in 1878 and 1879). The articles were inspired by his impression that the Liberals were trying to gain electoral and political support from Jews at a time when the Protestants and Liberals were involved in a clash about state support for denominational schools. In his views on Jews, Kuyper broke away from the Protestant tradition. He no longer regarded Jews as members of the Dutch nation, but as guests who lived among the Christians. Kuyper also claimed that the Jews had defected to the enemy camp – the Liberals – and as defectors he found them even more dangerous than the original foe. According to Kuyper, by consorting with Liberalism and with help of the Liberals, Jews had succeeded in overpowering the press, banks, judiciary and government; in other words, the bulwarks of society. He claimed Jewish influence was spreading among non-Jews, leading ordinary people into unbelief and atheism. Kuyper rejected anti-Semitism, but in one of the reprinted articles he wrote that "under the guise of Liberalism, Jews have been lords and masters"[24] in Europe. Kuyper did not express anti-Jewish sentiments again until 1907, nor did he use them to oppose Socialism – the Socialists were his new opponents after the Liberals conceded to the demands of the Protestants and Catholics in the 1880s on the issue of school funding and the religious parties won an electoral victory in 1888.

Kuyper was not the only Protestant to speak out against Jews. In 1896 the Protestant writer W.A. Paap caused controversy with the publication of his novel *Jeanne Collette*. The target of this roman à clef was the well-known Jewish banker A.C. Wertheim. Although Paap later rejected accusations of being a follower of German anti-Semitism, he wrote in the foreword of *Jeanne Collette* that whatever had been born most dirty during the nineteenth century, the "dollar century", was either Jewish-born or contained a Jewish soul. In a later book, *Vincent Haman* (1898),

23 For an analysis of his views, see Schöffer, "Abraham Kuyper and the Jews".

24 Quoted in Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 110. See also Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 286; J. Meijer, *De Zoon van een Gazzen*, p. 86.

Paap satirised the Jewish author and Socialist Herman Heijermans.[25] However, Paap was also anti-Catholic and anti-American, as the quotation from his foreword shows, which suggests that he was opposed to several if not all aspects of modernity, a sentiment he shared with many German anti-Semites at that time.

Catholics

About 36 per cent of the Dutch population was recorded in the 1930 census as being Roman Catholic. Among the Dutch Catholics medieval anti-Jewish prejudice had survived well into the nineteenth century. In his memoirs, De Wolff recalled how allegations about a ritual murder in 1892 still stirred anti-Jewish feelings among Dutch Catholics.[26] At this time, news about pogroms in Russia, the Dreyfus affair in France and the rise of modern racism encouraged some Dutch Catholics to initiate anti-Semitic political movements, but these failed because of a lack of support. At the turn of the twentieth century, several Catholic leaders began to reject some of the religious prejudices against Jews, notably the ritual murder accusations, while some bishops and priests attempted reconciliation with Judaism in the Friends of Israel association, which contributed to an increasing Catholic acceptance and tolerance of Jews.[27] Nevertheless, many Catholic publications continued to use anti-Jewish characterisations, still regarding Jews as the murderers of Christ. In 1924 the Dutch Roman Catholic hierarchy prohibited Catholics from domestic contacts with Jews and employment in Jewish firms. Four years later Rome outlawed membership in the Friends of Israel.[28] In private, many Catholics continued to despise Jews. For example, the Catholic business leader Jan Jurgens, a margarine producer, hated Jews and used to call his erstwhile competitor and later business partner Sam van den Bergh "the Jew".[29]

Liberals

At the start of the 1930s the various Liberal parties won about 13 per cent of the total vote, which gives an indication of the size of the Liberal segment in the Dutch population. However, following the Conservatives, the Liberals had been

25 For a comprehensive discussion of Paap and his work, see Meijer, *Willem Anthony Paap, 1856-1923*. See also Kossman, "Nawoord".

26 De Wolff, *Voor het Land van Belofte*, p. 45.

27 The major work on Dutch Catholics and Jews is Poorthuis, Samelink, *Een donkere spiegel*. See also Schöffer, "Nederland en de joden in de jaren dertig in historisch perspectief", p. 86.

28 Croes, Tammes, *'Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan'*, pp. 373, 374-375; Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 768.

29 Schrover, *Het vette, het zoete en het wederzijdse profijt*, p. 66.

the leading political group until the late 1880s and as such their influence was larger and lasted longer than their election results suggest. Furthermore, many prominent businessmen belonged to the Liberal segment. During the nineteenth century, some middle-class organisations excluded Jews, who, as a result of their economic position, belonged to the same class. For example, before 1862 several Amsterdam establishment societies barred Jews as well as Catholics and others who were regarded as nouveau riche. This type of exclusion also occurred in Liberal youth associations.[30]

Within the Liberal political organisations there was opposition against Jewish exclusion. In the 1870s calls were heard to appoint at least one Jew in Amsterdam as a Liberal candidate in parliamentary elections.[31] Previously, the Jewish lawyer Michael Henri Godefroi had been a Liberal deputy for an Amsterdam constituency, where he was elected in 1849. He served as government minister in 1860-1861 and was a member of the Second Chamber until 1881. A fellow Liberal was the banker Wertheim. He had been a member of a Liberal electoral association in Amsterdam since 1866, serving as chairman, and was elected as a member of the Provincial Estates of North Holland in the same year, thereby becoming a possible candidate for the First Chamber of the Dutch parliament. However, one of the stumbling blocks for Wertheim's candidature seems to have been erected by the Liberal leader J. Kappeyne van de Copello. It is unknown whether the party leader objected to Wertheim's candidature because of prejudice or because he feared that a Jewish candidate would arouse bias in the electorate, which could have played into the hands of his Christian political opponents. In any case, it appears to have kept Wertheim off the list for many years. He finally got his First Chamber seat in 1886.[32] The election of Wertheim marked a turning point for Jewish participation in Liberal politics and Liberals became some of the fiercest opponents of anti-Semitism in the twentieth century.

Socialists

If election results are used as a measure, in the early 1930s the segment consisting of Social Democrats and supporters of more extreme left-wing ideologies made up about 26 per cent of the total Dutch population. Before Hitler's rise to power Socialists were dissuaded to dwell publicly on Jewish issues and were encouraged to speak in terms of class differences rather than distinctions between Jews and

30 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 708; De Vries, *Electoraat en Elite*, pp. 92, 100; Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 140.
31 Schöffer, "Abraham Kuyper and the Jews", p. 239.
32 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", pp. 252, 269-270; Schöffer, "Abraham Kuyper and the Jews", p. 252 (footnote 18).

non-Jews.[33] However, the early Socialist movement in the Netherlands struggled with its attitude towards Jews, not least because it chose to criticise Jewish capitalists. As an example of this criticism, M.H. Gans has shown a 1904 cartoon from a Socialist publication. The drawing was about strikes and gave a rather fat-looking and obviously well-to-do capitalist what must have been regarded as a typically Jewish face.[34]

This was not an isolated incident and the Socialist problem with condemning Jewish capitalists without appearing to be anti-Jewish can be further illustrated by two critical opinions about Jews. These views were about people who had been successful in the diamond industry, but were attacked for drawing attention to themselves because of their lack of proper dress sense and unbecoming behaviour. The first example came from Martin Kalff, who wrote in 1875 about a couple at a fashionable Sunday afternoon theatre show in Amsterdam. He described the couple as Jews who had made their fortune during an upturn in the industry. The author pointed out that the woman dressed in clothes that were too colourful and wore jewels as large as marbles.[35] The protagonist in *Kamertjeszonde*, a book by the Socialist author Heijermans, sneered about a similar couple:

> [A] small black diamond Jew with his wife. He listens with narrowed eyes, raised lapping cheeks and a wide-open mouth with fleshy lips. The greasy grin does not leave his face. Repeatedly, a creaking slimy laughter hawks up from his throat, his sloping shoulders shake [...] One ugly formed ear has a large, dark hole from which long black hairs sprout.[36]

Heijermans' character did not describe the physical appearance of the woman, but he felt the need to say that her hat was adorned with yellow, purple, light blue, red and green flowers.

Kamertjeszonde was situated in 1894 and it was written and published shortly after that year. It was a popular book, reaching its twentieth imprint in 1933. Elsewhere in the book, Heijermans echoed feelings about assumingly unfit Jewish behaviour. It contains equally strong caricatures of non-Jews, but the book is almost consistently negative about Jews. Heijermans may have used his own experiences to report realistically on contemporary thought and conversation. He was a Jew and it is possible that the author encountered the hatred he put so vividly into words and even

33 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 265.
34 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 581.
35 Gans, *Memorboek*, pp. 595-596.
36 Heijermans, *Kamertjeszonde*, p. 20. Heijermans returned to Jewish subject matter in other novels such as *Diamantstad* (Amsterdam, 1906), writing with more affection about poor Jews. For Heijermans, see also Leydesdorff, "The Veil of History", p. 227.

internalised some of it in the form of self-hatred. Perhaps he wanted to condemn the abhorrence. Or as a Socialist he could have chosen to censure Jewish capitalists, not because they were Jews, but because they grew rich from the exploitation of their labourers. However, the words and images used by Heijermans fitted into general patterns of prejudice, which grew stronger towards the end of the nineteenth century and set the tone for the twentieth.

As a result of prejudice, Jews were marked among the Dutch Socialists. According to De Wolff,[37] in 1902 Jewish members of the Social Democratic Workers Party from electoral district III in Amsterdam offered canvassing help to party members in district IX, where Pieter Jelles Troelstra was the Socialist candidate for a parliamentary seat. Their offer was refused because local Social Democrat leaders felt that Jewish involvement would have a negative effect. Similar prejudice occurred among the Revolutionary Socialists and in the later Communist Party. The revolutionary Willem van Ravesteyn was one of the founders of the newspaper *De Tribune* in 1907. One of his co-founders was his Jewish friend David Wijnkoop. They both left the Social Democrats to form the nucleus of the later Communist Party. Van Ravesteyn called Wijnkoop's conflict with a Socialist insurance company "a typically Jewish row".[38]

Jewish responses before the 1930s

The pattern of Jewish responses to these anti-Jewish attitudes was set well before the 1930s, in keeping with traditions of loyal behaviour and the favourable sentiment among the Jews in the Netherlands towards the ruling royal house of Orange. Throughout Western Europe, Jews often behaved and portrayed themselves as law-abiding citizens, usually because of a fear of bringing shame upon Judaism and encourage anti-Jewishness. In the Netherlands this tendency took a particular form of Jewish loyalty to the royal family and its political representatives.[39] Rather than protesting in public, Jewish leaders preferred working behind the scenes and after 1848 in parliament through the Conservatives and Liberals. They devised a strategy of seeking safety in difficult times through establishing and maintaining special ties with the Dutch authorities. Take, for example, the 1858 Mortara affair in Italy, when a seven-year-old Jewish boy, Edgardo Mor-

37 De Wolff, *Voor het Land van Belofte*, pp. 79-80, see also p. 272. Troelstra was beaten by a candidate from the Anti-Revolutionary Party. He won his seat at the next election in district III. Troelstra was not a Jew, but as a Frisian he still may have been regarded as a political outsider at the time of his election. Compare Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, p. 272.

38 Quoted in Koejemans, *David Wijnkoop*, p. 65.

39 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 101.

tara, was secretly baptised by Catholic priests, removed from his parental home in Bologna and taken to Rome by the papal police. The affair sparked an international controversy, which also affected the Netherlands. Dutch Jewish leaders asked their government contacts for help. As a result, the Dutch ambassador in Rome conveyed his government's displeasure to the Pope. Many Dutch Protestants supported the Jewish case against the Catholic Church, as they sought to oppose Catholicism – in 1853 the Roman Catholic hierarchy had been restored in the Netherlands to the chagrin of the Protestants. However, the Dutch Catholics turned against the Jews in a defensive action. The Mortara affair resulted in the establishment of the Alliance Israélite in France. The organisation found a foothold in the Netherlands in 1864.[40]

Alongside the Alliance stood another Jewish organisation: the Society for the Benefit of Israelites in the Netherlands, set up in 1850 when the Society for the General Benefit appeared not to accept Jews as members – this may have been a temporary boycott; the banker Wertheim was a member from 1855 to 1897 and served as its chairman from 1888. Although prepared to act in public, both Jewish umbrella organisations were careful not to overstep the boundary of legal behaviour, emphasising the law-abiding conduct of the Dutch Jews and their respect of authority. Furthermore, they were overtly trustful of the Dutch public authorities and unwilling to press the minority status of the Jews on par with Catholics and Calvinists.[41] In 1854 Wertheim told an audience of Freemasons: "A new dawn is breaking [...] [The Jewish] nationality is dissolving in the large nationality in which [Jews] live and exists only in the religion [...] In church they are Israelites, outside they are citizens."[42] In other words, the Jews in the Netherlands felt Dutch, and they wanted to be citizens in the full, unqualified and indivisible.

Not every Jew agreed with Wertheim. Some individuals and groups cultivated segregation, and others internalised stereotypes, sometimes with well-intended self-mockery and at other times with ill-judged self-hatred. However, most Dutch Jews reacted to expressions of anti-Jewishness by referring to the freedom and security offered by the Netherlands. It was also customary to highlight good relations with non-Jews, notably between ministers and rabbis, or stress the traditional interest in the Jews from the house of Orange. For example, the ties with the Dutch royals were emphasised in 1924 when Queen Wilhelmina, her husband and daughter visited the main synagogue of Amsterdam and the royal

40 Fuks-Mansfeld, "Arduous Adaptation", pp. 205-207.

41 Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society", p. 58.

42 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 393. Compare A.S. Rijxman's dissertation: "A.C. Wertheim, 1832-1897. Een bijdrage tot zijn levensgeschiedenis" (University of Amsterdam, 1961), p. 224. (The dissertation was published the same year under the same title.) See also Blom and Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 260.

family toured the Jewish neighbourhood. Another highlight was the 1927 visit of the queen mother Emma to the Joodsche Invalide. The prestige of this hospital and care home was also used to show that Jews looked after their own ill and infirm, were not dependent on general care and thus did not deprive non-Jews of these health provisions.

There were other responses to prejudice. Jews displayed pride about accomplishments of individuals. Jewish apologists often mentioned Jewish contributions to general society or specific Jewish qualities. The formation of Jewish organisations like the Society for the Benefit of Israelites can also be regarded as a response to bias. The Society was one of a wide range of institutions for Jews who had been barred elsewhere or who were potentially excluded. They catered for all aspects of life, including education, work, social activity, culture and sport. Finally, although Zionism was more than a reaction to expressions of anti-Jewishness and exclusion of Jews from parts of the Dutch society, while it had roots in the traditional Jewish religion, the Zionist movement offered Dutch Jews means to react to prejudice. The Jewish nationalist movement gained an organised footing in the Netherlands with the foundation of the Association of Dutch Zionists in 1899, but it remained relatively small until the late 1930s.

Changing attitudes during the 1930s

During the 1930s the attitudes towards Jews in the wider population changed. This development was mainly caused by a combination of factors, including the general economic crisis, the persecution of Jews in Germany after 1933, the arrival of thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, and the rise of National Socialism in the Netherlands. In an era of mass unemployment, with refugee competition on the labour market, existing prejudices were easily contaminated with National Socialist ideology and spread further among the Dutch population. The antipathy against German Jews, who were sometimes accused of having brought the persecution upon themselves, also affected Dutch Jews. Although such feelings must not be exaggerated, during the 1930s non-Jews in general began to regard Jews more critically and sometimes with pity. Occasionally, Jews were seen once again as strangers.

At the heart of the Dutch reaction to the economic crisis was a policy of adjustment or accommodation. The admission of the government in 1935 that it could not save the Dutch economy from the global economic crisis was a sign of weakness. There were protests from left and right against this policy, and an alternative was presented by the Social Democrats in the form of an employment plan. However, at national level the Socialists did not gain access to political power until the eve of the war and they were unable to turn their plan into reality. Some opposition

took the form of riots, for example, in the Dutch capital, but these incidents were isolated events. The failure of the protests contributed to a general despondency and acceptance of fate. However, this climate also facilitated the projection of fear on perceived outsiders such as Jews.

The second factor that influenced Dutch attitudes towards Jews was Hitler's rise to power, which was accompanied by official persecution of Jews in Germany. Many Dutch were alarmed and bewildered by the German events and the first reactions to the persecution of German Jews expressed horror. However, the majority of the Dutch population probably never contemplated the issue in great depth or length and indifference grew. This factor was related to the third factor, the arrival of thousands of Jewish refugees. The first wave of refugees left Germany in 1933, after that there was a decline in Jewish emigration from Germany until 1938, when the Anschluss of Austria, the Kristallnacht pogroms in Germany and the German annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia raised emigration numbers.

Between 1933 and 1940 some 24,000 Jewish refugees arrived in the Netherlands and stayed here longer than two weeks. Of them, well over 7,000 left again before 1940. Another 11,000 travelled through the Netherlands and did not stay longer than one week.[43] In the climate of despondency about the economic downturn and bewilderment about the events in Germany, people questioned what was regarded as the traditional Dutch policy of hospitality and asylum. Initially (that is, before the spring of 1934), the Dutch government did not limit the entrance of refugees, hoping that an international solution for the refugee problem could be found. But from the spring of 1934 the government introduced limitations on immigration. The main reason for the policy change was economic, namely to avoid greater financial burdens and increased unemployment, because it was expected that the refugees would be unable to find work and had to rely on social benefits or take jobs from Dutchmen. The government had other considerations, including a fear of repercussions from the powerful German neighbour and anxiety about the perceived foreign influence in the Netherlands, which was expected to be growing as a result of the settlement of refugees from Germany. Meanwhile, leading politicians failed to comprehend the situation in Germany. In addition, some officials who formulated and executed this policy were not free from anti-Jewish bias.[44] At the start, the policy of limiting the influx had popular support and the majority of the members of the Dutch press subscribed to official opinions and measures, but increasingly the government came under attack from Socialists, Communists and Liberals (the last group was divided about refugee policy). Despite the new measures, refugees were allowed to come to the Netherlands,

43 D. Michman, "De joodse emigratie en de Nederlandse reactie daarop tussen 1933 en 1940", p. 94; Moore, *Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands, 1933-1940*, pp. 53-99.

44 Blom and Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 281.

although it was expected that the Jewish community would look after refugees who had insufficient means to support themselves.

During the spring of 1938 a dramatic change of policy occurred. In May of that year the Dutch government, through the Justice ministry, informed judicial and police authorities that now all refugees were to be regarded as unwanted foreigners, who were to be kept out or deported if they had crossed the border. In specific cases local procurators or police chiefs could call for a ministerial decision, for example, when it could be assumed that refugees would be in mortal danger if they were not admitted, or in exceptional cases, when admission would be desirable in the Dutch national interest.[45] The aim of the new policy was to keep new refugee numbers low, initially at 2,000, with the continued expectation that Dutch Jewry would look after the refugees who were allowed in. Nevertheless, as more refugees arrived, it became clear that local authorities did not always follow government policy. Furthermore, the Kristallnacht in November 1938 caused the government to increase the allowed entry number from 2,000 to 7,000. More came, possibly as many as 10,000 by March 1939, including illegal immigrants.

The fourth factor that brought about changes in Dutch attitudes towards Jews was the rise and changing nature of National Socialism in the Netherlands, notably when Dutch National Socialists exploited the increased presence of refugees in the Netherlands. The main Fascist party in the Netherlands was the National Socialist Movement. Founded in 1931, the Movement did not profess anti-Semitism at first. This changed in 1934 and in subsequent years its members matched expressions of anti-Jewish feelings with violence. For a short while the party made electoral gains. During the elections of the Provincial Estates in 1935 it won about 294,000 votes, almost 8 per cent of the electorate. However, this dropped to 4.5 per cent (about 171,000 votes) in the 1937 elections for the Second Chamber and 3.9 per cent (about 160,000 votes) in the Provincial Estates election in 1939. Membership numbers fluctuated, with about 36,000 members in 1935, 55,000 in 1936 and 34,000 in 1939.[46]

The National Socialists made themselves heard in the Dutch parliament. Just before the war two Social Democrat members of the Second Chamber declared to other party members that they no longer accepted the tolerance of the chairman of the Chamber towards Movement speakers who offended Jews and made anti-Jewish insinuations. However, the Social Democrat faction decided not to publicise the matter, preferring the faction leader to discuss the issue behind closed

45 Letter 7/5/1938, quoted in Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, pp. 160-161.

46 Croes, Tammes, *'Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan'*, pp. 367, 370. These authors put the total number of people who were members of the NSB between 1931 and 1944 at about 150,000. Compare Paape, "Nederland en de Nederlanders", p. 25.

doors with the chairman of the Chamber.[47] In 1939 the National Socialists tried to exploit the suicide of a banker of German-Jewish origin, who killed himself after a financial debacle.[48] A year earlier another scandal involving a Jew had broken out when it was alleged that a Jewish founder of a large company for meat processing and export had engaged in sexual relations with dozens of female employees. He was convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. However, the news about his trial was surpassed by sensational revelations about two local Catholic priests in the same town who had sexual contact with women and under-aged boys.[49] Perhaps this prevented the National Socialists from using scandal to the full. In addition to the Movement, there were other Fascist parties in the Netherlands, including the National Socialist Dutch Workers Party and the Black Front. The last organisation operated predominantly in the southern provinces. Both parties had anti-Semitic manifestoes, but remained insignificant compared to the Movement. While the overall influence of the National Socialists was small, some of their ideas about Jews trickled down into mainstream thinking.

The changes in attitudes towards Jews during the 1930s came about in different ways, depending on the religious and political characteristics of the Dutch population groups. Just like the general Dutch press, most Catholic publications supported the government refugee policy. Perhaps this support was given because the responsible minister in 1938 was a member of the Roman Catholic State Party. Some Catholics also wanted to protect Dutch society against a perceived Jewish influence. However, not all Catholics shared these feelings. For example, several Catholic trade unionists attacked the refugee policy. Furthermore, in 1934 the episcopate of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands condemned National Socialism. Two years later the bishops instructed priests to withhold the sacraments from Movement members who gave considerable support to the party, at the same time Dutch Catholics were warned against Liberalism, Socialism and Communism.

In the Protestant groups there was also a mixture of sentiments. The clergyman J.G. Geelkerken, who earlier had left the Reformed Churches, declared that Jewish Marxists had infected the population with "the materialist virus that is closely related to their own disease, the well-known Jewish, materialist service to Mammon", while the more mainstream J.A. Nederbragt wrote that "in a purely human judgement of Jews" he was largely in agreement with Hitler.[50] Other Protestants, notably Calvinists, stressed the morally unacceptable character of anti-

47 Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", p. 133.
48 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 792.
49 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 1, pp. 595-596.
50 Quoted in De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 1, p. 153, see also p. 154.

Semitism.[51] At first, these critical voices remained somewhat on the sidelines, but by 1940 most Protestants were involved in a discussion of the consequences of the persecution of Jews in Germany and the plight of the refugees. This resulted broadly in two positions. The first upheld that Judaism had to be countered as it was regarded as a false religion. The second put more emphasis on Jews as members of the Old Covenant (the Protestants regarded themselves as the people of the New Covenant). Proponents of both groups still strove towards conversion of the Jews, but felt that Christian charity meant that help should be offered to the victims of persecution.[52] On the basis of this feeling, they urged the Dutch government to open the door for persecuted Jews. This brought them in line with other critics of the refugee policy and opponents of National Socialism.[53]

The opponents of National Socialism could be found in a broad coalition of political groups, including Liberals and Social Democrats, organised in Unity Through Democracy. It was formed in 1935 and aimed at a mass audience to stop the spread of Fascism and Communism. Several Jews took part in its activities. One of the most outspoken participants was Henri Polak. This Jewish Socialist had long aspired to a more decent life for all, stressing that Jews should be enabled to play their part in Dutch society.[54] The Committee of Vigilance of Anti-National-Socialist Intellectuals was established in 1936 and included Communists. In addition, several left-wing individuals took a stand against National Socialism, including the Jewish writer Maurits Dekker, who steered an independent but radical course from the Socialists and Communists. He was also active in Aim Left, a group of writers and artists. This is not say that the left wing of Dutch politics was free of negative attitudes towards Jews. In 1933 the Communist newspaper accused "the Jewish capitalists"[55] of being financial supporters of the National Socialism in Germany.

Within the context of what happened in Germany, the anti-Jewish attitudes expressed in the Netherlands during the 1930s appear moderate and anti-Jewish violence in the Netherlands remained extremely rare. In contrast, in Belgium in 1933 and again in 1939 anti-Jewish riots broke out in Antwerp, favourably described in Catholic newspapers as spontaneous expressions of popular feelings. In 1939 the riots were to some extent spurred on by the intervention of Camille Huysmans, the Socialist mayor of Antwerp. In France, Léon Blum, the Socialist

51 For an overview of opinions in the Reformed Churches, see Van Klinken, "Opvattingen in de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland over het Jodendom, 1896-1970". See also Van Roon, "The Dutch Protestants, the Third Reich and the Persecution of the Jews".

52 Croes, Tammes, *'Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan'*, pp. 375, 380.

53 For an overview of Protestant opinion in the Netherlands on Nazi-Germany and the persecution of the Jews, see Van Roon, *Protestants Nederland en Duitsland 1933-1941*.

54 Blom and Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 264.

55 Quoted in De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 1, pp. 152-153.

leader of the Popular Front and in 1936 the first Jewish prime minister in France, became a target of anti-Semitic attacks. In 1940 the Communist leader Maurice Thorez verbally assaulted Blum, using language that according to Schuker, "Vichy officials would not have wished to improve".[56] Two years earlier anti-Jewish demonstrations had taken place in Paris and foreigners were attacked. Similar incidents occurred in other French cities. A year later calls were made for new legislation against foreigners in France; anti-Semitism had crept into respected French social circles. Italy provides yet another picture. Following the emancipation of Jews in the various Italian states before the unification of the country, the traditional ghettos were opened; the last ghetto was in Rome and disappeared in 1870. From then on, there was no official persecution until the Mussolini government in Italy issued racial laws in 1938.

Official persecution and riots did not occur in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, while anti-Jewishness was only expressed moderately and anti-Jewish violence was rare in the Netherlands, an outcome of the rising tensions during the 1930s was that Jews in the Netherlands were once again seen as a separate group. A person's Jewish origins remained a strongly distinguishing feature.[57]

Jewish responses during the 1930s

Dutch Jews responded in several ways to this seemingly unavoidable distinctiveness. In general, they were drawn closer together, but there were differences within the Jewish population; traditional responses were repeated and new ones took shape. The relationship between Dutch Jews and the House of Orange was given greater emphasis. In 1937 Princess Juliana and her German husband attended a musical reception in Amsterdam held by a Jewish youth association. A year later the princess visited the Joodsche Invalide. On this occasion a Jewish weekly wrote that Jews had never felt the importance of the House of Orange so strongly.[58] Dutch Jews shared with the general population their trust in the royal house, government and judicial system, and the general patterns of resignation and obedience.

The traditional loyalty to and respect for the authorities formed part of the basis for Jewish organisations that worked with the government on solving the refugee problem. These organisations were the Jewish Refugee Committee and the Committee for Special Jewish Interests. Professor David Cohen and diamond merchant Abraham Asscher headed both organisations. The two men were firmly

56 Schuker, "Origins of the 'Jewish Problem' in the Later Third Republic", p. 143.
57 Blom and Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 232.
58 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 784.

rooted in Dutch social and cultural life. Like the leaders of other Dutch population segments, they showed a tendency to take responsibility for looking after their own communities and were prepared to compromise rather than to seek conflict.

The main aim of the refugee committees was to provide relief and accommodation for refugees. They also negotiated with the authorities and wanted to shield refugees from government interference. In doing so, the committees took a considerable amount of responsibility for refugee welfare, but they also encouraged people to move on and leave the Netherlands. Shortly before the war, the organisations got involved in setting up the Westerbork camp for refugees, despite having reservations about its necessity and location. The camp opened in 1939, and 750 refugees lived there in 1940. Other Jewish organisations set up housing and training centres for young Jews, mainly refugees, to prepare them for emigration to Palestine. This included the work village Wieringermeer. In addition to these committees, individuals approached the government about the refugees. One of them was the director of the Joodsche Invalide, Isaäc Gans, who after the 1938 Kristallnacht went to The Hague for discussions with L.E. Visser, then vice-president of the Supreme Court. Visser introduced Gans to the Interior minister, so that he could plead for allowing another 1,500 refugees to enter the Netherlands.

By and large the refugee committees followed a course of accommodation of the official refugee policy and the Jewish leaders were unwilling to press the minority status of the Dutch Jews or make strong demands on behalf of the refugees. But not everybody judged accommodation to be a wise course. For instance, in December 1939, after the outbreak of war, the *Centraal Blad voor Israëlieten in Nederland* published an editorial about the Jewish leaders who applied this accommodating approach: "They demand nothing, God forbid – not even the application of existing laws".[59] The *Centraal Blad* accused the leaders of turning against Jews. They were told that instead of fearfully making weak requests, they should follow the examples of Jewish leaders in other countries such as Belgium, who were described as being more radical in their demands. While the *Centraal Blad* condemned the government for its policy on refugees, another Jewish weekly, the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (NIW), acknowledged that increasing numbers of refugees would derail the Dutch economy and carry the danger of "Überfremdung".[60]

Similar differences of opinion about the reaction to anti-Jewishness can be found among the Dutch Zionists. Some Zionist leaders, including Fritz Bernstein, early and publicly stated the mortal danger of Hitler's anti-Semitism, which Bernstein placed at the heart of National Socialism. His audience was relatively small – although it had more readers, the Zionist periodical *De Joodsche Wachter* only had a few hundred subscribers. However, during the 1930s the Zionist move-

59 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 789.
60 *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*, 13/5/1938.

ment in the Netherlands grew. It also received support from Socialists such as Polak, who had since 1917 backed Jewish settlement in Palestine, but could not be counted as a Zionist. In May 1939 the Zionists organised a protest meeting against British policy in Palestine, which the United Kingdom held under a mandate from the League of Nations. The meeting, notably the spokesperson of Poalei Zion – the Socialist Zionists – criticised the Dutch government for setting up Westerbork. In addition, young Zionists such as Lion Nordheim were publicly critical of the Dutch Jewish leaders.

The opponents of anti-Semitism sometimes struck up the traditional apologetic note, stressing the contributions Jews had made to the Dutch society. Examples of this response can be found in a collection of essays edited by Professor H.J. Pos, which was published in 1939.[61] Others concentrated on accusations that Jews were involved in crime. To counter this claim, Polak used contemporary crime statistics in a 1936 book to show that the occurrence of criminality among Jews was lower than in other population groups. Polak concluded that Jews belonged to the most peaceful, quiet, reliable and law-abiding citizens.[62] Meijer has remarked on this issue that in September 1934, when an eight-year-old girl called Sarah Beugeltas was murdered in a warehouse in Amsterdam, Jews were relieved to learn that the victim as well as the killer were Jewish, because that reduced the likelihood of the event fuelling anti-Jewish sentiment.[63]

There were different Jewish responses. In 1939 a group of individuals attempted to organise what they saw as a more robust Jewish defence. They formed the Association for the Defence of Cultural and Social Rights of Jews. Its chairman was the general practitioner and chemistry teacher David de Miranda. Other leading figures were the already mentioned writer Dekker and the psychiatrist C. van Emde Boas. Polak recommended membership.[64] The Association wanted to ensure "that especially poor Jews in our country get the moral support, which they need so badly in these difficult times".[65] In 1939 the Association published a pamphlet[66] about a "pogrom" in Amsterdam – on Thursday 25 May National Socialists had attacked an ice cream parlour that was run by Jewish refugees.[67]

61 Pos (ed.), *Anti-Semitisme en Jodendom*.

62 Quoted in Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, pp. 94-96.

63 Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, p. 104, has written that the Jews were "glad", but he overlooked the reported anxiety about anti-Semitism before the murderer was found, and the anger after the suspect confessed. See Van Weringh, "A Case of Homicide in the Jewish Neighborhood of Amsterdam, 1934"; idem, *De zaak-Sara Beugeltas*.

64 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 790.

65 Quoted in Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 133. According to Roegholt, only one Association publication still exists; the rest was burned in May 1940. See also below.

66 A copy can be found in the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Doc II, folder 1349.

67 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 781.

The Association demanded an investigation. However, it wanted to do more. Van Emde Boas, who also lectured for Zionist organisations, said after the annexation of part of Czechoslovakia: "The desire to form self-defence groups has arisen among a number of Jews, to ensure that you are not just slaughtered as a Jew."[68] The Association hoped to stimulate that desire.

On 1 April 1940 the Association organised a mass meeting in Amsterdam, with well-known speakers from the political and arts worlds. Dekker said on that occasion to have no problem with being a Jewish Dutchman:

> We Jews have accepted everything in history. Now the time has come for us to act [...] People regard us as guests in our country, but we are not guests: we are Jewish Dutchmen. But even if we were guests, we would still defend ourselves against pogroms.[69]

The Association also held lectures and discussion evenings, and trained people in boxing and gymnastics in order to prepare them for physical attacks. It is unknown how many people took part in these activities, which may well have petered out quickly, although this book will show that many persons related to the Association took part in resistance work during the German occupation of the Netherlands.

Jewish responses to changing attitudes towards Jews in the form of initiatives such as those taken by Association remained rare before 1940. Within the framework of the protection offered by the Dutch authorities, most Jewish responses remained muted and apologetic in terms of emphasising the law-abiding character of Jews and deference for authority. In their responses Dutch Jews stood out because of their extremely favourable sentiment towards the ruling royal dynasty and its representatives in government. As quoted above, in the eyes of the editor of the *Centraal Blad* Jewish leaders in Belgium appeared to be more ready to challenge their governments than the Jewish establishment in the Netherlands. The Dutch Jewish leaders followed the foremen of the other segments in the Dutch population, taking responsibility for their group and being overtly trustful in respecting authority, but unlike their Protestant and Catholic counterparts the Dutch Jewish leaders were unwilling to press the minority status of the Jews. However, their response could not counter negative attitudes towards Jews in the general Dutch population, which during the 1930s contributed to the renewed perception of the Jews in the Netherlands as a separate group.

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68 Quoted in Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 133.
69 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2/4/1940.

2 Participation of Jews in the economy, politics and arts

In 1919 the author Jacob Israël de Haan declared in one of his popular newspaper articles:

> [The] particular is always particular of the general. And what I have enjoyed and suffered and done, is a particular, personal form of what a Jewish boy of my nature and talent in my country and in my time was able to enjoy, suffer and do.[1]

De Haan wrote these words after he had left the Netherlands for Palestine. He was by no means an unsuccessful writer and had published several novels and collections of poems. However, his words suggest that his participation in the wider Dutch society had been limited because he was a Jew. Others Jews in the Netherlands also found such limitations. There was progress – increasingly Jews were able to take part in a growing number of economic, political and artistic sectors of the Dutch society – but during the 1930s, when attitudes towards Jews again became more negative, some of the advances were undone.

There was of course interaction between attitudes and participation. Typical economic roles such as money lending and street trading, sometimes the outcomes of traditional prejudice, contributed to the formation and expression of attitudes towards Jews in the wider Dutch population. In turn, these attitudes shaped the participation of Jews in the general economic, political and artistic life of the Netherlands. However, Jewish involvement also depended on developments in the Dutch economy, politics and arts, and on the opportunities for participation that these developments created. Between 1870 and 1940 the Dutch society went through a period of accelerated change, with economic expansion and industrialisation, growing prosperity for almost all sectors of the population, democratisation for the middle classes, the emergence of new political parties, the establishment of mass organisations for the working population, and the rise of new artistic movements, all of which created openings.[2] Furthermore, participation of Jews in society also varied according to personal circumstances and qualities such

1 Quoted in Meijer, *De Zoon van een Gazzen*, p. 41.
2 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 230.

as the knowledge and skills of individuals, while education steered the direction and speed of their participation.

Education

The reorganisation and modernisation of Dutch education before 1940 offered prospects for social mobility to children of parents who were able or prepared to make sacrifices to allow their offspring to study. Most Jewish children in the Netherlands before the Second World War attended public schools, and this involvement helped them to acquire the knowledge and skills that prepared them for participation in the wider society.

Going to general schools was not always easy. Later in life, many Jews remembered how as children they were rather isolated in these public institutions. In primary schools, there were painful insults from non-Jewish children or discriminatory treatment from teachers, one of whom, despite being a Socialist was called a "terrible anti-Semite"[3] because of his negative opinion on Judaism. Jews who attended general secondary and higher education also recalled being excluded or singled out. The young Herzberg and the later politician Wijnkoop both studied at an Amsterdam gymnasium and found that the local student association accepted "no plebeians, no girls and no Jews" as members.[4] Meijer has written about the experiences of De Haan at a teachers' training college:

> His life at the [college] became a chain of problems, which were not solely related to his Jewishness. But who distinguished here between the components? When he did something odd, then his teachers and fellow students regarded that as Jewish.[5]

Despite such prejudice, some Jews were able to profit from the limited opportunities for social mobility through higher education. Aletta Jacobs, a doctor's daughter, became in 1871 the first female student and later the first female medical practitioner in the Netherlands; she was also a prominent international feminist. Jacobs, who did not practice Judaism or publicly identified herself as a Jew,[6] was

3 Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, p. 273. Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, pp. 27, 67-68, mentions similar experiences for Herzberg and De Jong. See also De Wolff, *Voor het land van Belofte*, pp. 54-55.

4 Bregstein, Bloemgarten (eds), *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, p. 198; Koejemans, *David Wijnkoop*, p. 37. Compare Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, p. 28.

5 Meijer, *De zoon van een gazzen*, p. 46.

6 Jacobs kept her identity as a Jew very private, but was perceived by others as being Jewish and did not deny her origins, yet she preferred not to discuss this subject publicly. For an autobiography and a biography, see Jacobs, *Herinneringen van Dr Aletta H. Jacobs*; M. Bosch, *Aletta Jacobs 1854-1929*.

admitted to university after a personal appeal following a brief period at a pharmacy college. By 1871 Jewish males had already found that Dutch universities were open to them. This eventually caused some overrepresentation of Jewish students. During the 1930s the Jewish percentage of all Dutch graduates was almost twice the Jewish percentage in the total population. This is not to say that all Jewish children were successful in general education. The union leader Goudsmit had to leave school at primary level. His father was a diamond worker, who turned to street trading when he was unemployed during a downturn in the diamond industry, and at the age of 13 Isaäc had to find work to bolster the family income.[7]

Jewish students often chose specific subjects because social exclusion reinforced a traditional disposition for certain professions. The medicine and law faculties of Dutch universities were traditionally open to Jews. In fact, Jews had been working as lawyers before full civil rights were granted, and on the eve of the Second World War Visser was appointed as president of the Supreme Court, the highest post in the Dutch judicial system. Dutch Jews were also prominent as university professors, although they were concentrated in the medicine and law faculties. By 1940 there were some 50 Jewish professors and lecturers in the Netherlands.

Similar concentrations of Jews in higher education and professions occurred in other countries. In Germany, where the modernisation of education preceded the unification of 1871, school attendance was compulsory at an early stage and modern schools were set up that provided public education for Jewish children. In some German states educational reforms had only limited success, but overall Jewish numbers at German universities increased before 1933, in particular at medical faculties as these institutions had adopted a liberal admissions policy. Many Jewish students selected medicine because there was no impediment to Jewish medical practice in cities with a relatively large Jewish population such as Berlin and medical practitioners were traditionally highly valued in the general and Jewish populations.

Civil service and army

One of the areas where Jews in the Netherlands had access problems was the top of the civil service. The appointment of Jacob van Gelderen as head of the crisis department of the ministry for colonies in 1933 was an exception. In 1941, there were in total 2,535 Jewish civil servants in the Netherlands.[8] They formed 1.3 per cent of all Dutch civil servants, a figure just below their percentage of the total population, but they were mostly in lower posts and concentrated in the

7 Van Melle, "Goudsmit, Isaäc".
8 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 173.

justice department; 3 per cent of all employees in that department was Jewish. That relatively high number was not unusual as relatively many Jews worked as lawyers. Furthermore, before 1940 two professing Jews had been appointed as cabinet ministers, both of them as minister of justice. Several Jews also served as members of the Council of State, including Tobias M.C. Asser, a law professor in Amsterdam and in 1911 winner of the Noble Prize.

Another area where Jews were unable to gain access to higher echelons was the Dutch army. There were traditionally few Jewish professional soldiers in the Netherlands. At the start of the twentieth century general conscription was introduced and Jews served as conscripts, but mostly in lower ranks. After the First World War the need for conscripts declined and many recruits were able to get exemption from army service. This changed during the general mobilisation just before the Second World War. There were some Jewish officers among the new conscripts such as Flip de Leeuw, who became commander of a border detachment in Dinxperlo, but no Jews were among the highest-ranking officers in the Dutch army. It is unclear whether this was the result of prejudice against Jews in the army, the outcome of a military recruitment tradition or because the vast majority of Dutch Jews simply never considered a military career.

In comparison, before the Weimar Republic German Jews had been excluded from state offices and they did not figure significantly in the higher army ranks. However, in France individual Jews made their appearance relatively early on the public stage. Notably after 1870 French Jews rose to the upper ranks of governmental departments, including the prefecture and the ministry of the interior. Birnbaum has asserted that between 1870 and 1936 "in no other country in the world were there as many Jews exercising political functions so crucial to the implementation of the state and the general control of society" as in France.[9] They also served as professional soldiers, although not without opposition, as the example of Dreyfus has shown. There appeared to have been even fewer obstacles in Italy. From the time of the *Risorgimento*, Jews served in the Italian army, first as volunteers and later as conscripts, with a relatively high number of officers. Jews were at the centre of efforts to construct the modern Italian state.

Successful entrepreneurs and small traders

The participation of Jews in the Dutch economy was also shaped by the traditional economic roles they had played before the emancipation and their exclusion from guilds. By the 1930s they were concentrated in trades and industries such as finan-

9 Birnbaum, "Between Social and Political Assimilation", p. 115.

cial services, margarine making, textile production and diamond cutting, and in the distribution and retail sectors. In some of these areas individual Jews were successful. The new financial services industry in the Netherlands arose in the middle of the nineteenth century with changes in the money market and financial administration. Several Jews built their fortune in this industry. They included the banker Wertheim, who also sat on the board of the national Dutch bank, operated in railway construction and sponsored the arts. By the 1930s Jews owned several small banks in the Netherlands, while some of the larger general banks had Jewish directors. This was not a typically Dutch trend. Just as in the Netherlands, in nineteenth-century Germany a small number of Jews made large fortunes in the finance industry, notably in Berlin. In France Jews were involved in finance and financial policy, but during nineteenth century they were almost completely excluded from the industrial bourgeoisie.

The production of textile, margarine and related products were Dutch industries in which a number of Jewish families established successful enterprises. In the nineteenth century G. and H. Salomonson set up the first steam cotton mill in Twente. It became one of the largest industrial enterprises in the Netherlands. The Van den Bergh family, who moved to Oss in 1858, were butter merchants, but they started producing margarine in 1870s. Their factory moved to Rotterdam in 1891 and diversified its production, including items such as condensed milk and soap. After further expansion, also internationally, the Van den Berghs started a joint venture with the Catholic Jurgens family and together they fused with Lever to form Unilever in 1929, incorporating other margarine producers like Cohen & Van de Laan in Haarlem.[10]

While the Van den Bergh family maintained ties with Jewish organisations, other industrial families converted to Christianity and lost their Jewish identity. The reason for conversion may have been the desire to overcome social exclusion. Jonker, Van Gerwen and Miellet have argued that in the finance, margarine and large retail sectors, individual Jewish entrepreneurs remained outsiders. In the new financial industry Jewish investors were highly regarded, but outside the world of finance there was jealousy about their success. In margarine and textile, Jewish manufacturing was integrated into the industry, but Jewish entrepreneurs continued to live in social isolation. In the large retail sector, notably in Amsterdam, they were well represented but suffered from discrimination and hostility.[11]

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10 Schrover, *Het vette, het zoete en het wederzijdse profijt*, pp. 60-67.

11 See Gerwen, "De verwevenheid van joodse ondernemers met de Nederlandse textielnijverheid", Jonker, "In het middelpunt en toch aan de rand", and Miellet, "Joodse ondernemers in het Nederlandse grootwinkelbedrijf in de negentiende en de eerste decennia van de twintigste eeuw", all in Berg, Wijsenbeek, Fischer, (eds), *Venter, fabriqueur, fabrikant*.

The argument that Jewish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands remained outsiders is supported by the experience of Wertheim with his First Chamber candidature for a Liberal party and portrayal in *Jeanne Collette*, and the attitude of Jan Jurgens towards Sam van den Bergh, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, other Jews such as the sons of Sam van den Bergh enjoyed greater acceptance in non-Jewish circles. Some families had mixed social experiences. The Salomonson family was engaged in local politics in Twente, but also maintained ties with other Jews. Two members of that family married daughters of Wertheim. In comparison, some Catholic pioneers in Dutch industry and retail initially suffered a similar fate of social exclusion. It seems therefore that some Jewish business families were accepted in their social and economic group, while others were merely tolerated as a result of personal circumstances or group attitudes that were not necessarily related to anti-Jewishness.

Sometimes Jewish entrepreneurs got a bad name. Success went hand in hand with failure. In 1879 the business empire of Lodewijk Pincoffs and H. Polak-Kerdijk collapsed. This bankruptcy made a deep impression on non-Jews. Pincoffs had been an extremely energetic entrepreneur, establishing shipping, financial and energy companies as well as being active in education and public transport. In 1856 he was elected on the Rotterdam municipal council, two years later on the Provincial Estates and in 1872 he won a seat in the First Chamber. However, Pincoffs made severe financial losses on some of his enterprises, which resulted in the collapse of his business empire. When he was unable to pay his debts in 1879, he fled to the United States. His downfall also affected other bankers and may have caused the resistance among Liberals against Jewish candidates such as Wertheim.

The emancipation and new economic developments only offered limited opportunities for enterprising individuals. Furthermore, economic downturns also hampered access to more varied forms of employment for the majority of the Dutch Jews, so that many remained in their traditional trading roles. For example, at the start of the 1930s all ragmen and about a third of all street traders in Amsterdam were Jewish, while almost half of all Jewish men in the capital worked as traders – often small traders, but there were many medium-sized and some larger enterprises too.[12] Jewish traders did not only deal in second hand goods, but they also sold luxury goods. For example, by 1940 in the whole of the country almost a quarter of all art dealers and jewellers was Jewish. In Amsterdam this percentage was probably higher. In the capital there were also large fashion and department stores owned by Jews such as Hirsch and De Bijenkorf.

12 Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 67; Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 570.

The development of Amsterdam, where the majority of the Dutch Jews lived, encouraged their involvement in small retail and street trading. The major industry of the capital was the harbour, where traditionally few Jews worked. When the industrial activity increased during the nineteenth century, many Jews were employed in the diamond, textile and tobacco industries. These sectors were traditionally dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises, often family-based and started by workers who set up their own company. However, by the end of the First World War some of the larger industries were leaving the city after the pre-war expansion, mostly because employers found lower production costs elsewhere. The diamond industry moved to Antwerp, textile to Twente and tobacco to the southern Dutch provinces. Workers in these industries could have moved with their industries, and some did, but most Jews such as Goudsmit's father resorted to street trading and market selling to make a living. Between 1923 and 1929 Amsterdam profited from a long economic upturn, but after that the city suffered from the effect of the Depression, which brought unemployment and once again compelled many to turn their hand to trading. This maintained and strengthened Jewish overrepresentation in small trade.

The Jewish workforce

In the Netherlands as a whole, Jewish percentages of the total workforce were larger than their share of the total population in the diamond, tobacco, bakery, confectionary, textile, tailoring and livestock industries. The reason for the relatively large Jewish presence in these sectors was that there had been no or weak guilds, for example, in the diamond industry. The diamond trade in Amsterdam, with which Jews were often associated, grew after 1850 with the increased import of rough diamonds from Brazil and South Africa. Some diamond cutters became jewellery merchants, but the majority of workers in this sector were unable to gain an independent and affluent status and many became victims of economic fluctuations. For example, after a good year in 1919, the industry in Amsterdam declined and partly moved away. Just after the First World War the sector employed about 20,000 persons, by 1935 this had dropped to about 5,000, many of whom only worked for short periods.

The diamond workers had followed the typographers in forming trade union organisations. At the end of the nineteenth century the General Dutch Union of Workers in the Diamond Industry was set up under the guidance of Polak.[13] An accomplished leader, Polak opposed the general strike tactics of the Anarchists.

13 Bloemgarten, *Henri Polak*; Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", pp. 66-96. For a history of the diamond workers union, see De Jong Edz, *'Van ruw tot geslepen'*.

After the 1903 rail strikes Polak took the initiative for the more pragmatic Dutch Association of Trade Unions, which was orientated on the Social Democrats. He was chairman of the Association until 1909. When possible, the diamond workers' union cooperated with employers, which resulted in relatively early collective work agreements. In addition, Protestant and Catholic unions were established, mostly in response to the Socialist unions, while Betsalel was set up for Jewish workers. Betsalel looked after specific Jewish interests, for example, in relation to not working on the Sabbath, and similar to the Socialist diamond workers' union it was active in educational and cultural matters. However, Betsalel remained relatively small. In 1910, when its membership peaked, the organisation had some 240 members, while the General Dutch Union of Workers in the Diamond Industry had about 9,050.[14]

Most Jews in Germany, France and Belgium belonged to the lower economic classes and often operated as small manufacturers and traders. There were large Jewish proletariats in Berlin, Paris and Antwerp. In contrast to France, it is significant that apart from Betsalel, no Jewish unions were formed in the Netherlands. Hofmeester[15] has concluded that this difference can be attributed to two factors, namely the social, economic and cultural background of the Jewish workers and the attitudes towards Jewish workers among non-Jewish unionists. In both countries the Jewish workforce was concentrated in the capitals. However, in Amsterdam most Jewish workers were native-born and their ancestors had lived there for many generations. In Paris, notably after 1905, many Jewish workers were recent immigrants from Eastern Europe, who had their own language and religious habits. Jewish workers in Amsterdam worked with non-Jews in diamond factories that were occasionally owned by non-Jews. The Jewish workers in Paris mostly operated in the clothing industry, where they were largely employed in Jewish sweatshops. Furthermore, while the French trade unions accepted separate immigrant sections, the Socialist unions in the Netherlands did not because they strove to overcome divisions between Jews and non-Jews.

After the First World War there was a greater but still slow diversification in Jewish working class occupations in the Netherlands. This was partly a result of the rise of new industries and the opening up of older sectors that had traditionally been closed to Jews. Despite an upturn in the economy after the First World War and relative prosperity, this development was hindered by the Depression of the 1930s, which hit the Netherlands hard as a result of the Dutch reliance on international trade. It also caused mass unemployment in the sectors in which Jews had recently began to venture. There was some economic recovery in the later years of the 1930s and a Jewish middle group was able to maintain and occasionally

14 Hofmeester, *Van Talmoed tot Statuut*, p. 108, see also pp. 98-101.
15 Hofmeester, *Van Talmoed tot Statuut*, pp. 107-119.

improve its position, but on the eve of the Second World War the majority of Jews in cities such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam was still stuck in traditional occupations and belonged to the impoverished lower middle and working classes. Most of the smaller Dutch towns did not have a Jewish proletariat, although there were many poor Jewish workers and small traders in these towns.

In Germany and France, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe mostly found employment in working and marginal middle-class occupations. Compared to the Netherlands, in Germany and France relatively many Jewish hawkers and small tradesmen moved into larger-scale commerce such as wholesale (in the Dutch provinces many Jews had been hawkers, but if successful, they were more likely to become shopkeepers). In Belgium, there was individual Jewish success in the retail and services sectors, while the Antwerp diamond industry sustained its growth after the decline of Amsterdam and employed many Jewish workers. There was also a concentration of Jews in the Belgian leather, textile, fur and fashion trades.

What made Jewish workers in the Netherlands stand out was their at times extreme poverty. The deprivation among the Jews in Amsterdam had long been endemic.[16] In 1859 just over half of all of the Jews in the Dutch capital received support in the form of food and fuel.[17] They shared this hardship with non-Jews. By the middle of the nineteenth century there was much poverty among Dutch workers, notably in terms of housing conditions. Fifty years later the difference between Jews and non-Jews appeared to be sharper. Although contemporary figures are unreliable and have to be treated with care, M.H. Gans[18] has used them to show that in 1900 just over 2 per cent of the total Amsterdam population lived off charity, but among the Jews over 11 per cent suffered a similar fate – more than 6,000 Jews in Amsterdam in 1900 were unable to make ends meet without support. During the 1920s and 1930s many Jews still belonged to lowest income groups in Amsterdam. In 1929, 610 Jews formed about 27 per cent of all the street traders in Amsterdam who had to rely on municipal financial support, which was provided in the form of credit to buy merchandise but often proved insufficient. No less than 60 per cent of all the Jewish ragmen in the capital lived on social benefits.[19]

Trade unions tried to relieve poverty as did Jewish charities, but social support came increasingly from public provisions. During the first half of the twentieth century public care begun to replace private charity. New legislation brought

16 For a comprehensive and detailed analysis, see K. Sonnenberg-Stern, *Emancipation and Poverty*.
17 Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society", p. 46.
18 Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*, p. 95. Compare, Hofmeester, *Van Talmoed tot Statuut*, pp. 30-32.
19 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 243; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 132.

in social insurance, including cover for times of illness, incapacity and old age. Meanwhile, private initiative remained essential but became more efficient, for example, to support orphanages, hospitals and care homes. In the care sector some segregation of Jews continued. M.H. Gans has presented figures showing that in 1927 there were three general institutions for the old and the infirm in Amsterdam with a total of 1,288 inhabitants, seven Protestant institutions with 835 inhabitants, five Catholic institutions with 1,031 inhabitants and six Jewish institutions with 400 inhabitants. Gans has also used the figures to illustrate how well supported the Jewish institutions were. All these institutions received voluntary private donations in addition to public funding. The Protestant institutions got 13,254 guilders in donations, the Catholic ones 45,860 and the Jewish 115,652.[20] The last figure illustrates the popularity of institutions such as the Joodsche Invalide, which was a source of pride in the Jewish population, but it also emphasised segregation as it showed that the Jews continued to a large extent to look after their own, as they were expected and prepared to do.

In addition to private and municipal efforts, Socialist organisations made attempts to raise living standards for all workers, including Jews, for instance through better housing conditions and self-improvement. Slums in the old Jewish neighbourhood of Amsterdam were demolished, new houses and entire neighbourhoods were built. Working-class people were offered an all-encompassing new way of life. Smaller family sizes were promoted. Women were allocated a new domestic role, whereas previously they had been more involved in work and maintenance of religious habits. Not everybody was comfortable with this new world, people often returned to the old neighbourhood and some remained strangers in their new surroundings. By 1940 many had benefited from social legislation, rehousing and self-improvement, but the poverty among Jewish workers and unemployed remained rampant.

National politics and government

Jews who participated in politics devised and implemented some of the new social policies. In the Netherlands the parliamentary system of government had been introduced in 1848, but until 1888 the electorate consisted at most of one-tenth of the total population; universal suffrage was not achieved until the end of the First World War. Nevertheless, the 1848 constitution offered new freedoms of association, meeting, religion and education, and brought about further democratic reforms. In 1797 two Jews had been elected to the Second National Assembly of

20 Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*, pp. 107-108.

the Batavian Republic, but now more Jewish men were able to stand as candidates in elections; Dutch women did not win this right until 1917. There was always at least one Jewish member of the Dutch parliament between 1849 and 1940, which shows that individual Jews were able to participate in national politics. There was occasional overrepresentation. In 1940, out of the 100 members of the Second Chamber, eight were of Jewish descent, including four Social Democrats, two Radicals, one Liberal and one Communist.

One of the Social Democrat members of the 1940 parliament was Van Gelderen. In his early career he had risen from the position of clerk in the statistics bureau of the city of Amsterdam to head of the statistics service of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce in The Hague. Later he took up the post of head of the crisis department of the ministry for colonies, an exceptionally high position for a Jew. Van Gelderen was also active in the academic world, where eventually he was appointed to the Chair in Sociology in the legal faculty of the University of Utrecht. He was also a curator of the scientific bureau of the Social Democratic Workers Party and contributed to the party's employment plan. In 1937 Van Gelderen won his seat in parliament and two years later he became deputy chairman of the Social Democrat faction in the Second Chamber.

Jews were first elected for the Second Chamber as Liberals, later also as Radicals, Socialists and Communists. The Christian parties remained closed to Jews, unless they had converted to Christianity. As has already been noted, two Jews were appointed as government ministers before 1940. This is a relatively low number when reviewed in an international context. Blum's two French governments of the 1930s had five Jewish ministers, including Blum as prime minister. In Italy in 1873 fears about Catholic resistance prevented the appointment of a Jew as a minister. However, in 1891, Luigi Luzzatti was appointed minister of finance. Eleven years later, Giuseppe Ottolenghi, a former member of Garibaldi's militia and commander of an army corps, was appointed as minister for war – the first Jewish defence minister in modern Europe. In 1910 Luzzatti became prime minister, following in the footsteps of former agriculture minister Alessandro Fortis who in 1905 had been appointed as first minister in Italy, the first country in Europe to have a Jew in that post. Luzzatti served twice as first minister. Later, Jews were appointed in several Mussolini governments, including Guido Jung, who was minister of finance from 1932 to 1935.

The causes of the international differences can be found in specific national circumstances in the twentieth century. In France the political atmosphere that formed the background to the formation of the Blum government was different from the Dutch political climate, which was similar to Belgian politics. In France the political parties were not so solidly and coherently organised as their Dutch and Belgian counterparts, and the country also enjoyed less political stability than the Netherlands and Belgium. With more frequently changing governments came

more opportunities for appointments of new people. Furthermore, the Dutch and Belgium populations were politically more passive than the French. In general, the Dutch and Belgians felt secure within the institutions created by their parties and churches. In the Netherlands, the traditional religious parties, which excluded Jews, were therefore able to maintain political dominance. The Dutch Socialist Democrats did not gain access to the government until the eve of the German occupation. In a Western European context the Dutch Socialists were relatively weak. The French Socialists had long supported or formed part of the government. In Belgium the Socialist movement was stronger than its Dutch equivalent in terms of the number of votes and seats they won in parliament – the Parti Ouvrier Belge was more fully integrated into the parliamentary system than the Dutch Social Democrats and participated in several governments before 1940.

In Germany before 1933 Jews participated in politics through the Centre, Liberal, Socialist and Communist parties. However, after Walter Rathenau's murder in 1922, only one Jew served as cabinet minister of the Weimar Republic and none were found in the cabinets of Prussia and smaller German states. Apparently, the prejudices or political objections were too great. As stated earlier, in Italy Jews participated at national government level well into the Mussolini era. Between 1928 and 1933 almost 5,000 Jews joined the Italian Fascist party, but their support was on par with non-Jews; about one out of every ten Italians was a party member. Equal numbers of Jews participated in the Italian anti-Fascist movements, but they were somewhat overrepresented in leadership roles, notably in the middle-class movement Giustizia e Libertà, the moderate wing of the Socialist party and the Communists.

Nevertheless, Jews played a prominent role in the Dutch non-religious parties. Despite the problem about his candidacy for the First Chamber, Wertheim had been head of an Amsterdam Liberal section. Jews were active in several Liberal parties, including the diamond merchant Asscher, who was elected on the Provincial Estates for Liberal State Party. A high number of Jews were active in the Social Democratic Workers Party. The most prominent Jewish Socialist before 1940 was Polak. He helped to establish the party in 1894 and was its chairman from 1901 to 1905. In 1902 he became a member of the Second Chamber, when he was elected in Amsterdam III, which included the old Jewish neighbourhood. Polak was a member of the First Chamber from 1913 to 1937. Wijnkoop stood at the birth of the Dutch Communist movement when he left the Social Democratic Workers Party in 1909 to help establish the Social Democratic Party, from which later the Communist Party arose. Wijnkoop was a member of the Second Chamber from 1918 to 1925 and from 1929 to 1940. Meanwhile, other Jews filled leading positions in the party, including the former diamond worker Paul de Groot.[21] Some of

21 For his biography, see Stutje, *De man die de weg wees*.

Wijnkoop's followers broke with the Communists and formed the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party in 1935. Although a few of these politicians occasionally spoke at Jewish meetings or were members of Jewish organisations, none of them asserted himself as a Jew in their political activity or acted as a representative of the Jewish population. Instead, they were motivated by an ideology and stood for a population group or a segment of the Dutch population that was not specifically Jewish.

Local politics and administration

More than in national governments Jews in the Netherlands were able to participate in local administration. In Dutch Jewish historiography it has long been claimed that before 1940 no Jew was appointed as mayor in the Netherlands because of reservations in permitting Jews to represent the whole society.[22] This claim needs to be readdressed. There were a few Jewish mayors in small towns. Their appointments were possibly outcomes of or rewards for their military and colonial service.[23] In several larger towns and cities, Jews served as deputy or acting mayors, not installed by the national government but appointed by local councils.[24] That no Jews were appointed as mayors in major Dutch towns and cities was probably the result of traditional appointment policies. At the start of the twentieth century local government and administration were still in the hands of the old elites, despite the rise of the new Christian parties towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the early years of the twentieth century the vast majority of mayors was Liberal. The Liberals apparently overlooked or disregarded Jewish candidates in their parties for the post of mayor. The Christian parties that gained

22 See, for example, Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 270.

23 Jacobs, *Herinneringen van Dr Aletta H. Jacobs*, p. 56; R. de Leeuw van Weenen-Van der Hoek, "Joden op Voorne-Putten, een onderzoek naar beroepen", p. 30. See also the entry for Samuel Jacob da Silva (1875-1943) in *Joods Biografisch Woordenboek* (JBW). I am grateful to Hans Blom for referring me to the dissertation of I. van Wilde, "Nieuwe deelgenoten in de wetenschap. Vrouwelijke studenten en docenten aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen 1871-1919" (Amsterdam, 1998), which mentions the appointment of Eduard Jacobs (p. 290, footnote 48). Aletta Jacobs mentioned in her memoirs that her brother Eduard became mayor of Lonneker in 1893, and in 1906 of Almelo. De Leeuw van Weenen-Van der Hoek has found that Samuel da Silva was mayor of Zwartewaal from 1924 to 1932 and subsequently of Oostvoorne until 1938. Like two of his brothers, Eduard Jacobs had followed a professional military career. Da Silva had been a district governor of Coronie and Boven-Para in the Dutch colony of Suriname.

24 Jewish deputy mayors included N.M. Josephus Jitta in Amsterdam, Simon van Aalten in Rotterdam and L. van Lier in Utrecht. According to the JBW, Josephus Jitta was alderman in Amsterdam from 1905 to 1917, Van Aalten was alderman in Rotterdam from 1916 to 1923 and Van Lier was alderman in Utrecht from 1902 to 1908. The last two were also elected as members of the Provincial Estates.

political power after the Liberals simply had no Jewish candidates. The Social Democrats had to wait for appointments as mayor.

Many Jews participated in local Dutch politics as municipal councillors and aldermen. Outside the main cities, these men often combined local political functions with positions in local Jewish congregations. However, in some towns with significant Jewish populations, Jews were not represented on the municipal council. In Oss they had no seats before 1920, despite the presence of families such as the Van den Berghs. In contrast, Godfried Salomonson was alderman in Almelo from 1869 to 1885 and from 1889 to 1895. He came from the family that ran the leading textile firm G. and H. Salomonson.

In Amsterdam, after the introduction of universal suffrage, the Social Democrats held about one-third of the municipal council seats and became the largest party on the council. Polak won the first Socialist seat in the early years of the twentieth century. Following Polak's success, Socialist councillors included a relatively high number of Jews. Early in the 1930s no less than four of the six Amsterdam aldermen were Jews, including one Liberal and three Socialists. However, this was exceptional, even by Amsterdam standards. In 1933 the daily newspaper *De Telegraaf* condemned the fact that four aldermen in Amsterdam were Jews,[25] but making an issue out of a local politician's Jewishness remained an isolated incident. Later the number of Jewish aldermen declined. By 1940 there was only one left – Emanuel Boekman, with five Jewish councillors, including three Socialists and two Liberals.

The Jewish councillors and aldermen in Amsterdam did not represent the Jewish population of the capital, although some had large support in neighbourhoods where relatively many Jews lived and Jewish politicians from time to time acted on issues that affected many Jews. This involved Salomon Rodrigues de Miranda, a Socialist who had become alderman in 1919, serving for almost twenty years with a few interruptions. During these years he promoted a variety of issues, including the socialisation of food supplies and market centralisation. During the 1930s economic crisis De Miranda advanced social housing and other construction activity to reduce unemployment and improve living standards. This policy also contributed to his demise. In 1939 *De Telegraaf* accused De Miranda of irregularities in the allocation of construction sites in Amsterdam. He was said to have used his position to favour friends. There were also suggestions of corruption. A subsequent council investigation found that the alderman had not been careful in his appointments.[26] Although no reference was made to De Miranda's Jewishness, this could have played a role in the public's perception of the scandal. During the

25 Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society", p. 52.

26 Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 84. For his biography, see Borrie, *Monne de Miranda*. De Miranda's defence against the accusations, *Pro Domo*, was published in 1997.

following council elections the Social Democrats lost three seats, and the National Socialists won three.

No political pressure group

In addition to operating as individual politicians and party members, Jews could have acted as a political pressure group. They did so only on a very few occasions in the Netherlands, for example, through the Alliance Israélite. It is impossible to establish whether there was a clearly defined Jewish electorate before 1940. Prior to 1854 Jews had been under-represented in the Amsterdam electorate in relation to their share of the total population of the city, but this turned to over-representation in 1884. This was a result of social mobility with economically successful Jews becoming taxpayers who were eligible for the vote.[27] As the suffrage was extended and finally made universal, the concentration of Jews in some Amsterdam neighbourhoods and their support for the Social Democrats could swing a vote, as was suggested in the election campaign of Troelstra in Amsterdam 111. However, Jews only formed a majority of the voters in a few Amsterdam neighbourhoods and there are no data on the behaviour of electors suggesting that Jewish voters acted as a group. Nevertheless, in the old Jewish neighbourhood of Amsterdam party politics sometimes took a Jewish character and political debate occasionally used Jewish themes. De Wolff has described such an occasion in his memoirs. He wrote about the three speakers at a Socialist meeting in Amsterdam and said that all three were Jews and used a Jewish joke to get their point across.[28]

The Dutch Zionists rarely acted as a political lobby in the Netherlands, with the exception of organising an occasional appeal. For example, following the Balfour Declaration the Zionists organised a congress in Amsterdam in 1918 that attracted more than 2,000 participants. The congress demanded full civic rights for Jews everywhere, minority rights for Jewish populations in Eastern Europe and Jewish rights to settle in Palestine. A petition to support these demands was signed by 46,578 persons. However, this type of activity was rare and the influence of the Dutch Zionists on Dutch politics was negligible. Nonetheless, the movement offered activities and offices to those who were otherwise unable to participate fully in the politics of the general society.

27 De Vries, *Electoraat en Elite*, pp. 53-54, 62, 65.
28 De Wolff, *Voor het Land van Belofte*, pp. 115, 120.

Changes in Zionism

Zionism was deeply rooted in traditional Judaism and its influence in the Netherlands grew during the first half of the twentieth century.[29] The Association of Dutch Zionists was formed in 1899 and in 1908 it established a Zionist student organisation. In 1912 the Association attracted the author De Haan, although he turned against political Zionism after 1919. During the 1930s members of the student group contributed extensively to general Zionist activity and discussion. At the start of the 1930s the Association had just over 2,000 members, but it grew to over 4,000 members by 1939.[30] However, the influence of Zionist groups and the support for Zionism among Dutch Jews were larger than the size of the Association's membership suggests; the 1918 congress and petition showed that the appeal of the movement could be much larger. With rising tension in Palestine during the 1920s and 1930s and the German refugee crisis after 1933, Zionist demands for Jewish settlement in the Holy Land again received much publicity. Furthermore, over the years Zionism gained a broader appeal and won verbal support from prominent figures such as Visser, Polak and Boekman.[31]

Dutch Zionism also exercised international influence, mostly through individuals such as the banker Jacobus Kann and the Zionist leader Bernstein who emigrated to Palestine, where he became an influential politician.[32] In the international movement and in Palestine Dutch Jews showed typically Dutch characteristics. An estimated 1,600 Jews from the Netherlands moved to Palestine before the Second World War – 58 per cent of them came from outside Amsterdam. Brasz has noted that the Dutch Jews who emigrated to Palestine before 1940 were perceived there as having adopted the Dutch national character in terms of adherence to law and order, and were regarded as disciplined, punctual and industrious.[33]

In addition to the Association, other Zionist groups were formed to look after specific Jewish interests. This included the establishment in 1911 of a Dutch branch of the Mizrachi for Orthodox Jews who supported Zionism. De Wolff, who had been a Association member since 1904, was present at the formation

29 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 157.

30 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", pp. 272-274; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 157.

31 Although not in the same manner or consistently. Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", p. 96, points out that during the 1930s Polak rarely spoke about the relevance of Zionism, while Boekman joined Poalei Zion during this period.

32 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", pp. 272-279; Gans, "Fritz Bernstein (1890-1971) en het onvoorwaardelijke zionisme".

33 Brasz, "Dutch Jews as Zionists and Israeli Citizens".

of a Dutch section of Poalei Zion in 1933.[34] By the mid 1930s this Socialist Zionist organisation had about 500 members in the Netherlands. It attracted mainly young, secular intellectuals. Although they shared ideologies, Poalei Zionists initially had conflicts with other Socialists and with non-Socialist Zionists. After 1933 the disagreements with other Socialists about separate Jewish identities and with other Zionists about Zionist ideology subsided somewhat, with more unity among the Zionists in general; in 1935 Poalei Zion joined the Association.[35]

However, in the years just before the Second World War new disputes arose within the Dutch Zionist movement. Young Dutch Zionists and Zionists among the young Jewish refugees from Germany helped to initiate these debates. In broad terms, the younger generation was seeking what they regarded as a pure form of Zionism, less diluted with non-Jewish values and habits and aimed more radically towards emigration to Palestine. Several young Dutch Jews joined the Palestine Pioneers, who were preparing for *aliyah* (emigration to Palestine). One of the debating issues was the desirability of the use of Ivrit (modern Hebrew) as a daily language for Jews, especially in Palestine, which was proposed by young Zionists but opposed by members of the clergy and the establishment. Generational conflicts as well as the increasingly difficult position in which many Jews found themselves in the Netherlands during the 1930s contributed to the intensity of these debates.

The formation of general Zionist, Mizrachi and Socialist groups and a radicalisation of part of the Jewish youth also occurred in other countries. In Belgium and France, Eastern European Jewish immigrants showed a strong support for left-wing Zionism as well as the non-Zionist Bund and the Communist parties. Native French Jews were less inclined towards Zionism. The Eastern European Jews in France often maintained their language, Yiddish, and organised themselves in *Landsmanschaften* (groups of people from a specific region in Eastern Europe), independent unions, congregations and organisations which were dominated by Zionists. However, the French Pioneer movement was weak, suffered a lack of leadership and did not attract significant numbers of native French Jews. It remained more Eastern Europe in composition and character. In contrast, one of the oldest Jewish youth movements in France was the Eclaireurs Israélites de France (EIF), a Jewish scouting organisation founded in 1923 by Robert Gamzon. At first the EIF accepted only French-born Jews, but during the 1930s children of naturalised French citizens were also accepted. The organisation had Orthodox and non-religious as well as anti-Zionist and Zionist members, thus integrating most segments of the young in the French Jewish population. Under Gamzon's

34 De Wolff, *Voor het Land van Belofte*, p. 271. See also Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", pp. 261-284.

35 For the wider discussions, see Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", pp. 395-454.

charismatic leadership, the EIF organised a wide range of activities, including support for the Jewish National Fund, and eventually had teams of male and female leaders.

Participation in the Dutch art world

The last area for Jewish involvement in Dutch life to be reviewed here is the art world. Relatively many Jews found employment in the performing arts. Probably the best-known cabaret performer in the Netherlands during the 1930s was Louis Davids, nom de plume of Simon David. He had been born in Rotterdam, came from an artist family and established himself after performing at fairs. Davids first formed a duo with his sister Rika, and later with another sister, Heintje. He also performed solo. Davids had a string of popular songs and revue shows with general subject matter, including the song "We gaan naar Zandvoort aan de Zee" and the revue *De kleine man*. Davids, who died in 1939,[36] influenced many young cabaret artists who would later become household names in the Netherlands.

Another well-known Jew in the theatre world was the actress Esther de Boer-Van Rijk, who played Kniertje in Heijermans' play *Op Hoop van Zegen* – a role as a fisherman's wife that seemed far removed from the daily life of Jewish women in the Netherlands. Heijermans was one of the most widely known Jewish authors in the Netherlands during the first part of the twentieth century. His work contained social realism and he made powerful political judgements, reflecting his Socialist political beliefs. Heijermans' novels were well read before 1940, but nowadays he is mostly known for his plays such as *Op Hoop van Zegen* (1900). The Jewish subject matter in his books such as *Kamertjeszonde* is somewhat overlooked, while a play like *Ghetto* (1898) has disappeared from public memory, to resurface only very recently when it was performed in 2009.[37]

De Haan was in many respects an exceptional writer. He was born in Zaandam, but left the town to study at a teacher training college in Haarlem, where he ran into problems with fellow students and staff. After his studies he found it difficult to get a permanent teaching position because of health reasons and his eccentric behaviour. From a young age he published poetry in the literary magazine *De Gids* and the Social Democratic newspaper *Het Volk*. For the Sunday edition of that paper he also compiled a children's column. In 1904 De Haan's first novel *Pijpelijntjes* was published. Its subject matter was the relationship between two homosexual men, a highly unusual literary topic in those days. The two main

36 For a biography, see Peekel, De Groot, *Louis Davids, de grote kleine man*.

37 There is a large body of work on Heijermans. See, for example, Heijermans, *Mijn vader Herman Heijermans*; Meijer, *Waar wij ballingen zijn*, pp. 129-149. See also Harmsen, "Herman Heijermans".

characters in the novel were easily recognisable as the author and his friend A. Aletrino, to whom the book was dedicated. Aletrino quickly bought what remained of the print run and had it destroyed. Nevertheless, as a result of the publication De Haan lost his job at *Het Volk*. A second edition of the book, rewritten to avoid recognition of its characters, appeared shortly after, but received mixed reviews and was commercially unsuccessful (it was not reprinted until 1974). De Haan was better known for his poems. According to Meijer, the author had distanced himself from Judaism after his difficult time at the education college, but in his later poetical work he returned to Jewish themes and "sung as never a Jew in the Low Countries had sung before."[38] De Haan emigrated in 1919 to Palestine, where he was murdered in 1924.

Two Jewish female authors were Sani van Bussum and Carry van Bruggen. Sani van Bussum was a pseudonym for Sani Prijes-Schmidt. She wrote books such as *Een bewogen vrijdag op de Breestraat* (1930) and *Het Joodsche Bruidje, een zedenschets uit onze dagen* (1932). Writing in a time of change, these novels showed her nostalgia for a disappearing world full of Jewish orthodoxy, atmosphere, loyalty and care, which are lovingly described despite the Socialist beliefs this author held earlier in her life.[39] However, Van Bussum had only a limited influence in general society, which cannot be said of Carry van Bruggen (Caroline de Haan), sister of Jacob Israël de Haan; her book *Het Joodje* (1914) was based on his experiences. Like her brother initially, Van Bruggen rebelled against Jewish religion, the values of the older generation and social conventions. She also turned against Zionism. Nevertheless, she composed vivid descriptions of Jewish life in a small Dutch town that did appeal to a wide audience.[40]

A final example of a Jewish author was Emanuel Querido. Between 1919 and 1929 he published under the name Joost Mendes a cycle of novels called *Het geslacht der Santiljano's*, books with a distinctive Jewish subject matter. He also worked in the book trade. In 1898 the 27-year-old Querido opened his first bookshop. In 1914 he became head of the book department of the De Bijenkorf store in Amsterdam, but a year later he was fired after staying off work without giving a reason. He started Em. Querido's Uitgeversmaatschappij, a publishing company for Dutch and translated literature and political non-fiction. In 1933 the publisher set up the Querido Verlag for German literature, publishing the so-called *Exil* literature, work of mostly German authors who were prohibited from publication in

38 Meijer, *De Zoon van een Gazzen*, pp. 49, 97.

39 De Baar, "Sientje Prijes".

40 There is a large body of work on Van Bruggen, For a recent publication, see De Keizer, *De dochter van een gazan*.

Germany. A year later, Querido started the commercially successful Salamander pocket books series.[41]

Jozef Israëls and his son Isaac were two Jewish pioneers in the Dutch fine art world of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Jozef Israëls became one of the leading exponents of the Hague School and one of the most popular artists of his day in the Netherlands. He was a typical representative of the Dutch Romantics,[42] but in addition to his general and socially conscious subject matter, Israëls also incorporated Jewish themes in paintings such as *Joodse bruiloft* (1903). His son Isaac found new subject matter in the general everyday life of the Dutch capital but later produced popular paintings, returning to older subject matter such as outdoor scenes and applying the well-liked impressionist style.

Similarly successful was the Amsterdam painter Martin Monnickendam. His first work was shown in 1897 in the art society Arti et Amicitiae in the capital, but he had to wait 13 years for a solo exhibition; it took place in The Hague. Later his work was exhibited across Western Europe and America. In 1934 Monnickendam was appointed Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau.[43] He wrote about the standing of Jewish painters in the Jewish population and argued it was low. Monnickendam believed that centuries of being barred from the trades had caused contempt among Jews for trades such as painting, and despite praising Jewish artists in public, only few Jews owned paintings with religious Jewish subject matter.[44]

While Israëls and Monnickendam worked mainly in the Academic tradition, a new direction came from other Jewish artists. One of them was the female graphic artist, typographer and lithographer Fré Cohen, daughter of a diamond worker. She was influenced by Socialism, contemporary art and architecture movements such as the Amsterdam School, New Art and New Realism. Cohen believed that art should be part of the everyday life of working-class people and that the accessibility and impact of printed materials could be improved by simple typographic means. She often worked in monochrome and had a robust style, which later became more playful. Her work with its effective use of fonts and originality in design was published in Socialist and Jewish periodicals, influencing many artists during the 1930s. She also received commissions as a freelance artist, for example, from the municipality of Amsterdam, where she had been employed from 1929 until she was made redundant in 1932 because of the city's financial problems.[45]

In their ability to participate in the arts, Jews in the Netherlands did not stand out when compared to Jews in Belgium and France, Germany before 1933 and

41 For a biography, see Querido, Donker, Wink, *Emanuel Querido*.
42 Fuchs, *Wegen der Nederlandse schilderkunst*, p. 149.
43 Monnickendam, *Martin Monnickendam, 1874-1943*.
44 Van Helden, *Hommage aan Martin Monnickendam*, p. 117.
45 For a biography, see Van Dam, Van Praag, *Fré Cohen 1903-1943*.

Italy before 1938. All these countries had successful Jewish artists and writers. What most of them had in common was that they used general as well as Jewish subject matter and were influenced by their Jewish identity and the surrounding society. Just like modern Liberal and left-wing politics, the art world was prepared to accept Jews and their work, welcoming their contribution and being influenced by them. However, with a few exceptions the Dutch public was more interested in their works with a general subject matter rather than Jewish themes. Furthermore, individual Jewish writers and artists in the Netherlands had to work hard to establish themselves. Only a handful achieved a resounding success. Most artists – Jews and non-Jews – found it difficult to make a living out of their art, especially during the Depression of the 1930s.

In short, on the eve of the Second World War the participation of Jews in the general economic, political and artistic life of the Netherlands provided an uneven and sometimes pockmarked picture. In the economy their contribution had expanded in several industry sectors, but because of the economic crisis of the 1930s a few of the advances were undone. Some Jews made good use of the limited opportunities for social mobility, exploiting their talent, intellect, energy and tenacity, while others failed to do so because of general or personal circumstances. Individual Jews were involved in policy-making and implementation at local level. However, they remained underrepresented in the national government and higher echelons of the civil and armed services. While some areas of society remained closed to Jews, the Liberal and Socialist parties and the arts world were open to Jews and their work was appreciated.

The manner of participation in the wider Dutch society differed for groups within the Jewish population. In social terms, Dutch Jewry contained a small contingent of successful businessmen and professionals, a significant middle class with differences in wealth, and a large proletariat with variations in skills and employment status. Local conditions caused further variation. There were more differences in education, age and gender. Some Jews were highly educated and relatively many young Jews took part in higher education, but others left education at primary school level. Some women worked outside the home, notably the young, while others looked after children and the household. Jews in the Netherlands had different political ideologies and life philosophies. Within the Zionist movement, people were divided along political and generational lines. During the 1930s all these groups were affected by the changes in attitudes towards Jews, which made them stand out once more. Like De Haan earlier, many Jews may have felt that their participation in the wider Dutch society was curtailed because they were Jews.

3 Changes in Jewish rituals, habits and lifestyles

Celebrating his sixtieth birthday in 1928, the Socialist Polak told a journalist of a provincial newspaper:

> [The] study of Dutch civilization and the awareness of the country's beauty, in addition to my integration into Dutch society, explains my love for Holland. I consider myself to be a true Dutchman: a Dutchman among the Dutch, but also a Jew among the Jews.[1]

Polak spoke these words in a period when negative attitudes towards Jews appeared to be weakening and Jewish participation in the Dutch economy, politics and arts was increasing. However, by 1940 some of these advances had been reversed. Furthermore, the way in which Jews defined their Jewish identity through rituals, habits and lifestyle was changing. While the Socialist leader may have felt integrated in 1928, the integration of Jews into Dutch society was hampered on the eve of the Second World War. During the 1930s a mixture of integration failings, changes in the wider Dutch society and international events contributed to anxiety among Jews in the Netherlands about their way of life, which turned into fear for their life when German troops invaded the Netherlands in May 1940.

Congregations, rabbis and rituals

Before their emancipation in 1796 the Jews in the Dutch republic had been organised in religious congregations that governed many aspects of their life, including the observance of rituals. These congregations largely followed the traditional divisions between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, indicating the origins of these groups, with the first group coming from Germany and Eastern Europe and the second from the Iberian peninsula. However, with the emancipation of Jews in the Netherlands the congregations lost their control and by the middle of the nineteenth century the religious organisation was in disarray. For long periods there

1 Quoted from a clipping out of an unknown newspaper in Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak", p. 261 (translation by S.E. Bloemgarten).

were no chief rabbis, who otherwise would ultimately have ruled on the application of Jewish law and determined the course of their congregations in conjunction with the lay leadership.

An institutional reorganisation took place in 1870 under government pressure, resulting in the formation of the Dutch Israelite Congregation and the Portuguese Israelite Congregation. The Dutch Israelite Congregation was the umbrella organisation for the majority of Dutch Jews and represented most synagogues. It had a central committee and a permanent executive committee, formed by Jews from Amsterdam, where the majority of Jews in the Netherlands lived. In 1917 the permanent committee was enlarged to five members, including one from outside Amsterdam. The leadership of the committees came from the Jewish lay establishment. The banker Wertheim was one of the early leaders. He served as vice-president from 1878 to 1886 and president from 1886 to 1897. Lay leaders like Wertheim were mostly successful businessmen, who were far removed from the ordinary members. It was often believed that they were lacking in their personal religious observance. Gans has stated that Wertheim in private did not observe Jewish dietary and other religious regulations.[2]

In 1874 J.H. Dünner, the rector of the Dutch Israelite Seminary in Amsterdam, became chief rabbi in Amsterdam. It is possible that Wertheim supported Dünner as the banker was curator and president of the Seminary since 1869. Previously, Dünner had been instrumental in instigating new training methods for rabbis, countering foreign influences and restricting the use of Yiddish. The Seminary, formed in 1836 to replace traditional institutions for higher Jewish learning, had changed its curriculum in 1864, two years after Dünner's appointment as head. Under his guidance, rabbis were educated in the Netherlands, rather than being attracted from other countries as had sometimes been the practice. A requirement for rabbis introduced by Dünner was that they passed the candidate's exam in classical studies at a Dutch university. One of the new and younger rabbis who were active on the eve of the Second World War was Philip Frank, who was married to Bep Dünner, granddaughter of the chief rabbi. A few years before the Second World War Frank was appointed as chief rabbi in Haarlem, where he was to succeed Simon de Vries, who had headed the congregation for forty years and was to retire in 1940.

Dünner was also instrumental in changing synagogue ritual. For example, after considerable controversy, choirs became a permanent feature in the main synagogue services on Friday evening and Saturday morning. The role of the choir was to support the *chazzan* (cantor or leader of the synagogue prayers). This was a controversial change. Some of the opposition against choirs was founded on a fear

2 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 394.

of losing Judaism. Many of the supporters of choir services wanted to add more decorum to the service, similar to the practices in Protestant churches. These supporters also attempted to regulate the service by discouraging members of the congregation to talk or sing along with the *chazzan* and choir on moments when they felt this was inappropriate. In addition, changes were made to the prayer book with the omission of some prayers and simplification of others.

The ritual changes were not implemented in all synagogues. Many smaller congregations were unable or unwilling to introduce a choir. Next to the main synagogues in towns like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, many small synagogues and prayer groups existed. Furthermore, the relatively small groups of recent arrivals from Eastern Europe vigorously maintained their Yiddish tradition and opened their own synagogues. Under these circumstances, further changes to synagogue ritual such as the introduction of an organ in the service mostly failed. For some Orthodox Jews, having an organ in a synagogue reminded them of practices introduced by the Reform movement in Germany, which they rejected as a form of Judaism. By and large, however, the alterations made to synagogue worship produced a more orderly and solemn service, which may have been in line with the wishes of the Jewish establishment, but the adaptations were also intended to modernise rituals and make them more attractive to younger generations.

Different as well as similar developments in Jewish religious organisation and ritual took place in other Western European countries. In France, the main bodies of French Jewry moved to the capital, following the nineteenth-century urbanisation of French Jewry and their concentration in Paris. For instance, in 1859 the Rabbinical School of France was transferred from Metz to Paris. However, immigrants from Eastern Europe often selected or were forced to live apart from the indigenous French Jews, maintained their traditional synagogue rituals and organised their own congregations. In 1913 Edmond de Rothschild, heir to the traditional court Jews and financers, said about the immigrants: "These new arrivals do not understand French customs [...], they remain among themselves, retain their primitive language [Yiddish], speak and write in jargon."[3] His words illustrate the division within French Jewry.

In Germany developments in ritual and organisation took a different course. Like France, there was a relatively large immigrant group that remained somewhat aloof from native-born German Jews in terms of religious observance, culture, occupations and wealth. However, within indigenous German Jewry religious changes went further than in the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Italy. In Germany, membership of a Jewish congregation had been compulsory until

3 Quoted in Birnbaum, "Between Social and Political Assimilation", p. 112.

1876, when it had long ceased to be so in other countries. At the same time the threat of German anti-Semitism as well as other external and internal pressures to change religious ritual, practice and ultimately belief, brought about the successful Reform movement. By 1933, 80 per cent of all German-born Jews belonged to Reform congregations.

In the Netherlands Reform Judaism was attractive for families such as the Van den Berghs, but overall the Reformists hardly made an impact on the majority of the Dutch Jews. This was not due to a lack of initiatives. In 1846 Reform was advocated to win back the many "sons and daughters who had fallen into unreligiousness".[4] During the second half of the nineteenth century other initiatives were taken to introduce Reform services and in 1919 the Association of Liberal Jews in the Netherlands was formed, but these attempts were largely unsuccessful. At the end of the 1920s the World Union for Progressive Judaism approached members of successful business families to introduce Reform in the Netherlands. Although initially it found little interest, this approach acted as a catalysing agent and small Reform congregations were established in The Hague and Amsterdam. Their membership grew with the arrival of German Jewish refugees. However, in the Netherlands before 1940 the Reform movement did not attract large numbers.

The failure of Reform Judaism in gaining extensive support in the Netherlands had a number of reasons. Despite some official Dutch pressure on congregational reorganisation and education, there was no large-scale public debate about Judaism as had taken place in Germany, where Reform was successful. The social composition of Dutch Jewry did not favour Reform. It was largely a middle-class movement and Dutch Jewry was mostly working class. Meanwhile, the Dutch Jewish middle classes were increasingly apathetic in religious matters or adapted their practices to be more in line with those of the surrounding society – the organisational and ceremonial changes described above helped to render synagogue ritual in the Netherlands in a characteristically Dutch, but nevertheless Orthodox manner, which appealed to most worshippers. The Jewish middle classes provided the leaders of the congregations, who insisted on their clerics and members maintaining Orthodox Judaism, although they may have been less observant in their own life. Finally, religious leaders such as Dünner also strongly opposed the Reform movement.[5]

4 Quoted in Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943*, p. 28.

5 Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland*, pp. 27-34, 176. Compare Blom, Cahen, Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, p. 256.

Other elements of Jewish identity

The changes in the congregational organisation, rabbinate and synagogue ritual did not stop what was at the time generally regarded as a drift away from Judaism. The census of 1930 recorded a fall in the membership of Jewish congregations in the Netherlands. Many synagogue seats remained empty during the normal weekly and Sabbath services. The number of seats dropped too. By 1935 there were about 3,500 synagogue seats in Amsterdam, compared to 5,000 in 1880 – on the High Holidays extra spaces had to be created, but still only 10 to 15 per cent of the Amsterdam Jews went to synagogue during these festivals.[6] Similar phenomena occurred in the general society, but they were not necessarily signs of people abandoning their religious identity. There was a certain amount of secularisation, which became apparent in the census when decreasing numbers of people were recorded as church members, notably among Protestants. However, this did not mean they stopped seeing themselves as part of their religious group. It could also indicate that without leaving their community they were no longer practicing all the habits associated with their religion such a regular church attendance.

For Jews secularisation did not always indicate a break with Judaism. Throughout the 1930s people maintained ties with other Jews and hung on to elements of Jewish culture. This happened at important moments in life when people choose to emphasise their Jewishness. In 1934 about 90 per cent of all Jewish boys born that year were circumcised. In 1933 about 91 per cent of all marriages where both partners were Jewish were solemnised in a synagogue.[7] People also maintained elements of Jewish culture in their daily lives. While many no longer observed all dietary laws every day, there was still a demand for kosher products. In 1930 Amsterdam had about 80 kosher businesses, including 32 butcher shops, 11 poultry shops and 18 bakeries.[8] There were other ties to Judaism. Many families subscribed to the *NIW* or one of the many other Jewish periodicals. The *NIW* had about 14,000 subscribers in 1919, a number that rose to 15,000 by 1935. The *Centraal Blad voor Israëlieten in Nederland* and the Zionist publication *De Joodsche Wachter*, which appeared weekly from 1924, had fewer subscribers but were also widely read.[9] All this suggests that on the eve of the Second World War, Jewish identity was no longer solely defined by membership of a religious organisation and synagogue attendance but by a variety of means. The application of these means depended on personal, family and group circumstances.

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6 See for example Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, p. 44

7 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 249.

8 Blom, Cahen, "Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870-1940", p. 254.

9 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 148.

Outside the congregations, an array of organisations catered for aspects of Jewish life. Blom has shown that it can be argued that although Jews were members of Social Democrat, Liberal or general organisations, Dutch Jewry formed a mini population segment, which tended to organise separate institutions on the basis of a religion or philosophy of life.[10] One of the characteristics of the segments was the presence of an establishment that was prepared to accept responsibility for all the group members. Typically, within the Jewish population this establishment consisted of mostly wealthy men, who were often religiously unobservant but nevertheless headed the religious congregations and many other Jewish organisations.

The maintenance of the organisational activity proved a constant financial burden on the Jewish population. It also required considerable effort from individuals in running the mostly voluntary organisations, arranging all the activity and conducting the administrative work. The reasons why people took and continued initiatives for Jewish organisations varied. They included a wish to preserve and raise a kind of Judaism with which the initiators and organisers felt connected, a fear about Christian missionary work, and a desire to offer alternatives for general organisations that barred Jews from their membership and pursuits. There were more reasons. Some of the Jewish organisations offered individuals the opportunity to gain social and communal recognition when they could not get it elsewhere within Dutch Jewry or in the wider society.

Overall, the voluntary organisations were taking over the role of the congregations in reshaping existing and creating new Dutch Jewish identities, and in the main cities they replaced the synagogues as the centres of communal life. These institutions ranged from the Pekiediem and Amarkaliem to the Joodsche Invalide. The Pekiediem and Amarkaliem were founded in 1809 to raise and distribute money for the Jews in Palestine, including Dutch families who settled there. It built a network of collection points, but also promoted Orthodox Judaism.[11] The Joodsche Invalide was a modern institution that looked after the ill, infirm and old, with a continued emphasis on the Orthodox religion. The Invalide was very much an extension of the traditional network of Jewish self-help. The hospital and care home was also a focus of attention and a centre of activity on Friday evenings and during festivals.[12]

With shortening working hours people in the Netherlands had more time for leisure. Numerous groups organised spare-time activity for Jews. Long before the 1930s, many Jews participated in games and sport – not only draughts and chess, but also rowing, fencing, boxing, wrestling, gymnastics, athletics and, of

10 Blom, "Nederland in de jaren dertig", p. 12.
11 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, pp. 81-82, 120.
12 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 728.

course, football, which was becoming increasingly popular. In 1928 Joël Cosman formed the Olympia boxing school. One of his pupils was Dutch champion Ben Bril, who won a bronze medal in the featherweight category at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. Many boys from poor Jewish families boxed. The training and matches meant an escape from their daily routine, but boxing also built self-esteem as it was the art of defence, which required technical skills such as footwork and quick reactions. Bril and Appie de Vries boxed at the Second Maccabia in 1935 in Tel Aviv. Both became Maccabia champions. The team received a large-scale welcome in Amsterdam on their return from Tel Aviv. In a post-war interview Cosman said:

> In Amsterdam we got a great reception. [In front of the station] were two horse-drawn coaches and two bands from the mounted police, and like this we went through the Jewish neighbourhood. Everybody had hung a red-white-blue [the Dutch national] flag from their window.[13]

If Cosman's memory of the Dutch national flags in the Jewish neighbourhood is correct, the success of individual sportsmen also appears to have contributed to communal pride, Jewish confidence and a feeling of being part of the Dutch population.[14] Most of the sport organisations joined by Jews were not entirely Jewish, but some attracted many Jews or consisted almost entirely of Jewish members. Maccabi was an exclusive Jewish club that operated under Zionist auspices.

Jewish education and youth organisations

An area of concern for the lay leadership and religious establishment was Jewish education. Traditionally, Jewish children had received Jewish tuition at home, in small private classes or at schools for poor children. After 1814 a radical reorganisation had taken place in Jewish education, which then became available for girls as well as boys. The free Jewish schools for the poor were remodelled and state inspectors were appointed. From the 1820s there were also state schools for Jews in the larger cities, with tuition and textbooks in Dutch. Most of the Jewish institutions disappeared quickly after the official secularisation of the state and the introduction of new education legislation in the late 1850s, when state funding for denominational education was lost. Later in the century, legal changes and new state funding enabled the setting up and maintenance of denominational schools. However, initially few Jewish schools were established to profit from the

13 Bregstein, Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, p. 244.
14 Gans, *Memorboek*, pp. 708-709.

new opportunities. This could have been caused by the wish not to segregate Jewish children, parental choice or indifference. Liberals and Socialists also favoured non-denominational schools. It was not until the 1920s that several Jewish schools were opened in the large urban centres, where Jewish education became part of a wider curriculum. Growing Zionist influence and renewed desires in Dutch Jewry to preserve or enhance Jewish identity inspired these initiatives. Eventually, Amsterdam had a Jewish infant school, several primary schools and institutions for secondary education. In 1932 there were almost 800 pupils at Jewish day schools in the capital.[15]

Although during the two decades before the Second World War the number of pupils in Jewish schools increased, before the 1920s and notably outside Amsterdam Jewish children in the Netherlands usually attended public non-denominational or Christian rather than Jewish day schools. In a few neighbourhoods in Amsterdam public schools had a large percentage of Jewish pupils and in some of these schools the teaching staff took account of Jewish requirements such as the observance of the Sabbath and Jewish festivals. In general, the Dutch government and local authorities were prepared to accommodate the special needs of Jewish pupils.

With too few Jewish schools to cater for all Jewish children, most of them received Jewish religious instruction after school hours, on Sundays or not at all. The main institution for Jewish education was the Talmud Torah. In Amsterdam it was spread over 13 locations with about 2,000 pupils in 1932, a figure that dropped to about 1,600 in 1938.[16] Most children left the Talmud Torah at age 13, when boys performed the bar mitzvah ceremony in their synagogue. Large Jewish congregations were able to maintain their own classes outside the normal school hours, but in smaller towns congregations struggled to attract Jewish teachers, usually because of financial reasons. Overall, teaching training became more regulated and improved during the twentieth century, resulting in a greater number of Jewish teachers, which relieved some of the staffing problems. The subject matter of Jewish education at basic level consisted usually of Jewish history, Hebrew (mostly through hymn learning and Bible translation), and religious instruction on topics such as High Holy Days and dietary laws.

Other organisations next to the Talmud Torah catered for the Jewish youth. Beis Jisroeil looked after children of poor Jews in Amsterdam. It had a nursery but also organised countless cultural activities and excursions, helping mothers to raise their children in what was regarded as a traditional Jewish manner.[17] Betsalel, which had come forth from an attempt to form a Jewish trade union,

15 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 136.
16 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 135.
17 Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, pp. 242-245.

quickly provided classes for its members on subjects such as Dutch and Jewish history. In 1908 Rabbi Meyer de Hond founded the Betsalel theatre association. In general, at that time bringing people to the theatre as participants in plays or members of the audience was a popular way of educating them. In 1913 a Betsalel youth organisation was founded, which provided learning and cultural activity for Jewish children after they left primary schools. During its heyday in the 1920s over 500 children attended its courses. The Betsalel programme of activities was extended with religious study and travel, all of which were aimed at strengthening Jewish identity and solidarity. In 1928 De Hond started the popular weekly paper *De Joodsche Jeugdkrant*, which was meant for children and contained stories as well as lessons on the Torah and Jewish history. The weekly folded in 1935, showing that despite their popularity, organisations such as Betsalel usually encountered financial problems, which became acute during the 1930s when donors, sponsors and members had less money because of the economically difficult times.[18]

Several Jewish youth organisations were set up in competition with the Workers Youth Organisation, which was Social Democrat in outlook and open to Jews. Orthodox Jews who opposed Zionism established their own groups or supported non-Zionist activity for young Jews. Significantly, many groups were set up for Jewish children and adolescents. This followed a trend in the general society during the twentieth century that championed youth and promoted their activity as a cure for many social problems. The Jewish groups organised sport and other social activities such as holiday trips, thus also giving young people an opportunity to meet their future Jewish marriage partners.

For some Jewish parents giving their children a chance to find a Jewish partner was important. Intermarriage was increasing and not all parents were happy about their child choosing a non-Jewish partner. Marriages between Jews and non-Jews had been rare until well into the nineteenth century. In 1884, for example, 96 per cent of all Jewish electors in Amsterdam were married to Jewish women, while 96 per cent of all Jews marrying in Amsterdam in 1899 had Jewish partners.[19] During these years the percentages of Protestants and Catholics marrying a partner of the same faith were already much lower in the capital, which also indicates that the social distance between Jews and other population groups still remained relatively large. Between 1901 and 1934 the percentage of all Jews in Amsterdam who got married but did so to a non-Jewish partner rose from 6 to 17 per cent. Five years later 22 per cent of all Jews in the Netherlands who got married had a non-Jewish partner, which suggests that intermarriage rose fast after 1934 or that the rate of intermarriage was higher outside Amsterdam than in the Dutch capital.

18 Gans, *Memorboek*, pp. 588, 590; Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, pp. 250-252; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 142.

19 De Vries, *Electoraat en Elite*, p. 78.

More Jewish men than Jewish women married a non-Jew, respectively 20 per cent and 14 per cent in the period between 1931 and 1934.[20] Again, during the 1930s marrying outside the faith was more common among Protestants and Catholics; 39 per cent of all married Protestant women selected a non-Protestant partner between 1931 and 1934, among Catholics this was 48 per cent.[21]

The largest Jewish youth organisation in the Netherlands before 1940 was the Jewish Youth Federation, which included various Zionist youth groups. In 1927 the Federation had 915 members with 17 groups spread over 14 towns. Twelve years later the organisation had 2,009 members. About a third of the 1927 members were religious Zionists.[22] At that time, middle-class adults still played a considerable role in the Federation and preparation for emigration to Palestine was not yet a major aspect of its work. This changed during 1930s, also because of the arrival and participation of young German refugees and Socialists. It resulted in the expansion of the movement as well as its radicalisation. Much of the discussions between young Zionists and the Zionist establishment, mentioned in the previous chapter, crystallised in the Federation.

Preparation for emigration to Palestine also became more important. A new movement developed, resulting in the establishment of *chaloetsim* or Palestine Pioneer groups. The Pioneers were expected to revive Jewish culture, detach themselves from Dutch society and prepare for emigration to Palestine. Special training centres were established. At the start of the war several hundred *chaloetsim* were trained in the Netherlands. There were different Pioneer organisations, including the Association for the Vocational Training of Palestine Pioneers and the Association Jewish Work for the Training of Jewish Refugees. They were mostly intended for young refugees, but there were differences between groups and some included Dutch Jews. The most outspoken leader of the young Zionist radicals was Nordheim, who chaired the Federation from 1934 to 1936, but remained an influential figure in the movement after he left that post.[23] Despite the radicalisation, not all Federation members were preparing to detach themselves from Dutch society and leave the Netherlands. For example, during the mobilisation the already mentioned Federation member De Leeuw married Betty Polak, daughter of a well-known accountant, and proudly wore his army uniform of a reserve first lieutenant.[24]

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20 Croes, Tammes, *'Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan'*, p. 408.
21 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 130.
22 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, pp. 147, 158.
23 Michman, "Zionist Youth Movements in Holland and Belgium and Their Activities during the Shoah", pp. 147-154.
24 Hoogewoud-Verschoor, *Lion*; Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 796.

Jewish identity and everyday life

Apart from congregational membership, synagogue attendance, observance of Jewish rituals on special occasions, and participation in organised Jewish education and activity, Jews in the Netherlands maintained and further developed Jewish identities in their daily life. This was expressed, for example, through the way they spoke, how they lived and what they ate. M.H. Gans[25] has made several observations about the language of the Dutch Jews. Since the middle of the nineteenth century most Jews in the Netherlands spoke Dutch, which had replaced Yiddish as the everyday language. This had been a slow process, with Yiddish being diluted with Dutch, but the development accelerated after the changes in education. By 1900 some families still spoke Yiddish at home, but this was regarded as uncivilised by the establishment. Not only Jews changed their language; the general population also altered language use. Like other living languages, Dutch was constantly changing. Significantly, several Yiddish words were introduced into Dutch and used by non-Jews. For instance, the phrase *het was een sof* to indicate that an event had been bad or the use of the name *Mokum* for Amsterdam showed that language change was part of a process of mutual cultural transfer.

M.H. Gans[26] has remarked that the Dutch spoken by Jews in Amsterdam had certain characteristics that distinguished it from the Dutch spoken by non-Jews in the capital. Jews pronounced some letters less sharp, their intonation was dissimilar, and they gave words extra endings, changed syntax and word order, and made different word choices and combinations. To some, this language sounded more melodious, others found it exaggerated or even vulgar. Linguists[27] have pointed out that it is common to have several speech communities within one town, which show differences in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation or intonation. These sometimes long-lasting differences can be caused by real or perceived ethnic origins. While this is a group phenomenon, individuals within one family can use different spoken variants of a language, not always depending on their education, and one person can use various language forms at different times, often in relation to the people he or she is addressing. The language Gans heard from Jews in Amsterdam can be best described as a non-standard variety of Dutch. For example, the feature he has mentioned of *wij bennen* instead of *wij zijn* (we are) is characteristic of a non-standard language.

Jews may have used language variety for several reasons. An overtly flowery word choice could have been typical for persons who were uncertain about their

25 Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*, pp. 14-16.
26 Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*, pp. 14-16.
27 See, for example, Hiskens, Muyskens, "The Talk of the Town: Languages in Amsterdam, 1507-2007". I am grateful to Natalie Braber for pointing me in this direction.

language use, for example, working-class people who thought their language use was improper or incorrect. This relates to what linguists call striving for overt prestige (in the eyes of users of the standard language) rather than covert prestige (in the eyes of users of non-standard forms). It suggests that the Jewish users of standard and non-standard Dutch wanted to express a sense of belonging, either to the group that apparently spoke the standard variety – proper Dutch – or to the group that did not. As such, how Jews spoke and what they said could have been knowingly or unintentionally a response to attitudes about Jews in the general population, a wish to hide or express a Jewish identity or a desire to participate in or abstain from certain activities. However, the use of a non-standard variant could also cause misunderstandings between Jews and non-Jews,[28] which set Jews apart within the general population.

There were by 1940 numerous dialects in Amsterdam, some of which were specific to neighbourhoods and perhaps Jews had their own dialects in the neighbourhoods where they were concentrated or they adapted the dialect of the neighbourhood in which they lived or to which they moved. Traditionally, the Jews in Amsterdam lived in and near a quarter on east side of the city centre. It was not a restricted area or ghetto and was also inhabited by non-Jews. In other cities such as Rotterdam and The Hague, Jews also resided in a limited number of neighbourhoods. The old Jewish quarter in Amsterdam belonged to the part of the city that had some of the worst slums. Demolition of slums forced their inhabitants to move. Some individuals who were successful in business or employment also moved voluntarily to neighbouring and further outlying districts. However, such moves were by no means permanent. Sometimes people moved on, at other times they returned to the old neighbourhood, either because they preferred living there as they had remained outsiders in the new neighbourhood or because they were forced to return as they could no longer afford the usually higher rents of their new homes. In any case, by 1930 only about 18 per cent of all Jews in Amsterdam still lived in the old neighbourhood. In 1941 there were four neighbourhoods in the capital where more than 50 per cent of the inhabitants were Jewish: Weesperbuurt (70.2 per cent), Afrikaanse or Transvaalbuurt (58.1 per cent), Hoogte Kadijk (57.6 per cent) and Plantagebuurt (51.6 per cent). In other neighbourhoods Jews often lived in clusters.[29]

28 Leydesdorff, "The Veil of History", pp. 229-231.

29 Croes, Tammes, *'Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan'*, p. 368 (footnote 7).

The Social Democrats and lifestyle

Demolition of slums in and near the old Jewish quarter started at the end of the nineteenth century, in a general attempt to improve housing conditions in Amsterdam. For instance, in 1910 work started in the Uilenburg area of the old Jewish neighbourhood. The plans to build new homes came from the Artisans Friendly Society. However, most of the slum clearing and building was the result of a municipal policy to erect social housing accommodation for working-class people. De Miranda promoted and implemented this policy, which was formulated when, under the guidance of Polak, the Social Democrats embarked on an all-encompassing programme aimed at improving general living standards and housing conditions for all workers. The Socialists also attempted to educate workers on how to improve themselves and their families by adopting a new lifestyle, for example, by buying modern furniture, reading worldly books and periodicals, making good use of spare time, giving women a new role in the household and using contraception to reduce family sizes. Social (but when deemed necessary also official) pressure was applied to force people to accept the new lifestyle.[30]

E.E. Gans[31] has established that radical ideological changes occurred among Jewish Socialists. During the first decades of the twentieth century many Jewish Socialists had felt comfortable about being part of a general movement, helping to create a Socialist society, building international workers solidarity and opposing nationalism and Zionism. They usually believed their Jewish origins were only a marginal factor in their identity. However, many still had extensive Jewish contacts through their family, neighbourhood and work. During the 1930s, with the persecution of Jews in Germany, the arrival of refugees and the rise of the National Socialism in the Netherlands, for some the Jewish component of their identity was reinforced. As the Social Democrat Workers Party became a more national than a class-based party, nationalism in the form of Zionism also became less of an anathema. Individuals responded differently. The Socialist leader Polak became less supportive of Zionism, while the Amsterdam alderman Boekman got deeper involved in Poalei Zion.

However, for most Social Democrats a modern life did not include religion. The rise of Socialism was one of the factors that contributed to a decline in religious observance among Jews. However, there was no general drive to disregard traditional regulations. National and local authorities as well as large Dutch organisations such as the railways were prepared to accommodate special Jewish requirements, for example, in relation to festivals and Sabbath observance with

30 Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", p. 13, argues that Socialism and assimilation often went hand in hand, either consciously or unconsciously.

31 Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", pp. 870-881.

special school hours for children and weekly train tickets for travellers. Nevertheless, many Jews found it unnecessary or impossible to observe regulations such as the rules that forbade working and travelling on the Sabbath. Often economic necessity forced people to work or travel on Saturday. And by the 1930s consistent obedience to the dietary laws no longer figured prominently in many Jewish lives. However, as the number of kosher food suppliers in Amsterdam suggests, for many what was regarded as Jewish food was still important. There was a continuing dislike of traditionally prohibited food such as pork meat. There were also favourite dishes, especially for the customary Friday evening meal. These dishes were mainly based on long-existing recipes, handed down through the generations, but adapted to general Dutch customs and consisting mostly of locally produced ingredients.[32] The Jewish cuisine also influenced non-Jews. For example, a *challe* (the plaited white bread baked for the priestly offering on the Sabbath) became a weekend favourite on many Dutch tables – another illustration of the process of cultural transfer, which was taking place before 1940.

It is possible to speculate about the effects of urbanisation on the development of Jewish identities. When people migrate from small towns and villages to large cities, they sometimes look for support in their new environment from individuals or groups who have a similar background. However, others avoid contact, because one of the reasons why they come to the city is to make a fresh start. In large cities peer group control is often less strong than in small towns and villages. City dwellers quickly come in contact with cosmopolitan culture and there are more attractions to leave a traditional way of life than in small towns and villages. This could have affected many of the Eastern European Jews and German Jewish refugees who settled in the Netherlands before 1940. In a similar way, city life and culture could have influenced native Jews in cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. The concentration of Jews in neighbourhoods as well as the return of poverty among Jewish workers during the 1930s could have weakened this influence for some, but it may have encouraged others to break away from Judaism. Meanwhile, the Jewish inhabitants of small towns and villages experienced other pressures and temptations that determined their Jewish identity.

In short, urbanisation did not have a singular and constant effect on the development of Jewish identities. Other factors such as education, participation in new organisations, intermarriage, spare time activity shared with non-Jews, and the Social Democrat drive for a new lifestyle contributed to changes. To use a metaphor devised by E.E. Gans,[33] by 1940 Jewish identity in the Netherlands had become a kaleidoscope. Personal and group experiences changed the composi-

32 Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*, pp. 61-66; Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, pp.168-169.
33 Gans, "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken", pp. 871-875.

tion and colours of the picture, sometimes gradually, but at other times changes were sudden. They were notably so during the upheavals of the 1930s.

Course and speed of integration on the eve of the German occupation

This and the previous two chapters have applied three yardsticks to measure the course and speed of the process of integration of Jews into Dutch society before May 1940: the attitudes towards Jews in the general population and Jewish responses; the participation of Jews in the wider economy, politics and art world; and the changes in Jewish rituals, habits and lifestyles. The application of these yardsticks shows that the integration of Jews into Dutch society was hampered, if not partly reversed during the 1930s; attitudes once again became more negative, the economic participation stagnated and despite changes, many rituals, habits and lifestyles continued to make Jews stand out from the rest of the population. However, while attitudes became more negative, some groups within the Dutch population (such as the Protestants) developed more positive opinions. Despite economic stagnation, participation continued to expand in several industry sectors, such as financial services, margarine production and retail. Although they were not appointed in government posts, individual Jewish politicians made contributions to national policy-making and implementation at local level. The arts world remained wide open to Jews and their work was still appreciated. Some of the changes in rituals, habits and lifestyles formed part of developments in the wider society and did not necessarily mark an end to Judaism, but they were also signs of an integrating group that maintained and developed some of its characteristics.

So, the image of the Jews in the Netherlands that arises from the analysis of their integration into Dutch society on the eve of the Second World War is one of great diversity. Integration was like a running fluid with mixed components on an uneven surface, its course and speed influenced by obstacles that had different effects – slowing the fluid down, clogging it up and reversing its course, but sometimes the fluid trickled through and occasionally it accelerated. However, this flow was overshadowed by international events, the news about persecution, pogroms and prison camps in Nazi Germany, and the fear that the same could happen in the Netherlands. Surveying the ominous premonition that came over the Jews in the Netherlands during the 1930s, Herzberg has written:

> [As] it increasingly worried [the Jews in the Netherlands], it was increasingly exorcised with formulas like "It will not come, it will not come" or "This cannot happen here in Western Europe and certainly not in the Netherlands". And whoever predicted that it would come, and could happen, was accused of inducing

> fear, while they were only expressing the fear that had hung in the air over the Jews in the Netherlands since 1929 and really since 1933 and that was justified. But they did what all people do: they knew very well what was threatening them and closed their eyes. They did not want to be remembered.[34]

Meijer has supported this view by writing: "People were just scared."[35] Michman, Beem and Michman have affirmed that when the war in Europe broke out in 1939 there were signs of fear, but they have argued that Dutch Jewry as a whole was not deeply worried, because it did not expect a German attack on the Netherlands.[36]

The German invasion (May 1940)

In a lightning strike German army units crossed the Dutch border in the very early morning of 10 May 1940. By and large the inhabitants of the Netherlands were ill prepared for the ordeal that awaited them, despite the general mobilisation of the Dutch army in August 1939, a few days before the outbreak of war in Europe, in which the Netherlands had remained neutral.[37] The Dutch army surrendered after four days of fighting and a German threat to destroy the main cities, following the bombardment of Rotterdam. The Dutch government, both the queen and her ministers, fled to London, leaving a population in disbelief, dejection and despair. There was widespread uncertainty and fear about what was to come. Jews shared these feelings, but also expected that the National Socialists would repeat in the Netherlands the persecution and pogroms they had unleashed in Germany after 1933. Thousands of Dutch fled, but the vast majority of the Jews in the Netherlands could or would not escape. Most of them, as Presser has written, quietly hoped for the best, and only for some there appeared to be an opening: "[a] flight on the two remaining ways out, the way out into foreign lands, [and] the way out into death".[38]

Among the 3,000 Dutch citizens who escaped from the Netherlands in May 1940 were several hundred Jews.[39] Fleeing often involved taking difficult decisions. It always meant making a complete break with pre-war existence, positions and relations, and leaving behind family members and friends in uncertain circumstances, although most refugees probably hoped that their exile would only be

34 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging, 1940-1945*, pp. 15-16.
35 Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, p. 100.
36 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 170.
37 Kossman, *The Low Countries, 1780-1940*, p. 682. For a wider overview, see De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vols I and II.
38 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, p. 10.
39 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. III, pp. 430-456.

temporarily. The trade unionist Goudsmit was one of the prominent labour leaders who tried to escape on the last boats leaving the Netherlands on 14 May 1940. The union leader faced a terrible dilemma. When he boarded a ship in a Dutch harbour, Goudsmit was told that his wife was not allowed to accompany him.

We can only speculate on Goudsmit's thoughts in that dockside moment, but is useful for our understanding of his situation to contemplate what he could have been thinking. Should he leave his wife behind, exposed to the expected maltreatment at the hands of the Germans? But if he stayed with her to face what was to come, he would be especially at risk as a prominent Socialist. Perhaps he thought that from abroad he would be able to continue his work and resist the National Socialists. He may have expected the exile to be short, not the five years it turned out to be. He may also have hoped that his wife would soon be able to join him abroad. After all, at this stage the National Socialists still aimed at the forced emigration of the Jews from the territory under their control. In any case, Goudsmit decided to continue his flight and later learned that his wife died in Auschwitz. The couple's two sons and two daughters also perished[40] – a fate that he could hardly have foreseen as he stood on the Dutch quayside in May 1940.

Two of the other Jews who managed to flee were the journalist and later historian Louis de Jong and Meyer Sluyser, the editor of a Social Democrat periodical. Sluyser included De Jong and his wife in a list of Socialists who had to be given safe passage. The couple faced a similar dilemma as Goudsmit, having to leave behind their parents, and they made the same difficult choice as the union leader.[41] After May 1940 fleeing became even harder. Escaping over land to unoccupied France, Spain or Switzerland or across the sea to England or Sweden demanded much determination, resourcefulness, physical strength and resilience.[42] In total up to 2,700 Jews managed to flee from the Netherlands and reach neutral or Allied territory between 1940 and 1945.[43] So far no comprehensive study has been made of the Jews who fled the Netherlands, and it is therefore impossible to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of the information presented here.

The remaining way out in May 1940 was to take your own life. The Netherlands witnessed a wave of suicides committed by individuals, but occasionally entire families died together. It has been estimated that in The Hague there were more than twenty Jewish suicides, including the Liberal municipal councillor Michel Joëls, who wrote to the mayor of The Hague: "My willpower is broken,

40 Melle, "Goudsmit, Isaäc".

41 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. III, pp. 452-453. Compare Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, p. 71.

42 See, for example, Gans-Premsela, *Vluchtweg*.

43 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VII, p. 358, has mentioned the figure of 1,800. Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 204, have put it at 2,700.

and the sorrow that my beloved, good and beautiful fatherland, for which I thank God from the deepest of my heart to have been born there, now has to suffer foreign rule destroys the final remnant of my stamina."[44] Herzberg and De Jong have provided an estimate that well over a hundred Jews in Amsterdam took their own lives.[45] According to Ultee and Luykx[46] the number was higher; hundreds of Jews killed themselves, and later, after the start of the deportations in 1942, the number would again rise sharply.[47]

Some suicides were committed in May 1940 after unsuccessful attempts to flee from the Netherlands. The Amsterdam alderman Boekman was found dead on 15 May 1940. Boekman's daughter and her husband had fled the Netherlands, but the alderman had refused to leave with them, apparently because he regarded this as desertion by a Jew in a leading social position.[48] However, when the capitulation of the Dutch army drew near, Boekman tried to flee and after this attempt was unsuccessful, he and his wife killed themselves. The Boekmans died on the same day as their Socialist friend Van Gelderen and his family. On 10 May 1940 Van Gelderen was one of the few members of parliament who was able to make it to the Chamber. Apparently, he told his Jewish colleague J.E. Stokvis: "It's over."[49] Van Gelderen died four days later with his wife and their two youngest children.

Suicide and flight also occurred in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, and the numbers were higher in these countries than in the Netherlands, but different national developments and circumstances caused anomalies that complicate a proper comparison. Suicide and flight in response to National Socialist persecution first occurred in Germany after Hitler's rise to power in 1933. About 10,000 Jewish suicides took place during the period between 1933 and 1945. Some of them concerned refugees. The German author Kurt Tucholsky wrote to his colleague Arnold Zweig from his exile in Sweden in 1935: "I left Judaism in 1911. I know [now] that this is in fact impossible."[50] Six days later he committed suicide. During the pre-war years suicides by Jews in Germany peaked at the time of the boycott of Jews in 1933 and during the Austrian Anschluss and the Kristallnacht in 1938. They rose again sharply during the deportations with an estimated total of

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44 Quoted in De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. III, p. 451.

45 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. III, p. 450; Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging, 1940-1945*, p. 14.

46 Ultee, Luijkx, "De schaduw van een hand. Joods-gojse huwelijken en zelfdodingen in Nederland 1936-1943". See also Ultee, Van Tubergen, Luijkx, "The Unwholesome Theme of Suicide: Forgotten Statistics and Jewish Suicides in the Netherlands for 1936-1943".

47 A survey of suicides in 1940 in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 41-42, is based on information found in NIOD, Doc II, folder 30b.

48 Borrie, "Boekman, Emanuel (1889-1940)". See also Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 759; Jansen, "Boekman, Emanuel"; Van Dulken, Jansen (eds), *Het leven als leerschool*.

49 Quoted in Schreuders, "Gelderen, Jacob van". See also Fase, "Gelderen, Jacob van (1891-1940)".

50 Quoted in Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, p. 173.

up to 4,000 suicides, amounting to 2 per cent of the remaining Jewish population in Germany, 4 per cent of Berlin Jewry and 10 per cent of those who had received notification of their forthcoming deportation.

Flight was another option. Jews were able to leave Germany until October 1941, although would-be émigrés often encountered great difficulties. In the five years after 1933 about 140,000 Jews left Germany, 26 per cent of the total German Jewish population. Changes occurred from 1938. The number of Jews who left the country rose quickly after the Anschluss. Then, about 20,000 Jews with Polish citizenship were expelled. The horrors of the Kristallnacht forced many more to leave. Finally, between the outbreak of war in summer of 1939 and the end of that year another 100,000 Jews left Germany. The exodus between 1933 and 1941 more than halved the Jewish population of Germany. As a case study of the town of Worms[51] has shown, the vast majority of the Jews remaining in Germany in 1941 still had emigration plans, but they were rendered futile by the wartime developments. After 1941 Jews only managed to flee sporadically from Germany. No numbers are available; Kwiet and Eschwege[52] have mentioned only a few individual examples of people who fled at this relatively late stage.

In Italy the racial laws introduced by the Mussolini government in 1938 had severe consequences for Jews. They were banned from the Fascist party and no longer allowed to marry non-Jews, permitted to own large companies or land, and work in finance or national and local administration. In education, Jewish children were segregated. Thousands of foreign Jews were forced to leave the country. The introduction of the laws led to suicides. The author and anti-Fascist Angelo Formiggini threw himself from a bridge, according to Gina Formiggini, "in the expressed hope of demonstrating to all his countrymen the horror of racial laws that persecuted a few".[53] Others fled Italy or converted to Christianity. Between 1938 and 1943 the number of Jews in Italy decreased by about 10,000 persons.

The number of Jews who fled Belgium after the German invasion in 1940 was higher than the number of Jews who fled from the Netherlands. Possibly as much as half the Jewish population of Belgium ran away from the advancing German army in 1940, as did vast numbers of non-Jews. About half of all the refugees returned to the country after a short stay in France. As noted earlier, a difference with the Netherlands was the relatively large presence of recent immigrants from Eastern Europe in Belgium. They had arrived during 1920s and 1930s. As recent arrivals in this country they may have found it easier to leave everything behind. The number of Jews who fled the German invasion in France was also higher than the Dutch figure. Again, the relatively large presence of Eastern European immi-

51 Huttenbach, "The Emigration of Jews from Worms (November 1938 – October 1941)".
52 Kwiet, Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, pp. 141-150.
53 Quoted in Zucotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust*, p. 43.

grants could have played a role. Furthermore, the fighting in France and Belgium took longer than in the Netherlands, while unlike the Dutch, the population of Belgium and northern France had a living memory of being driven from their homes during the First World War. Later, the existence of Vichy France and Italian-occupied Nice as well as the proximity of Switzerland and Spain offered Jews in France more possibilities to escape. In 1940 France was divided in a northern zone, occupied by the Germans, and a southern zone, ruled by the Vichy government. In 1940 up to 150,000 Jews from northern France fled into the unoccupied zone, thousands returned, but a relatively high number of the refugees from the north settled in Vichy France. In addition, until October 1941 the Germans pushed thousands of German refugees and Jews from Alsace-Lorraine into the southern zone.

In the Netherlands, men like Boekman and Van Gelderen, both prominent Dutchmen, knew their voluntary deaths would make an impression on the wider population. However, like councillor Joëls in The Hague, they were members of a political elite and it is impossible to say whether they were representative examples of the several hundred Jews who took their own lives in May 1940 – such a statement would require much more research, which lies outside the scope of this book. The lack of information about Jewish suicides in the Netherlands also makes it impossible to state that these suicides can be regarded as the ultimate acts of defiance and forms of polemic Jewish resistance as defined by Marrus. To enable the making of such a statement would require a more detailed study of a representative sample of the persons who committed suicide.

Individuals probably had a variety of motives for taking their own lives and those of their children and other family members. Despite the notes some people left behind, we can only speculate about these motives. Fear about persecution could have been a strong motive, but as committing suicide requires determination and self-discipline, it is difficult to conclude that fear was the sole motive. It is possible that people did not want to await the fate they expected and decided to die in a dignified manner. Or they did not wish to become a burden for the people they left behind. A few may have wanted to act in a manner that could be seen as a protest against persecution. A suicide attempt could, of course, also be a cry for help. The descriptions of suicides in this chapter do not confirm these speculations, but they do provide an insight into the background of some people who took this way out in May 1940. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the Jews in the Netherlands was unable or unwilling to get away and could only wait for what was to come with feelings of doubt and anxiety.

PART II

Resistance

4 Apprehension (May 1940 – December 1940)

During his retirement speech in Haarlem in 1940, Rabbi De Vries said:

> From where does the strength, the inner salvation, come now? Brothers and sisters, it can only come from Judaism [...] From our Jewish self-consciousness [...] Jacob made a promise: "When God will be with me." That when was not conditional but of time. It means that when the time will have come – and that time will come – that the Divine promises have been fulfilled, this stone (that Jacob used as a pillow) will be a house of God. That time has come indeed for Jacob, that is: for Israel [...] This way that stone can be: the cornerstone of your inner strength, the basis of your balance, the bulwark of your resistance.[1]

The words spoken by De Vries were a rabbinical response to the German occupation of the Netherlands. They illustrate one of the Jewish reactions to fears about the persecution that was expected to follow the German invasion of the country.

After the capitulation of the Dutch army in May 1940, the Germans imposed their regime in the Netherlands with competing elements from their army, intelligence, security and police services. Dutch National Socialists also strived to gain power. The Dutch civil service, headed by Secretaries General, was mostly left intact and implemented German decrees. The Dutch population at large remained unclear about the intentions of the occupiers. Initially, in an effort to gain the trust of the Dutch, the Germans allowed life to resume its seemingly normal course. In most people's eyes the occupiers seemed to act correctly. There were several manifestations of continued support for the royal family (for example, on the celebration of the birthday of the queen's son-in-law, Prince Bernhard, in June 1940), but only small-scale acts of resistance took place. However, for Jews the outlook remained bleak. The expected pogroms failed to materialise, but occasionally German soldiers and Dutch National Socialists attacked synagogues and persons who appeared to be Jews. Well-known men such as the Socialist and trade union leader Polak were arrested and imprisoned. The occupying authorities also announced decrees, some of which especially affected Jews, such as the ban on ritual slaugh-

1 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 615.

ter. In July 1940 Jews were expelled from the air raid defence service. German Jews in the Netherlands had to report to alien registration offices. In the midst of these early measures dismissals of Jews took place in business, broadcasting and the press.[2]

Romijn[3] has pointed out that the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands was stepped up in degrees, but for contemporaries there was little cohesion or consistency, a lot of confusion and overall bewilderment. Until the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 the German National Socialists had hoped to force Jews to emigrate from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia through maltreatment, humiliation and expropriation of property. Some of these measures were repeated in the Netherlands after May 1940, but now, following the conquest of Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and part of France, millions more Jews had come under National Socialist rule. Other measures than forced emigration were considered and implemented, such as starvation and slave labour in Poland, but the National Socialists formulated no clear plan for the occupied territories in Western Europe until January 1942. It was therefore difficult for contemporaries to predict the consequences of German actions and to decide what reactions were feasible.

Jewish reactions in the Netherlands to anti-Jewish measures taken between May 1940 and December 1940 were characterised by apprehension about what was to follow these measures. Notable responses came from rabbis, but also from outside the religious establishment. Several Jews joined the as yet small resistance groups, an act that sometimes had long-term consequences. The question is whether the rabbinical responses and participation of Jews in early general resistance can be construed as outcomes of the integration of Jews into Dutch society before the war.

Rabbinical responses

One of the main sources for a description of rabbinical responses in the Netherlands has been provided by D. Michman,[4] who has shown how rabbis attempted to steer a course in these new circumstances and solve the practical problems in relation to the observance of Jewish law caused by the German regulations and the general situation in the Netherlands with growing shortages and limited

2 The chronological overviews and summaries of anti-Jewish measures in this and the following chapters are based on Romijn, "The War, 1940-1945". See also Barnouw, *Geschiedenis van Nederland 1940-1945*.

3 Romijn, "The War, 1940-1945," p. 297. Compare, for example, Snatager, *Zo gaan we allemaal ... Brieven van een vervolgd man 1941-1943*, and Van Thijn, *Het verhaal*.

4 Michman, *Religious life during the Holocaust*, pp. 379-399.

imports. For example, when slaughtering without prior stunning was outlawed, they helped to investigate other methods of killing. However, by the end of 1941 Jews were no longer allowed to enter public spaces such as municipal slaughterhouses and kosher meat became a luxury, for many beyond their reach. The rabbis also gave new instructions on how to live according to the Jewish law, including observance of other *kashrut* (dietary law) matters. They advised people what prayers to say and how to obey Sabbath regulations, meanwhile trying to solve matrimonial matters such as grass-widowhood caused by uncertainty about the fate of husbands who had fled or later had been deported or gone into hiding. The main acts of rabbinical leadership were taken in the spiritual domain, through sermons, personal visits, articles and other publications. During his retirement speech in Haarlem in December 1940 Rabbi De Vries set the tone.

De Vries had been born in 1870 in a small village in the east of the Netherlands. He studied at the Seminary in Amsterdam under Dünner, but left in 1892 to take up the post of teacher and secretary of the Jewish congregation in Haarlem. Dünner granted De Vries the right to call himself rabbi. De Vries played a major role in local Jewish life. He also published extensively to promote Zionism from a traditional Jewish point of view. His oratory skills and combative style made him one of the spokesmen of the Mizrachi movement in the Netherlands, which he had helped to found in 1911. This brought him in conflict with other Orthodox religious leaders and the *NIW*, which opposed Zionism. De Vries wrote columns on Judaism for a local newspaper, which were bundled and extended in his two-volume *Joodse Riten en Symbolen* (Zutphen, 1927 and 1932) and became a pre-war reference work on how to live according to the Torah and tradition.

De Vries' 1940 reference to Jacob's promise as the source of strength and his emphasis on the continued need for a commitment to religion were testimonies of his views on Judaism. It was in line with Orthodox theology, which regarded life in the Diaspora as a continuous suffering, which would last until the coming of the Messiah. For Orthodox Jews this suffering was an essential part of the existence of the Jewish people. Relating his own experiences in Bergen-Belsen, Herzberg has written about this aspect of the faith of an Orthodox Jew: "It is the deep conviction about the justification of his existence and accordingly the love for his fate: *Amor fati*."[5] De Vries shared this faith and fate; he was deported and died in 1944 in Bergen-Belsen.

Whereas De Vries appealed to Orthodox Jews, a wider plea was made by his successor in Haarlem, Philip Frank, chief rabbi of North Holland since 1937 and a representative of the younger generation of Dutch rabbis. He wrote in October 1941 in *Het Joodsche Weekblad* that the Jewish community could not be destroyed:

5 Herzberg, *Amor fati*, p. 85.

> In the course of history it has happened several times that parts of the Jewish people suffered so much in their exile that they were submerged. But there was always enough to forge a new link with the past and thus they worked despite everything with hope and trust on the future.[6]

Frank did not omit God from his plea; he was an Agudist, writing that as long as God offered strength and life, the Jewish people would be preserved. The Agudath movement had been established in 1912, after the World Zionist Congress rejected a motion for the funding of religious schools. Its aims were to maintain what Agudists saw as an authentic Judaism and they promoted the supremacy of Torah in all problems facing Jews as individuals and as a nation. However, more than De Vries' final sermon, Frank's 1941 words were also attractive for non-religious Jews. They were also consistent with Frank's later acts.

Frank had been born in 1910 in Hilversum, where his father ran a small shop. The family was not rich, but Frank's parents were pious and wanted their son to learn. While Frank studied, he kept his father's business accounts to repay some of his study costs. He married Bep Dünner, granddaughter of the chief rabbi. M.H. Gans has described him as shy, but certain about his Judaism and full of warm feelings for his fellow human beings.[7] After a German soldier had been shot in Haarlem in January 1943, the Germans took 100 hostages, including three Jews. They singled ten hostages out for execution; one of them was Frank. Before he was shot on 2 February 1943, the 32-year-old chief rabbi behaved with courage and dignity, standing up to his captors and telling his fellow prisoners:

> They [the Germans] are so small; they cannot harm us Jews, only kill us. But Judaism will survive Fascism [...], as so many historic examples have illustrated. We are spiritually far ahead of them. We have to endure this and as a rabbi I belong to my people, I have to support them and strengthen them for their coming suffering.[8]

De Vries and Frank represented two generations of rabbis in the Netherlands. Other rabbis acted and spoke in a similar vein.

In Rotterdam Chief Rabbi Aharon Davids encouraged the continued observance of the dietary laws, assisting people with practical tips and the provision of kosher hot meals three times a week. Davids also stimulated the supply and

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6 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 829. Compare Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, p. 224, who has quoted a Dutch translation of the Hebrew song of Yitschak Lamdan, which was sung by children during the war. The first two lines of the song were: "The chain has not been broken / The chain is still tightly joined together."

7 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 805.

8 Quoted in Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 407.

use of ritual means such as the *tefillin* (phylacteries) for prayer purposes and the maintenance of ritual baths. His congregation continued to organise public synagogue services; overcoming many practical difficulties (for example, the May 1940 bombardment of Rotterdam had destroyed places of worship and other communal buildings, many members of the congregation had left the city and those who had remained there were faced with curfews – the number of Jews in Rotterdam dropped from 10,515 in 1930 to 8,835 in 1941[9]).

Davids was a grandson of Dünner. He had been born in 1895 and studied at the Seminary in Amsterdam, where he joined the Zionist student organisation. He came from a Zionist family; in 1932 his father settled in Palestine. In 1924 Davids was appointed as chief rabbi in the province of Friesland. In 1927 he took up the chief rabbinate in Groningen and three years later moved to Rotterdam. Davids was one of the leaders of the Mizrachi movement in the Netherlands. He had a broad and inclusive view on Judaism, attracted the Eastern European scholar Meyer Landau to the Rotterdam Beth Hamidrasj, established the Institute for Jewish Development, promoted Jewish day schools, supported the Jewish scouts, published a magazine for the members of his congregation and founded a local B'nai B'rith lodge in order to reach out to Jews who did not belong to his congregation. Similarly, he organised meetings for unemployed Jews and Jewish soldiers. Davids' support for Zionism caused problems with the anti-Zionist lay leaders who were about to appoint him as chief rabbi in 1924, but he maintained his point of view and demanded the freedom to promote the Zionist cause, saying: "Once you see the suffering of your people, you cannot sit still where help needs to be offered."[10]

In April 1941 Davids wrote to Chief Rabbi Lodewijk Sarlouis in Amsterdam, suggesting a meeting to discuss German measures and other issues that affected Dutch Jewry. Davids opposed the plans of the recently formed Jewish Council in Amsterdam to ask the Germans to extend its competence over the whole country, because that would weaken congregations and rabbinical supervision.[11] He told a meeting of Dutch chief rabbis in July 1941: "We have to increase piety; there is too little contemplation and too little strength among us."[12] However, rabbinical efforts to counter the influence of the Council failed. Their responses were therefore largely restricted to the spiritual domain. For instance, Abraham Levisson, chief rabbi in Friesland, Drenthe and Gelderland, went to his death singing psalms. Herzberg saw Levisson blind and emaciated in Bergen-Belsen, where on

9 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 497.
10 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 801.
11 Michman, *Religious Life during the Holocaust*, p. 396.
12 Quoted in Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 510.

Yom Kippur he raised his hands and called: "God, give us life, life!"[13] As these men were provincial chief rabbis, it is possible to speculate that they behaved differently from their colleagues in Amsterdam, who had larger congregations and may have been further removed from daily life and ordinary Jews. However, M.H. Gans has written that the Amsterdam Chief Rabbi Sarlouis remained full of courageous confidence and expressed it publicly, even after he was rounded up for deportation.[14] Herzberg has mentioned a speech by Sarlouis, when the chief rabbi was with his family awaiting deportation in an Amsterdam transit depot. Herzberg was not present and has not supplied details of the speech, but has stated that Sarlouis' words were so powerful they spread out of the prison on to the street.[15]

These rabbinical responses also occurred among the Dutch followers of Reform, that is the Liberal Jews who had congregations in Amsterdam and The Hague. The congregation in The Hague declined when its German members and rabbi were forced to leave after the occupiers made the Dutch coast a prohibited area for non-Dutch nationals; the last service took place on Yom Kippur in 1942. However, in Amsterdam the congregation held services in private homes after their synagogue was closed, helped people to maintain Jewish practices and its women's association continued with social work.

At the centre of Liberal activity in Amsterdam stood Rabbi Ludwig Mehler. He had come from Berlin in 1935 and was appointed as rabbi of the Liberal association. At first, Mehler was not accepted by all members of his congregation, but he won most people over after he learned Dutch and proved knowledgeable in Jewish matters. He was an active rabbi, blessing weddings, delivering sermons, leading services and teaching, but also setting up youth clubs and women's groups. In 1935 he became head of the Sunday (later Wednesday) school in Amsterdam, which taught about 60 pupils. Mehler supported Zionism. He said that in their support for the Zionist cause the Dutch Liberal Jews differed from Reform Jews elsewhere: "[In the Netherlands we feel] as a part of the Jewish people, and everything that strengthens the cohesion between Jews is important to us."[16] During the war his congregational work completely exhausted him, but Mehler continued to encourage and activate members, finally conducting Liberal services in the Westerbork transit camp after the deportations had started.

Like the Orthodox rabbis, Mehler's main activity was in the spiritual domain. The question can be asked whether the rabbinical responses discouraged Jews to disobey German orders and join resistance groups. The evidence presented here does not support such a view. The rabbis mentioned above defied persecution by,

13 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, p. 226.
14 Gans, *Memorboek*, pp. 798-801.
15 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, pp. 225-226.
16 Quoted in Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland*, p. 121, see also pp. 115-120, 124-125, 131, 138-139.

as Bauer[17] has written, helping Jews to keep body and soul together, and by what Michman[18] has called the sanctification of life or what Marrus has classified as symbolic Jewish resistance. The rabbis also offered moral support to people who were unable to disobey German orders. An element of resignation to fate can be detected in the rabbinical response. That could have been an outcome of their integration into Dutch society, because that resignation was common in the wider Dutch population. However, it was also part of a Jewish, not specifically a Dutch, tradition.

Responses in Germany

The rabbinical responses in the Netherlands were not exceptional in a Western European context. In Germany Hitler rose to power in 1933 and the National Socialists embarked on anti-Jewish measures, with changing policies, aims and intensity, but culminating in the deportation and mass killing that started in 1940. The National Socialists repeated some of the measures taken in Germany before 1940 in the Netherlands after May 1940. So it is possible to compare the responses to these measures. Much of the efforts of the leaders of German Jewry after 1933 were aimed at preventing the disintegration of their communities, ensuring the continuation of Jewish life, providing for the material needs of individuals and bolstering their spiritual strength. One of the German Jewish leaders, Martin Buber, tried to confront the problems on an ideological level, offering Jews a moral defence to persecution. At the centre of his thinking was study of the Torah, of which he emphasised its unchanging, transcendental values. In his focus on the Torah, Buber did not differ from the rabbis in the Netherlands.

At a practical level, individuals and organisations in Germany also took initiatives. The National Socialist rulers prohibited ritual slaughter in 1933 and stopped the import of kosher food in 1938. In reaction, small numbers of Jewish slaughterers started or continued to perform their work in secret. The Jüdische Frauenbund produced vegetarian recipes to help its members overcome the lack of kosher food and observe the dietary laws in general. The Bund had been founded in 1904. It resigned in 1933 from the umbrella organisation of Jewish women in Germany to continue its work. With about 50,000 members and hundreds of affiliated groups, including many new members and chapters, it tried to alleviate the worsening conditions, maintain traditions and help the needy.

17 Bauer, *They Chose Life*, pp. 32-33.
18 Michman, *Holocaust Historiography*, pp. 217-248.

Kaplan[19] has emphasised the role of gender and provided a full, intimate and nuanced picture of Jewish life in Nazi Germany. She has demonstrated how Jewish reactions to anti-Jewish measures varied, corresponding to the stages of the persecution, but were mostly aimed at practical arrangements to preserve a sense of normality. At communal level, education, religious observance and charity were maintained and emigration was organised, while individuals attempted to evade anti-Jewish measures. This resulted in a vital and intense Jewish life, until it was made impossible by the deportations. Kaplan has shown that the mostly middle-class women – with a significant minority of working-class immigrant females – often responded differently from men, because their role in the family changed with increased burdens to their daily life. The women took up new jobs and training, maintained their dignity and volunteered for Jewish aid, meanwhile mediating for their family in the local neighbourhood and helping to protect their men. Integration influenced these reactions to persecution. Kaplan has argued that women were integrated into their immediate community; men were integrated in their work, higher education, culture and politics – all areas from which the Jewish males were removed after 1933.[20] Unfortunately, comprehensive studies on Jewish daily life in the Netherlands during the period of German occupation comparable to Kaplan's work have not yet been conducted, so we lack detailed knowledge about the responses of everyday people to the early anti-Jewish measures in the Netherlands. However, it is obvious that the Dutch rabbinical response in providing spiritual guidance was unexceptional in an international context when compared to Germany.

Spiritual responses outside the rabbinate

Spiritual responses by Jews to the new situation after May 1940 in the Netherlands also occurred outside the rabbinate. An extreme, but informative example was the prison activity of Herman Salomonson. He composed poems in which he worded the feelings he experienced and tried to instil belief and courage in his fellow prisoners (collected and published in 1946 under the title *Recrutenschool en andere gevangenisverzen* [*Recruiting School and Other Prison Poems*]). In his poem "Luchten" ("Airing") he wrote:

> We step out of the silence of these walls
> now one by one into the sober daylight.
> One moment during the slow passing of hours

19 For her conclusions, see Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 229-237.
20 Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 65-66.

we are together, as one family.
[...]
No matter how long and burdensome the test,
there is one solace that sweetens loneliness!
We are travelling together during the silent hours
towards the light of God's parade.

Salomonson was a descendant of the Salomonson and Wertheim families. His ancestor Moses Salomon settled in Almelo at the turn of the nineteenth century. Salomon's sons started the textiles firm G. and H. Salomonson. Two members of the family married into the Wertheim family. One of them was the merchant Maurits Salomonson who married Dinah Wertheim, a daughter of the banker Wertheim. The couple had two sons: Herman and Johan.[21] Herman studied at the technical university in Delft, but rather than becoming an engineer, he turned his hand to writing. During the First World War Salomonson wrote poems, using the pseudonym Melis Stoke, the name of a medieval Dutch chronicle writer. In 1929 Salomson published his novel *Zoutwaterliefde* (reprinted in Leiden in 2006, with a biography by his daughter). Meanwhile, he worked as a journalist – first in the Netherlands, then in the Dutch East Indies. In 1927 Salomonson became Director of Aneta, a Dutch press agency that specialised in news relating to the East Indies. Five years later he was awarded the title Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau. He was described in 1946 as a "journalist through and through, a remarkably fast worker, travelling a lot, with a rarely failing ingenuity, with a nice house and fond of his family."[22]

In 1940, Salomonson, who had converted to Christianity a few years earlier, was stationed in The Hague, where his agency had offices in the building of the general Dutch press agency ANP. The Germans removed the Jewish journalists of both agencies one day after the capitulation of the Dutch army, including Salomonson and J.F.E. Belinfante, the assistant director of the ANP. Both men were arrested. Belinfante was later transported and died in Buchenwald. On 26 November 1940 Salomonson was incarcerated in Scheveningen prison, a place used as a detention centre for arrested members of the resistance who were under interrogation or awaiting trial or execution of their sentence. In August 1941 Salomonson was transported without trial. He died in Buchenwald or Mauthausen, possibly on 7 October 1942; officially, it was proclaimed that he was shot while trying to escape.[23]

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21 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 506; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, 278-279.

22 De Brouw, "Voorwoord", p. 5.

23 Weber, *Gedenkboek van het 'Oranjehotel'*, pp. 196-199, 234, 299. For Salomonson, see also Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 53-54, and NIOD, Doc I, folder 1470.

In his poems, Salomonson expressed his emotions and tried to provide an example for others to follow. The poem quoted above contains references to a feeling of belonging as well as the forthcoming release from suffering. In the anticipation of the final lines there are parallels with the song of the Jews in Amsterdam who were about to be deported and the Socialist idea of good overcoming evil (both quoted at the start of the introduction to this book). All of these had of course their origins in a shared religious and ideological heritage. Although Salomonson had converted to Christianity, his ideas were also not far removed from the rabbinical responses. They offered guidance to the Jews who were affected by anti-Jewish measures. De Vries adopted a traditional rabbinical response to persecution. The much younger Frank addressed a wider audience, including non-religious Jews, but his beliefs remained firmly grounded in pre-war religious thinking. Other rabbis, including Davids and Mehler, followed a similar path. Like Salomonson they publicly offered people spiritual support, which can be interpreted as an expression of thoughts that had been formulated before May 1940 but gained a new significance after the German invasion of the Netherlands.

Participation in early general resistance

It is possible that Salomonson was connected to the Ordedienst, an early resistance group formed by professional soldiers and conscripts who served during the mobilisation and participated in the fighting in May 1940. No Jewish armed resistance groups were formed in the Netherlands during the period of occupation, but Jews formed part of general groups that resisted the Germans. Some Jews were among the people who formed resistance groups in response to the German invasion of the Netherlands and the early anti-Jewish measures taken by the National Socialist regime. The question asked at the start of this chapter is whether this activity can be regarded as an outcome of their integration into the Dutch society.

Jewish participation in the general resistance started in 1940 with the De Geuzen group. In the autumn of that year the German police made hundreds of arrests, including many members of this group. Among them were two Jews, Bernard IJzerdraat and Sebil Minco. IJzerdraat had helped to distribute the clandestine newsletter *Geuzenberichten* and may have been involved in sabotage of telephone communications.[24] Minco was an 18-year-old student. He stood trial in a German military tribunal in The Hague in February 1941, together with some 40 other members of De Geuzen. According to the warrant for his arrest,[25] Minco

24 Paape, *De Geuzen*, pp. 13-64.

25 Minco, *Koude voeten*. See also Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 49-50, based on NIOD, WBN 3KSTL 498/41.

had joined the group in November 1940 and gathered information about military installations in and around Rotterdam, which was to be sent to England. The tribunal condemned 18 of the accused to death, but Minco was pardoned because of his age and sentenced to life-long imprisonment. It is possible that the Germans had not discovered his Jewish identity. He survived the war.

A relatively large number of Jews were among the defendants in two trials of members of the Ordedienst. They included Maurits Hes, Barend Davidson, Salomon Vaz Dias, Rudolf Hartogs, Rudolf Lewin, Abraham Wijnberg, Abraham Jakobson and Jacob Lopes de Leao Laguna. What these men had in common was their army service or personal contacts that had brought them into the trial of the Ordedienst members. Their trial documents[26] reveal some of their activities and personal background.

Hes was a lawyer in Amsterdam. He was arrested in April 1941. Davidson came from Zwolle. He was a cattle trader and later worked as a paper merchant. Both were accused of military espionage, tried in Berlin and sentenced to death. Vaz Dias was a journalist. In the autumn of 1940 he had discussions with the Social Democrat Frans Goedhart about setting up communications with London. Hartogs came from Germany and lived in Utrecht, where he was unemployed when asked by the Ordedienst to collect and hide explosives and arms. He also worked as a courier for the group. One of the weapons he collected was allegedly intended for Lewin, a German Jew, who was to liquidate a dentist working for the Germans. The assault did not take place because of the arrests of the men.

Wijnberg was the son of a wholesale merchant in Groningen. He was said to have joined the Ordedienst in November 1941. Half a year later he was asked to participate in the liquidation of a Dutch National Socialist. On the evening of 20 April 1942 four members of the Ordedienst gathered outside the home of the National Socialist. Wijnberg had been given a Labour Service uniform. He was to wait outside with the getaway car. At about 9.30 pm the National Socialist came home from a party to celebrate Hitler's birthday. The resistance members took him inside, but there was confusion about what to do next. Wijnberg was called in. He hit the National Socialist over the head with his gun. The man fell and one of the other Ordedienst members shot him. Later, at the time of his arrest, Wijnberg was carrying two guns. He was imprisoned in Haarlem, where he made an unsuccessful attempt to escape.

Jakobson was a manufacturer from Overveen. He joined the Ordedienst in the summer of 1940. By the time of his arrest in July 1942 Jakobson was district commander in Drenthe, responsible for setting up a provincial network. Lopes de Leao Laguna had a construction firm that had erected military installations before

26 For the Ordedienst, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 50-53. The trial documents can be found in NIOD, WBN StPL (HLS) III 56/42, StPL (RKA) 390/41, 9KStL II153/42, Doc II, folders 582a and 583.

the war. Like Jakobson he joined the Ordedienst in the summer of 1940. His role in the organisation remains unclear, but he was caught in May 1941 and tried together with Maurits Kann, a member of the *Het Parool* group (see below), which suggests that he could have been involved in clandestine publications. Hes, Davidson, Vaz Dias, Hartogs, Lewin, Jakobson, Wijnberg and Lopes de Leao Laguna were all sentenced to death and executed on charges such as *Feindbegünstigung* (assisting the enemy), membership of an illegal organisation, espionage, possession of firearms and explosives, distribution of illegal publications and murder.

Social Democrats

Several individuals and the pre-war political parties of Social Democrats, Communists and Revolutionary Socialists also began organising their resistance activity during 1940. Jews were involved in this activity, including the clandestine publication of the *Nieuwsbrief van Pieter 't Hoen*, started by Goedhart. It first appeared in July 1940 with a circulation of about five hundred copies, produced on the equipment of businessman Eddy Davids. Goedhart and Davids had both been involved in the Association for the Defence of Cultural and Social Rights of Jews before the war. Former members of that organisation helped to distribute the *Nieuwsbrief*. Between July 1940 and April 1941, 27 issues of the *Nieuwsbrief* appeared with an increasing circulation. In Amsterdam Jaap Melkman was responsible for its distribution.

In 1940 Goedhart and the Social Democrat leader Koos Vorrink decided to start another clandestine publication. They formed an editorial board that included three Jews, namely Hans Warendorf, Maurits Kann and Jaap Nunes Vaz. Warendorf and Kann were lawyers. Both had been active in the support of refugees before the war, when Warendorf published a weekly German-language magazine. Kann also worked for the weekly *De Groene Amsterdammer* and had Zionist connections. Nunes Vaz was a journalist, who had joined an independent Socialist organisation once he finished school, but he lost his job at the ANP after the German invasion because he was a Jew. On the suggestion of Kann, the new publication was called *Het Parool* (*The Watchword* or *The Motto*). Many young Jews got involved in working for *Het Parool* through membership of Social Democrat youth organisations and participation in their activities.[27]

27 For the history of *Het Parool*, see De Keizer, *Het Parool 1940-1945*. For the Jewish involvement, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 103-106, based on NIOD, Doc II, folders 615a/b, 615a/c and 1283. During the course of the war several other Jews got involved in the production and distribution of *Het Parool*, often as they were in hiding. Unlike Melkman, they usually did not have a major organising role. For an example, see Frank, *Onvoltooid verzet*.

Het Parool appeared from February 1941 and became one of the largest resistance publications. It quickly attracted the attention of the German police. Kann was arrested in the spring of 1941. He was sentenced to death during one of the Ordedienst trials and executed in March 1942. In December 1942 the first trial against *Het Parool* workers took place. Melkman was one of the defendants and was sentenced to death. He died in February 1943. After the first arrests, Warendorf and Nunes Vaz managed to continue the editorial work, until Warendorf was forced to flee to England in November 1942. Nunes Vaz went into hiding, but he was caught in October 1942 and died in Sobibor.

Communists

Like the Social Democrats, the Dutch Communists also centred some of their activity around a publication. Several Jews played a leading role in the Communist Party. The most outstanding of them was De Groot. The Communists had a certain advantage compared to other groups as they could use their experience in semi-clandestine work gained before May 1940, including building networks of secret cells of Communists who worked in the public sector and giving assistance to illegal refugees. In November 1940 the first issue of *De Waarheid* (*The Truth*) appeared. This paper became the focus of the Communist resistance. However, there was confusion among the Communists about how they should respond to the German occupation as a result of the 1939 non-aggression agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union; this cleared up once the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. As a result of the German-Soviet pact, Dutch Communists had problems in identifying their main enemy: the National Socialists or capitalists in general. To what extent prejudice against the Jewish establishment and ideas about class struggle influenced Communist attitudes was illustrated in the pamphlet *Staakt, staakt, staakt* (*Strike, Strike, Strike*), which called for strikes against the February 1941 round-up of Jews in Amsterdam (which will be discussed in a later chapter): "[The round-up] is mostly a result of the big capitalist 'mediation' by Asscher, Saarlouis [sic] and Cohen, who grovellingly accepted Jewish blame and tried to prevent further powerful defence measures and struggle by suggesting that 'calm' would return."[28]

28 Almost a week earlier, on 18 February 1941, *De Waarheid* included an editorial article about the "diamond-capitalist" Asscher and the other two men, suggesting that the trio had accepted blame for disturbances in Amsterdam because they hoped to regain their supremacy over lapsed Jews. This article and the pamphlet published on 24 February 1941 have been reproduced in *De Waarheid in de oorlog*. Compare Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 798, who has mentioned the social conscience of the Amsterdam Chief Rabbi Sarlouis (the correct spelling of his name). For Jews in the wartime Communist Party, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 106-109.

Almost at the same time, the party issued instructions to its members about national and Jewish issues. They argued that the Communists did not regard the Jews as a separate nation, but that Jewish workers formed an integral part of the Dutch proletariat and that only class struggle would solve Jewish problems. When a year later the deportations started this position was altered and the Communists were instructed to offer practical help to individual Jews who went into hiding. Meanwhile, Communist leaders had to counter anti-Jewish sentiments that had crept into their ranks. During the first war years De Groot was leader of the party and editor of its newspaper, but in 1943 German persecution forced him into hiding and he disappeared from the party organisation.[29]

Revolutionary Socialists

Several groups of Revolutionary Socialists operated to the left of the Social Democrats and Communists. Unlike the Communists, they rejected Stalinism and were not affected by the 1939 German-Soviet pact. One of their clandestine publications was *De Vonk* (*The Spark*), edited by Eddy Wijnkoop, a leader of the Marx-Lenin-Luxemburg-Front (MLL-Front). Before the war Wijnkoop had been secretary of the anti-Fascist Committee of Resistance in the province of North Holland. The initiative for *De Vonk* came from this group in December 1940. The publication strongly attacked the persecution of the Jews. The second issue of February 1941 paid attention to anti-Jewish violence in Amsterdam and a year later the group published a pamphlet to warn against forced labour measures for unemployed Jews. When the yellow star was introduced in May 1942, *De Vonk* distributed 300,000 paper protest stars. By that time the MLL-Front had already lost Wijnkoop. He was arrested in March 1942 and died in Mauthausen. Significantly, *De Vonk* took a less radical course on Jewish issues after Wijnkoop's arrest, which may indicate his influence.[30]

The arrest of Wijnkoop formed part of a German action against the Revolutionary Socialists, which resulted in the capture of many of their leaders. Nine of them stood trial, eight of the accused were sentenced to death and one of them was the trade unionist Ab Menist. He had been born in Amsterdam in 1896, where his father was a shopkeeper. Menist started work as a bricklayer and joined a Socialist youth organisation. He also became a member of a youth association that promoted temperance, which was not unusual for Socialists, but in 1920 he joined the Communist Party. It was exceptional for a Jew to followed a profes-

29 Galesloot, Legêne, *Partij in het verzet*, pp. 68, 129, 130.

30 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, p. 189; Sijes, *De februari-staking 25-26 februari 1941*, p. 79; Winkel, *De Ondergrondse Pers*, p. 315.

sion like bricklaying, and this suggests that he was already alienated from Judaism. When he married a non-Jewish woman, Menist broke with his father, who maintained the Orthodox religion. In 1924 Menist moved to Rotterdam to work as a salaried union official in the construction industry. He left the Communist Party and helped to form the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party. He was a member of the party's executive and won seats on the municipal council in Rotterdam and the Provincial Estates of South Holland. During the crisis years of the 1930s Menist organised advice centres, where unemployed workers received free consultations. He was a well-known and outspoken public speaker; in February 1940 he was sentenced to 14 days in prison for insulting Hitler during a public meeting.

In July 1940 Menist took charge of the creation of a clandestine network of his party's members. Despite injuries caused by a car accident, which interrupted his work for a couple of months, he organised meetings of the executive and engaged some four hundred members in the illegal activity. In 1941 Menist was made responsible for the editing and distribution of a clandestine publication called *Spartacus*. Just as *De Vonk*, *Spartacus* strongly attacked the persecution of the Jews. In relation to the forced labour measures the publication spoke about slave hunters: "Their prey consists of Jews. They hunt them as animals and treat them disgustingly."[31] In March 1942 Menist fell into the hands of the German police. During his interrogation he told the Germans about his activities: "I knew I committed offences, but I believed [I was] fighting for a good cause."[32] On 9 April 1942 the Obergericht condemned Menist and his seven comrades to death. They were taken to Amersfoort concentration camp to await execution. Menist wrote on the prison wall: "*Zonder er op te pochen, kapot gaan ze de Moffen*"[33] (Without boasting about it, the Krauts will go down). On 13 April 1942 the men were told that their execution would take place in two hours. Menist wrote letters to his family, including his wife and father. He told his wife: "I am myself and accept the verdict with inner resignation" and to his father Menist wrote:

> You thought [yourself] to be so much closer to death than I. Life is different. You are not spared much. But I, now so close to my end and not believing in an almighty God who has wanted all this, I beg you to remain strong, bear this too, accept some of my resignation.[34]

31 For Jewish involvement in the Revolutionary Socialist groups, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 118-122. The quoted text can be found in NIOD, SG 15/42.

32 NIOD, SG 15/42.

33 Quoted in De Jong. *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. IX, p. 416 (footnote).

34 Quoted in Perthus, *Voor Vrijheid en Socialisme*, p. 82.

The activity of Jews who joined the early resistance groups followed their participation in the wider pre-war society and their social positions. They included IJzerdraat and Minco who joined the Geuzen group and Hes, Davidson, Vaz Dias, Hartogs, Lewin, Wijnberg, Jakobson and Lopes de Leao Laguna, who were part of the Ordedienst, Davids, Melkman, Warendorf, Kann and Nunes Vaz in the *Nieuwsbrief* and *Parool* groups, and De Groot, Wijnkoop and Menist in the Communist and Revolutionary Socialist parties. Earlier in this chapter the question was asked whether the activity of Jews in the early general resistance was an outcome of their integration into the Dutch society. The examples described above show that they had an awareness of Jewish problems that arose from the German persecution, were moved by the worry for their fellow Jews and were prepared to discuss Jewish issues in their clandestine publications. However, they joined groups that arose to resist the German occupiers in general, not just because of anti-Jewish matters but because many of the resisters had motives that were founded on ideas and ideologies that they shared with non-Jews before May 1940. That they joined a specific group was usually determined by contacts with people and organisations made before the war. So, these Jewish members of the resistance wanted to respond to anti-Jewish measures, but their integration into Dutch society had a major, if not the most important effect on their resistance.

5 Segregation (November 1940 – May 1942)

In 1942 the secondary school teacher J. Hemelrijk told his pupils why he disobeyed the German order to wear a yellow star:

> Because I do not recognise their authority; because I reject their right to defile me; because I do not want to be a lamb for the wolves [...] But we are told to regard it as an honour, not a disgrace; and to be proud of it [...] Those who accept that, should wear it; I will not.[1]

Hemelrijk had been removed from his post in a general school and transferred to a Jewish institution in Amsterdam.[2] The teacher was an example of people who responded publicly to the German policy to segregate the Jews in the Netherlands from the rest of the Dutch population.

In the second half of 1940 and the first half of 1941 the German armies consolidated their success in Western Europe, despite a setback in the Battle of Britain, and they overran the Balkans and Greece. Germany and the Soviet Union were still holding to their 1939 non-aggression pact, which gave Hitler a free hand in the west and enabled Stalin to occupy part of Poland and the Baltic states and conduct a war with Finland. The occupiers of the Netherlands followed their early anti-Jewish measures with an order in November 1940 to register all Jewish officials and public servants in the Netherlands, who were subsequently barred from office, while non-Jewish civil servants had to sign a declaration to indicate they were not Jewish. This measure resulted in protests in the general population, notably among students and lecturers in universities, but at this stage general resistance groups remained small. Jewish protests were suppressed immediately, with Jewish protesters sent to concentration camps from where their death notices started to arrive quickly. A month earlier the registration of Jewish business assets had started, followed by the registration of persons. Jews had to register with local

1 Quoted in Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, p. 229. See also Hemelrijk, *Zeven maanden concentratiekamp*.

2 For Hemelrijk, see also Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 44, 46, based on NIOD, HSSPF 43a, report 5/2/1941. In February 1941 it was reported to the German police that Hemelrijk continued teaching illegally at home after being removed from his school, a gymnasium in Alkmaar, where he also served as head of the school.

public offices. The civil servants marked their index cards in the population registers and their identity cards with a J. To distinguish whom they regarded as Jewish, the German authorities devised a formula, which said that persons were Jews when they had at least three grandparents who had been members of a Jewish congregation or had two grandparents who had been members of a Jewish congregation and were themselves member of a Jewish congregation or were married to a Jew. Persons with only two Jewish grandparents were regarded as half-Jews and persons with one as quarter-Jews.

Meanwhile, Dutch National Socialists attempted to conquer the streets and implement German segregation orders that forbade Jews to enter public spaces. They also attacked Jews, especially in Amsterdam. When Jews fought back, their resistance was smothered and Jewish men were rounded up and sent to camps, where most of them quickly perished. Part of the old Jewish neighbourhood in the Dutch capital was temporarily sealed off, but the occupiers refrained from erecting ghettos in the Netherlands. The round-ups sparked in a two-day general strike in Amsterdam in February 1941, which spread to other cities and initiated more but as yet small-scale resistance in the general population. The occupiers imposed a Jewish Council on the Jewish population. Gradually Jews were expelled from the social, economic and cultural life of the Netherlands, culminating in Jewish pupils being banished from public schools at the end of the summer of 1941. In March 1941 the Germans announced that Jewish refugees were to be stripped of their nationality. Jewish shops and enterprises were expropriated. Finally, the movements of the by now almost completely segregated Jews in the Netherlands were restricted and in May 1942 it was decreed that Jews had to wear a yellow star, sewn onto their clothes.

A combination of factors enabled the Germans to segregate the Jews from the rest of the population in the Netherlands, foremost their overwhelming military power, use of force and threat of reprisals, but segregation was also eased by the collaboration of the Dutch civil service in the execution of German orders. In addition, as this chapter will show, the integration of Jews into the Dutch society played an important role – ironically, it assisted the Germans in segregating the Jews from the rest of the population. However, integration also helped to shape Jewish resistance during the period of segregation, although not all Jewish reactions to persecution can be explained as outcomes of integration as personal characteristics and circumstances influenced these reactions too.

Registration of Jews in the Netherlands

The execution of the registration decree proved an extensive administrative task for the Dutch civil service, but it met little resistance. Presser and De Jong have extensively described the process, finding that while some people challenged

the validity of the registration by denying their Jewish identity, only a very small minority decided not to register.[3] No less than 160,790 registrations had been processed by the end of August 1941, including 140,522 persons who were counted as Jews, 14,549 half-Jews and 5,719 quarter-Jews. These figures included 15,174 refugees from Germany, Austria and German-occupied countries, who resided in the Netherlands at that time.[4] Apparently almost everybody obeyed the registration order, because they had to register with local Dutch authorities and most people regarded this as a civic duty that they undertook out of loyalty, fear of reprisals or simply because they did not see an alternative and could not oversee the consequences of registration. In itself, being registered as Jews was not new; Jewish congregations had already recorded information on their membership. Furthermore, Jewish compliance with the registration order went hand-in-hand with the general obedience of decrees at this time. And equally important, it was not until the procedure was well under way that is was decided that Jews would receive identity papers marked with a J.

In contrast to the obedience of the registration order, the expulsion of Jewish teachers and lecturers from secondary and higher education had given rise to public protests. Several academics spoke out and university students went on strike against the German measures. Some Jewish academics refused to be terrorised into submission. In Groningen Professor Leo Polak declined to accept his dismissal from the university. He was arrested and died in Sachenhausen in December 1941.[5] The suppression of these protests increased the anxiety about repercussions, which also discouraged people from disobeying the registration order.

Street fighting

Hemelrijk and Polak and were members of the Jewish elite and middle classes. Some insight into responses from working-class Jews can be gained from examining the street fighting that occurred in Amsterdam in February 1941, which took place at the same time as the process of registration was conducted. Early in 1941 Dutch National Socialists increased their efforts to make their presence felt on the streets by implementing German orders that prohibited Jews from entering public spaces, which resulted in attacks on individual Jews and the old Jew-

3 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. IV, pp. 874-875; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, pp. 54-78. Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 139, has noted that one of the few people who decided not to register was Jacob van der Velde, a former municipal councillor in Amsterdam. He survived the war.

4 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. V, 496; Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 831; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, pp. 64, 418.

5 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, pp. 96-97.

ish neighbourhood in Amsterdam. Fights between National Socialists and their opponents had taken place earlier. They clashed in June 1940 in Rotterdam and Delft and two months later in The Hague. In Amsterdam, the National Socialists targeted the markets, because as the newspaper *Het Nationale Dagblad* wrote on 5 September 1940: "Screaming and cursing Jews who swarm the markets are a nuisance for anyone who means well for the capital." With some German support and encouragement, the National Socialists intensified their violence early in 1941 and increasingly directed it at Jews, coinciding with the banning of Jews from public places. On Sunday 9 February 1941 there were fights on the Rembrandtsplein in Amsterdam, during which the National Socialists entered pubs and restaurants to enforce the ban.

Encouraged by their victory on the Rembrandtsplein, the National Socialists went across the Amstel into the Jewish neighbourhood, kicking in doors, destroying possessions and beating up people. Some Jews fought back. According to a post-war statement,[6] a group of men from a pub attacked the National Socialists with billiards queues and possibly a knife, and there were further clashes in neighbouring streets, but by the time the fight-back started the damage was done and most National Socialists had left the area. The next day several Jews reported crimes of violence and theft at the police station on the Jonas Daniël Meyerplein. The Jews in the neighbourhood were obviously distressed, but there was also an atmosphere of determination; to hit back if the National Socialists returned. A contemporary diarist noted:

> Shattered windows fell on the street and in the stores. That was the first assault on the Jewish neighbourhood. [The next day] the resilience awoke [...] There were men on the Jodenbreestraat, trained wrestlers and boxers, and they dared to look their man in the eye.[7]

On that Monday there were rumours that the National Socialists had announced they would return to the Jewish neighbourhood. In the evening an incident took place outside the Tip Top theatre. The police had to stop a fight between a small group of National Socialists and several men, including Toontje Prenger, a scrap

6 The statement can be found in NIOD, Doc Februari Staking, Report J. Groenteman 12/4/1946. The reconstruction of the events around 11 February 1941 in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 57-70, has been based on this report and the following witness statements and police reports in the NIOD collection: Report A.H. Prenger, June 1946, Proces verbaal A.H. Prenger 18/2/1941, Report J. Heide 18/8/1949, Report M. Nebig 4/4/1946, Proces verbaal P.A. Kater 27/2/1941, anonymous report 14/4/1946, logbook GG&GD Jodenbreestraat. This has been complemented with an interview by the author with one of the participants, namely Bennie Bluhm, conducted on 3/2/1984. See also Cosman's story in Bregstein, Bloemgarten (eds), *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, pp. 242-244, 311-313.

7 Quoted in Paape (ed), *Bericht van de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, p. 550.

metal merchant on the Waterlooplein, and his friends Maurits Caransa and Jo Heide, who threw at least one of the National Socialists into a canal.

The unrest continued the next day. The situation was discussed in neighbourhood coffee houses and pubs and the idea of forming defence groups was raised. Prenger told several men to come to his scrapyard and collect a piece of metal as a weapon. Some individuals seem to have taken charge and different groups were formed. One of the groups consisted almost entirely of wrestlers and boxers. It was formed after the writer Dekker went to see Cosman, the trainer at the Olympia boxing school.[8] The group used a small haulage truck from Simon Looper as a transport van, enabling them to move quickly in case new attacks were reported. Perhaps up to 50 fighters joined this group.[9] The men trained and worked in shifts. There were other groups, usually based in and around local pubs, and arrangements were made to get together in the evening when trouble was expected.

According to Bennie Bluhm,[10] several men who were trained fighters or had strong political convictions took charge. Bluhm has mentioned Lard Zilverberg as one of the leaders. Zilverberg, a dedicated Communist, had convinced Bluhm to join the party before the war. We have to assume that Lard Zilverberg was actually called David Zilverberg or that Bluhm meant his brother Isaac. In that case, he had been born either in 1916 or 1921 as a son of Jacob Zilverberg, an advertisement artist who had moved from Coevorden to Amsterdam. The Zilverbergs were a large family, which in 1941 lived in the Valkenburgerstraat. Like his father, Lard worked as a commercial artist when he had work.[11] However, Zilverberg was not the only person in charge of the Jewish street fighters. Cosman had organised a group and several other teams were formed with unknown leaders. Actually, the defence efforts were not well organised. There was a lot of confusion, with people coming and going and rumours flying around, including one about a National Socialist plan to attack a synagogue.

In the afternoon of 11 February there was a fight outside a shop owned by a National Socialist on the nearby Oude Schans. Three persons were wounded. A National Socialist went by car to report an incident at the police station on the Jonas Daniël Meyerplein, possibly the fight on the Oude Schans. A metal bar was thrown through the windscreen of his car and he drove into bystanders; three of them got hurt, and one later succumbed to his injuries.

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8 Compare De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VIII, p. 916 (footnote).

9 Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 143.

10 Interview, B. Bluhm with author, 3/2/1984.

11 Digitaal Monument Joodse Gemeenschap in Nederland (DMJN). See also Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd*, p. 268, and the photo opposite p. 273. Including David, five Zilverberg brothers still lived at home in 1941.

It was a misty evening when three hours later, between 6.30 and 6.45 pm, a group of about 40 uniformed National Socialists left their headquarters on the Singel. Their intention was to march through the Jewish neighbourhood. They crossed the bridge over the Zwanenburgwal and went through the Zwanenburgstraat. At the Waterlooplein they turned left, towards the uneven-numbered side of the square and the tram tracks that ran in the direction of the Mozes and Aäron Church. Jewish fighters were awaiting them, mostly hidden in doorways and alleys around the square. One of the National Socialists was on a bike. However, coming from the Zwanenburgstraat, he took a sharp left to the even side of the Waterlooplein and got separated from his group by the play area in the middle of the square. Somebody called: "There's one. Grab him."[12] A piece of metal was thrown at the National Socialist and hit the man's head. Stones followed. His comrades heard the commotion and started running towards him.

At that moment the Jewish fighters emerged. Knives were drawn. Men also attacked each other with rubber hoses enforced with lead, belts, iron bars, bats and similar types of weapons, mostly hitting heads and shoulders. They fought as if their lives depended on the outcome; hatred and feelings of revenge released themselves quickly. Heide and Prenger stood on the even side of the square. They saw the National Socialist H. Koot on the northwest corner of the play area. Koot was shouting insults, and the Jews replied. Heide, his brother Juda and Piet Werkheim attacked Koot. He tried to get away, but Koot was caught and fell under their blows. The fight was over within a few minutes. Other Jewish fighters arrived on the scene, but some came too late to join the fighting; the National Socialists had already withdrawn across the Blauwburg.

At 7.15 pm the first casualties arrived in the first-aid post in the Jodenbreestraat. Koot had head wounds and the base of his skull was fractured. He was taken to hospital, where he died later. Six other National Socialists came in with head wounds. There were Jewish casualties too. Arnold Arian had been stabbed in the upper torso. Daniël Leon had a head wound and was soaked as he had fallen or was thrown into a canal. Meanwhile, the alarmed German police cordoned off the area. They made some 20 arrests, including Zilverberg and one of his brothers. It is believed that together with another Jewish man, possibly Mark van West, the Zilverberg brothers were forced to pose with weapons for a photograph.[13]

A few days later, the Dutch police conducted an investigation into Koot's death. Prenger was arrested, but the police report was not followed up. Some of the arrested men were released. However, Lard Zilverberg was probably kept in

12 Quoted in Sijes, *De februari-staking*, p. 85.

13 Interview, B. Bluhm with author, 3/2/1984. The photo is reproduced in Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, opposite p. 65.

prison; he died a year later in Mauthausen.[14] In 1942 the police started another investigation into the disturbances. About 20 arrests were made. They included Prenger, Werkheim, Adrian and Juda Heide. The prisoners were also sent to Mauthausen, where they perished quickly. Only Prenger survived.

Koco, round-ups and the February strike

Meanwhile, in February 1941 the disturbances in Amsterdam continued. On the evening of Saturday, 15 February, a fight broke out near the Koco ice cream parlour in the Rijnstraat. There were two Koco parlours in Amsterdam. The second establishment was in the Van Woustraat.[15] Its owners were two German Jews, Alfred Kohn and Ernst Cahn. To protect this parlour, Elias Rodriguez Garcia had formed a defence team. They were armed with metal pipes and conducted street patrols to warn the owners if National Socialists were in the neighbourhood. It was agreed that they would try to keep any fighting outside the parlour. In case of an attack the owners would turn off the inside lights and switch on a powerful outside lamp above the front door, so that the fighters could deal with the attackers. Following the incident in the Rijnstraat, an unknown man approached the Koco team on 18 February. He offered help and wanted to arrange a meeting with the team leaders. It was agreed he would return the next evening.

On the night of 19 February a patrol returned to Koco in the Van Woustraat with a report about singing National Socialists in the neighbourhood. The owners closed the parlour. Around 10 pm there was a knock on the door. The fighters left the parlour through the back door, followed by the owners Kohn and Cahn, after they had turned off the inside lights and switched on the outside lamp. However, it was the German police and not Dutch National Socialists who had knocked on the door. When their knocks went unanswered, they must have decided to break the door down, just as the outside light went on. As they entered the parlour, a biting gas hit their faces; it may have been that the owners had opened a container of ammonia gas or that one of the Germans fired a gun when the outside light was suddenly switched on, hitting the gas bottle.

The German police commander later reported that shots had been fired from inside the parlour. Kohn and Cahn as well as members of the defence team were arrested. They were tried before a German court. Cahn, born in 1889 in Remagen,

14 According to DMJN, David Zilverberg died on 5/2/1942 in Mauthausen. His brother Isaac had already perished in the same camp on 26/9/1941.

15 The reconstruction of the events around Koco in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 65-68, has been based on NIOD, Doc Februari Staking, Report E. Rodriguez Garcia 2/4/1946; HSSPF I SS-und Polizeigericht X 129. See also Sijes, *De februari-staking*, p. 103.

was the main suspect. He was accused of setting up a Jewish terror group armed with poison gas and firearms. Kohn, a year younger than Cahn, was named as his accomplice. Rodriguez Garcia, a 31-year-old tailor's assistant, was said to have recruited his younger brother Simon and Abraham Muller, a private detective, who was born in Amsterdam in 1920. On 27 February 1941 Cahn was sentenced to death; he was executed on 3 March 1941. The other defendants received prison sentences.

Cahn was the first man in the Netherlands to die in front of a German execution squad. The occupiers apparently wanted to set an example; during the trial the president of the court referred to the unrest in Amsterdam, which had resulted in a general strike two days before his judgement. The reason for this strike was yet another event that had taken place in the capital. The German authorities had exaggerated the news about the death of Koot and the events around Koco, and as a reprisal rounded up 425 Jewish men from the streets of the Jewish neighbourhood on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 February. The reprisals shocked the general population. Several individual Communists, their party executive and Revolutionary Socialists took initiatives to protest against the persecution, which resulted in a strike on 25 February; the work stoppage lasted for two days and spread outside Amsterdam.

The Germans sought the organisers of the strike among Jews and notably among Jewish Communists. Joop Eyl was arrested on 26 February when he distributed strike pamphlets. He was executed on 13 March together with 15 members of the De Geuzen group and two other Jewish Communists – Herman Coenradi and E. Hellendoorn. A week earlier Leen Schijvenschuurder had been executed. Later in 1941 a trial took place of 22 persons accused of organising the strike.[16] Among them were two Jews, Rosa Boekdrukker-Hirsch and Joop van Weezel. Boekdrukker-Hirsch had been born in 1908 in Ostrowo. In 1921 her parents moved to Berlin, where she studied to become a nurse. In 1933 she emigrated to Palestine and met her husband (whom she later divorced). In 1937 Boekdrukker-Hirsch went to the Netherlands, where she worked as a cleaner and joined the Communist Party. She refused to make a statement, but was said to have been responsible for one of the neighbourhood sections of the party. Van Weezel was a 31-year-old chemist. Before the war he had worked for the Communist newspaper, but under interrogation and during the trial he denied being a party member. He was also accused of leading a neighbourhood section. Boekdrukker-Hirsch was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment; she survived the war. Van Weezel got 4 years and died in Dachau in April 1945.

16 For Jewish involvement in the strike see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 68-70, based on NIOD, WBN 9KSTL 161/41, Doc 11 folder 231a and VR 347/41.

Jewish Council and Jewish Coordination Committee

In the aftermath of the fighting in Amsterdam in February 1941, the German occupiers imposed the Jewish Council on the Jews of Amsterdam. Professor Cohen and the diamond merchant Asscher, leader of the Dutch Israelite Congregation, were appointed as the chairmen of the Council. In the course of the remaining occupation period the responsibilities of the Council were extended, eventually covering the whole of the Netherlands, and it became a body through which the Germans announced and implemented their measures. As M.H. Gans, Herzberg, Michman and Presser have shown, the formation of the Council and its policies met resistance, which was most strongly and publicly worded by Visser, the former presiding judge of the Supreme Court, the highest judicial authority in the Netherlands. He objected to the Council, writing to its leaders:

> It is possible that in the end the occupier will achieve his aim [in relation to the Jews], but it is our duty as Dutchmen and as Jews to do everything that will prevent him from achieving that aim, to refrain from anything that will pave the way for him.[17]

Visser was president of the Jewish Coordination Committee (JCC). It had been formed at the end of 1940 and was modelled on the organisation of the Committee for Special Jewish Interests. Cohen was also a member of the JCC, as were the Zionists S. Isaac and I. Kisch, the industrialist Albert Spanjaard, the representative of Sephardic Jews E. Belinfante, the Groningen Chief Rabbi Simon Dasberg and the Social Democrat member of the parliament Stokvis. The JCC aimed to unite the Jewish population in the Netherlands. In 1941 it unsuccessfully urged cooperation between the congregations of Orthodox and Liberal Jews. The JCC also advised people on judicial and taxation matters, offered financial support, organised cultural and educational work and set up social care. The presence of the Zionists in the JCC relates to the fact that the Dutch Zionist Association was at that time the largest Jewish organisation in the Netherlands after the Dutch Israelite Congregation. During the war Zionism played a greater role in Dutch Jewry than before 1940, not politically – the Zionist ideal of Jewish state in Palestine seemed far removed – but many Zionists got involved in cultural and educational activity. The Zionists also had an organisational network that the JCC could utilise.

17 Quoted in Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, p. 194. See also idem, pp. 189-196; Michman, "The Controversial Stand of the Joodse Raad in Holland", pp. 9-68; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, p. 82. Compare Gans, *Memorboek*, pp. 755, 807; Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, p. 173. Visser was not alone in his rejection of the Jewish Council. Professor H. Frijda refused to join the Council and Nordheim also opposed it. Herzberg was a member, but objected to the Council's policy and resigned.

For a short period, the JCC was the dominant force in Dutch Jewry.[18] This position came to an end after the Germans formed the Jewish Council in Amsterdam. Despite some cooperation between the JCC and the Council in social, educational and cultural activities, a difference of opinion arose between Cohen and Visser on the best strategy to counter German measures. To take the JCC out of the Jewish Council sphere of influence, Visser moved the committee's headquarters to The Hague in April 1941 and appointed the lawyer and Zionist Henri Edersheim as its secretary. The JCC was forced to end its work in October 1941 when the Council became responsible for the whole of the Netherlands, although the committee continued to meet in secret.[19]

The conflict between Visser and Cohen was about cooperation with the German authorities. Visser's guiding principle was that the Jews were Dutch citizens, who had the constitutional right to demand that the Dutch authorities would look after their interests and negotiate with the occupiers on their behalf. Cohen felt he had to cooperate with the occupiers and – under private protest – obey their orders and implement their decrees to avoid the Germans forcefully carrying out their measures. In contrast, Visser wanted no direct contacts with the Germans, recognising only the Dutch authorities.

Visser emphasised resistance, protested publicly and set a personal example. When the synagogue in The Hague was attacked, he successfully urged the lay leaders of the congregation to continue the services. On the following Sabbath Visser walked demonstratively to the synagogue wearing a top hat and holding his prayer shawl and prayer book under his arm (in September 1941 he became chairman of the congregation). He refused his official identity papers because they were stamped with a J. In April 1941 Visser declined a request from the leaders of the Nederlansche Unie, a recently formed organisation that aimed to unite the Dutch population. They had asked him to advise Jews against taking an active role in the Unie. He publicly condemned segregation of Jews in education and their forced removal from provincial towns to Amsterdam and Westerbork. Visser also wrote for the resistance paper *Het Parool*, which opposed segregation.

True to his principles, Visser turned to the Dutch authorities when fears grew about the men who had been deported to Mauthausen early in 1941. He approached the Secretaries General who headed the ministerial departments, but his first attempt to coerce them into action failed. Desperate about the fate of the deportees, Visser changed tactics and went to the German security and police chief for the occupied Netherlands, who refused to receive him. In September and October 1941 the Germans again rounded up and deported several hundred

18 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, pp. 174-186; Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland*, p. 137.

19 JCC member Kisch became a member of the Jewish Council but later resigned, sharing Visser's views. In contrast, JCC Secretary Edersheim eventually became representative of the Council in The Hague.

Jews, this time in response to resistance attacks. Visser wrote several times to the Secretaries Generals, who discussed the matter with the Germans and promised Visser that they would protest – a promise they did not keep. Such setbacks did not stop Visser. When Cohen on behalf of the Germans threatened Visser with deportation to a concentration camp if he would not stop his actions, Visser replied on 14 February 1942 that he took note of the threat, but he did not promise to sit still, adding to have been impressed by "the humiliation that has been brought upon you, who knows the history of these actions."[20] However, these were almost Visser's last words; he died three days later.

The difference of opinion on strategy between Visser and Cohen arose from dissimilar assessments of the wartime situation, but their personal histories also played a role. The two men had much in common.[21] Both came from a privileged provincial background. They graduated from university: Visser studied law and Cohen classics. Both obtained a doctorate. Cohen became a teacher and university lecturer, and he was eventually appointed as professor at the University of Amsterdam. Visser joined a law firm in Amsterdam. He was appointed as a judge in the district court of Rotterdam. Later Visser sat on the Supreme Court, becoming its vice-president in 1933 and president in 1939. Both lost their positions in 1940. They were not known as religiously observant, but Visser and Cohen held positions in Jewish organisations in the Netherlands, for example, in refugee aid and Zionism, although Visser disagreed with other Zionist leaders about fundraising matters. Both men were typical Jewish establishment figures, comparable with the leaders of the other Dutch population segments, who were prepared to take responsibility for their group, represent them and work with the authorities.

The two men also differed from each other. Visser, born in 1871, was 11 years older than Cohen. Unlike Cohen's professional progress, Visser's early career was jeopardised by discrimination. For several years Visser acted as a legal advisor in the foreign ministry as a deputy clerk. He left that post in 1903 because he saw no opportunities for promotion in the civil service as a result of anti-Jewishness, which increased at the time of the Dreyfus affair in France. Visser was not a man of the people, but perhaps as a result of the discrimination he encountered so early in his career and his experience as a district judge, often dealing with everyday matters, he was able, as Herzberg has written, to identify himself completely with the ordinary Jew and share his fate – in contrast, Cohen has been perceived as being more authoritarian and elitist.[22] There were other differences. Cohen was

20 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 807.

21 For Visser, see also Polak, *Leven en werken van mr. L.E. Visser*. For Cohen, see Schrijvers, *Rome, Athene, Jeruszalem*; Somers, *Voorzitter van de Joodse Raad*.

22 Herzberg, *Kroniek de Jodenvervolging*, p. 199. See also Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 11, p. 8.

much more active in Zionism. He also had an extensive experience in representing the Jewish population and dealing on their behalf with authorities before the war. Visser lacked that experience.

The dispute between Visser and Cohen brings out how two well-integrated men with similar backgrounds made different choices. It is possible that these choices were influenced by the new circumstances – Visser's position in the JCC was undermined by the formation of the Jewish Council, while Cohen was appointed as co-chairman of the Council. Visser as a legal expert was of course more prone to emphasise the illegal character of the German measures against Jews and not accept their authority. He took a principled resistance stand, whereas Cohen chose a more pragmatic cooperation course. However, the two men also had different personalities, and it is possible that the development of Visser's character was influenced by the anti-Jewish discrimination he experienced early in his career at the foreign ministry. The differentiating personal histories of the two men also contributed to the views that lead the two men to make different choices between resistance and cooperation.

Jewish organisations in Germany

In comparison, Jewish leaders in Germany occasionally took a public stand. In 1933 the newly founded Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden, with its first president, Rabbi Leo Baeck, spoke publicly against the National Socialist accusation that the Jews had harmed the German people. During the same year, the Zionist association in Germany protested against the boycott of Jewish businesses. A couple of years later, in the wake of the Nürnberg Laws, the Reichsvertretung issued a prayer, referring to Hitler as Haman (the Biblical figure who instigated a plot to kill the Jews in Persia). It was to be read aloud from the pulpits of all German synagogues. However, the Gestapo forbade it and arrested Baeck and Otto Hirsch, the director of the Reichsvertretung. At the start of the deportations in 1940 (from Stettin and Schneidemühl), the Reichsvertretung, now called Reichsvereinigung, protested and it warned Jews in Baden and the Saar-Palatinate in the autumn of 1940 not to turn up for deportation. Its leading members raised their voice in synagogue addresses, resulting in their arrests.

In contrast, the main Jewish organisation in Germany, the Centralverein deutscher Staatbürger jüdischen Glaubens, adopted the traditional defence mechanism of wait and see, using a rather apologetic tone in public. For example, after Hitler's rise to power the organisation issued a new edition of its brochure against the ritual murder accusation, but the title was toned down from *Blutlügen: Märchen und Tatsachen* (*Blood Lies: Fairytales and Facts*) to *Zur Ritualmordbeschuldigung* (*About the Ritual Murder Accusation*). However, as persecution increased, it

was impossible to maintain this stance and most Jewish establishment organisations formulated different responses as outlined above.

A German example from outside the establishment shows how individuals also took a stand. This concerns Ruth Abraham. She had been born in 1913. When in 1933 her father had to appear at a Gestapo office, she decided to go with him to offer protection. After her uncle was arrested, she travelled from prison to prison to find him, finally appealing to a judge to release him. During the Kristallnacht in 1938, Abraham guided her fiancé to safety through teeming crowds and then travelled to Dachau where her future father-in-law was taken. After three days of trying she succeeded in getting an interview with the camp commandant. Abraham had emigration plans but they failed. After her parents and her sister's family were deported, Abraham tore the star of her clothing and went into hiding. She was pregnant at the time. Abraham survived the war and later said about her decision to have a child:

> As improbable as it sounds, in spite of everything I wanted to have a child at this time, and I as well as my parents were overjoyed when this happened and I became pregnant. [My husband] was very depressed during the entire pregnancy. I tried to encourage him.[23]

Jewish Councils in Belgium and France

The Germans also created a Jewish Council in Belgium: the Association des Juifs en Belgique. It was set up later than the Dutch Council – in November 1941. The Council, headed by prominent Belgian Jews, had local committees in four cities, including Antwerp and Brussels. However, it was not merely a tool in German hands, and like the Council in the Netherlands, it could be used to support and rescue Jews, as will be discussed in the next chapter. The division of tasks and competencies within the German authorities also encouraged people to use the Council and its facilities for their own ends or to resist persecution. As in the Netherlands, there was local cooperation in the general population with German orders, fed by pre-war anti-Semitism, and people had been intimidated by the anti-Jewish riots on Easter Monday in April 1941, when several hundred pro-German Flemish militants set fire to synagogues in Antwerp and to the chief rabbi's house after attending the screening of the anti-Semitic film *Jud Süss*.

The formation of the Jewish Council in France, the Union Générale des Israélites de France, also took place later and met resistance. As in the Netherlands

23 Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, p. 166. See also pp. 29, 60, 127-128, 186, 194, 198.

and Belgium, individuals and organisations found they could use Council facilities and positions. For example, the French scout leader Gamzon sat on the Council's executive. Nevertheless, several prominent French Jews attacked the Council in 1942, because according to them it acted illegitimately as the representative of the Jews of France. They included the historian Marc Bloch and the militant Socialist Marc Jarblum, president of the Fédération des Sociétés Juives, which had many immigrant members. Meanwhile, the Jewish Assembly of France at first directed private protests to the Vichy government in reaction to new anti-Jewish legislation. It notably rejected the new racial definition of Judaism, but remained rather apologetic about Jewish contributions to French culture and avoided speaking out in public. Later, during the deportations, it was to speak out publicly.

In short, the formation of the Jewish Council in the Netherlands and the opposition it met followed similar developments in Germany but heralded events in Belgium and France. However, in an international context Visser's resistance activity appears to be exceptional.

Other reactions in the Netherlands

On different levels and in other situations, several Jews can be found who emulated Visser's reactions to German demands. Among them was the former Amsterdam alderman De Miranda. He refused a position on the Jewish Council. When one of the Council chairmen approached him during the February 1941 strike to appeal to the strikers to return to work, he has been reported as saying: "Do you think that I collaborate with the Germans to execute anti-Semitic measures? Never!"[24] De Miranda was possibly taken hostage during the strike, but if so, he was quickly released. Soon after the strike the former alderman travelled through the Netherlands to address meetings of Social Democrats. He was arrested in October 1942 and later died in the Amersfoort prison camp, after being assaulted by inmates who were encouraged by the Germans to terrorise their fellow prisoners. Shortly before his death, he wrote: "While it was day, I worked. Now that evening is falling, I am reassured, no matter what fate will bring now. My confidence in the big cause is unshaken."[25]

Another example was B. Arnold Kahn, director of the fashion store Hirsch & Co. in Amsterdam, who paid with his life for speaking out during the confiscation of Jewish companies in 1941. He had gathered his staff and implored them to remain loyal Dutchmen, rejecting the idea that Jews could be denied their civic rights. Kahn had been born in Amsterdam in 1886, a son of Julie Berg and Sylvain

24 Quoted in De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. IV, p. 920; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, p. 435.
25 Quoted in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, p. 103, based on NIOD, Doc I, folder 1156a; see also folder 957c.

Kahn, the couple that founded Hirsch. He studied law and joined the Zionist student organisation. Kahn succeeded his father and was well connected with Jewish organisations and in general business life. In the early 1920s he set up the Keren Hajesod in the Netherlands, which emphasised the practical work of collecting money for Palestine rather than conducting political activity. Kahn also served as Secretary of the Zionist Association, joined the Friends of the Hebrew University and helped to organise the training of Palestine Pioneers. After the speech to his staff Kahn was arrested; he died in Buchenwald.[26]

Kahn's fate also brings out another aspect of Jewish resistance. His death showed how the Germans were merciless in crushing Jewish protest or disobedience. The threat of being sent to camps like Buchenwald, Sachenhausen and, above all, Mauthausen hung over the head of Jews who considered speaking out or refusing to obey orders. In the course of 1940 and 1941 it had become clear that the German occupiers did not hesitate to turn this threat into action. This formed the background to the lack of outspoken opposition to the introduction of the yellow star. Presser[27] has described some of the reactions to the German decree in 1942. They varied. Some children took pride in wearing it, while adults were equally proud or did not speak up because they were afraid of standing out, were indifferent or ashamed and hid the star as much as possible or stopped going out. There were also jokes about the star, calling the Amsterdam Jewish neighbourhood "Hollywood" or renaming the Waterlooplein in the capital as the "La Place de l'Étoile".

Some people refused to wear the star. This included Visser's son, who was arrested and deported. Hemelrijk, by now a teacher at a Jewish secondary school in Amsterdam, initially refused to wear the star. He has written in his post-war recollections that his pupils asked him why he was not wearing it. He told them that he did not recognise the authority of the German occupiers, as quoted at the start of this chapter. His post-war memoirs have also shown how far his resistance could go. The refusal to wear the star was followed by doubts and discussions at home, which resulted in his wife sowing it on his garments and accompanying him in the morning to the train station. He sat in the train to Amsterdam and was ashamed, despite his earlier courage. Later, in August 1942 when the deportations had started, Hemelrijk walked through Amsterdam, again without the star, witnessing a round-up of Jews in the south of the city: "What we had to witness there was so revolting and humiliating that all self-control was required to force yourself to remain a passive onlooker."[28]

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26 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 144; Giebels, *De Zionistische Beweging in Nederland 1899-1941*, pp. 144-145.

27 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, p. 229.

28 Quoted in Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 1, p. 269.

Hemelrijk, Kahn and Polak were well-integrated members of the Dutch middle classes. They responded to the segregation of Jews through protests as some non-Jews did. Visser stood out in the Jewish establishment because of his prolonged and outspoken resistance, which he shared with people like Warendorf and others in the *Parool* group. To make his voice heard, Visser used his position in the pre-war Dutch judiciary. This position had arisen from his integration into Dutch society. However, his personal circumstances and character also contributed to his determination to resist the Germans and oppose the Jewish Council. Working-class Jews reacted to anti-Jewish violence in their own way and in a manner they may have been used to before the war, namely with an attitude of wanting to hit back physically. They came together in groups lead by men like Zilverberg and Rodriguez Garcia. Others like the Social Democrat De Miranda and the Communists Eyl, Schijvenschuurder, Coenradi, Hellendoorn and Boekdrukker-Hirsch as well as Van Weezel, who denied being a Communist, worked in their parties or used their pre-war contacts to help organise and participate in the general strike of February 1941 to protest against the rounding-up of Jewish men. It follows that the integration of Jews into Dutch society influenced much of the Jewish resistance before the deportation of Jews from the Netherlands started in 1942. On the other hand, the widespread obedience of the registration order was also partly an outcome of integration – people had to register with local Dutch authorities, whom they trusted, many regarded it as a civic duty and the compliance with the registration order went hand-in-hand with the general obedience of German decrees at this time. In this way, the integration of Jews into Dutch society assisted the Germans in segregating the Jews from the rest of the population. However, at the same time it can be concluded that as in Visser's case, people's own traits and situations helped to form a specific reaction to persecution.

6 Deportation (July 1942 – September 1944)

In 1942 Joachim Simon wrote in a letter to a friend in a concentration camp:

> When I think about you, being incarcerated, I am grateful that I can be active. I still have the opportunity to try – and that is most important for us. It is still possible to fight against fate – even if we will lose. And if I have an accident tomorrow, I can have peace. I will not regret for one moment what I have done. We had the courage to fight and if we failed, that is our fate. And the thought that we have not only fought for ourselves gives us courage.[1]

Simon was a Palestine Pioneer. The activity he referred to in his letter consisted of rescuing others and helping them to hide or flee to safety. It was one of the responses to the deportation of the Jews from the Netherlands.

When the deportations started in July 1942, the United States had already entered the Second World War on the Allied side. The German armies had suffered some setbacks, but were still able to mount substantive offences. In the Soviet Union, which had been invaded in June 1941, the Germans had to withdraw from Moscow, but continued to besiege Leningrad and were on the attack in Stalingrad. In the Netherlands, with a wave of raids, which had started in July 1941, the Germans terrorised the Jewish population. In December 1941 Jews with a foreign nationality had been ordered to report for voluntary emigration. A month later German Jews were transported to Westerbork, the former refugee camp in the eastern part of the country. In June 1942, when insufficient numbers of Jewish men volunteered to work in special labour camps, they were forced to enlist. These measures and the deportation orders from July 1942 were implemented through the Jewish Council, sometimes with assistance from the Dutch police and civil services. In July the first Jews were ordered to report for removal to Westerbork, which became a transit camp from where the first deportation train to Auschwitz left during the night of 14 and 15 July 1942. By September 1943 more than 93,000 persons had been deported, a figure that rose to about 107,000 in September 1944.

1 Quoted in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 86-87.

The Jewish responses to deportation varied. Thousands ignored the order and went into hiding. Several individuals helped others to escape and hide. Small Jewish groups came into being to rescue people and help them to hide or flee. While the Jews were now segregated from the rest of the population in the Netherlands, their pre-war integration into Dutch society still influenced the resistance to deportation. It did so in different ways, depending on people's social position and their personal characteristics and circumstances. Integration also had effects on the aid and rescue work conducted by groups of Jews who helped others to escape deportation and hide or flee. However, not all the (often young) Jewish rescuers were well integrated into the Dutch society. Again people's personalities and background determined this form of resistance, although they could not have succeeded without the help of others who had a more advanced social position.

The number of Jews who ignored deportation orders

The deportation of Jews from the Netherlands met resistance in the form of people ignoring deportation orders. From the beginning of July 1942 large numbers were called up to report for removal to Westerbork. Despite the cooperation of the Jewish Council, less than two-thirds of those initially called up in Amsterdam heeded the call. Similar disobedience occurred in The Hague and Rotterdam. In The Hague less than 1,200 of the 4,000 called up appeared at the assembly point.[2] In Rotterdam about 1,500 people were called to report for the first transport, but only about 1,000 came. During the second Rotterdam transport in August 1942, only 300 of the 900 who were called up appeared; during the third only 520 out of 2,000 came.[3] As a reprisal for people not turning up in Amsterdam, the Germans arrested 700 persons on 14 July 1942. When non-compliance continued, the Germans began to round up more people.

Refusing to turn up for deportation meant ignoring the advice of the Jewish Council to obey the German order. To prevent violent German countermeasures, the Council in Amsterdam and most of its local representatives in other towns advised obedience. Romijn and Schenkel have shown that the attitude of the Council representatives in the town of Enschede was exceptional.[4] With help of non-Jews the leaders of the Enschede Council succeeded in launching a support service for Jews who refused to present themselves for deportation and had gone

2 Romijn, "The War, 1940-1945", p. 319.

3 There are different estimates for Rotterdam. Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 511, have presented the following figures: first deportation: 1,120 came out of the total of 2,000 who had been ordered to report; and second deportation: 800 out of 2,000.

4 Romijn, "The War, 1940-1945", p. 324; Schenkel, *De Twentse Paradox*, pp. 89-93, 144-145.

or wanted to go into hiding. Sigmund Menko, Gerard Sanders and Isidor van Dam headed the Jewish Council in Enschede. Before the war Sanders had worked with Menko to help refugees from Germany. Sanders had good contacts with Protestants and their resistance groups. The textile manufacturer Menko was well connected in the local business community. Their success in helping Jews go into hiding also had other reasons: the Germans had conducted raids in Enschede in September 1941, just as in Amsterdam earlier, but in contrast with the Jewish establishment in the capital the Jewish leaders in Enschede decided to prepare for more round-ups by planning to hide people. In addition, the local police in Enschede did not fully cooperate with collecting Jews for deportation. This way, a considerable number of people were saved; estimates of the number of Jews from Enschede who survived the war go up to about 600 – just under half of the town's Jewish population.[5]

Perhaps in a similar way, the local connections of the Salomonson family, who were influential textile producers, may have contributed to the fact that during the occupation about a third of the almost 500 Jews in Almelo, including refugees from Germany who had been transferred to this town, was able to go into hiding and survive the war.[6] However, it is impossible to make a comprehensive comparison between the numbers of Jews who went into hiding in Amsterdam, the other main urban centres, such as Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, and smaller towns and villages like Enschede and Almelo. There are no reliable data, Jews from some smaller towns had been forced to move to Amsterdam and the deportations did not take place simultaneously in all these places.[7]

In addition to not turning up for deportation, an unknown number of Jews managed to escape from the collection centres, deportation trains and transit camps. For example, on 10 December 1943 the Rotterdam police transported 21 Jews from the town to Westerbork. According to a later report,[8] shortly after the train left the Maas station for Utrecht at 6 am, an unnamed female prisoner asked to be allowed to go to the toilet. A police officer accompanied her through the darkened train. Suddenly, the woman pointed at a door, indicated it was a toilet and stepped in. Later it appeared she was gone; a witness said she had jumped from the train. It transpired that in the bus to the station, the woman had already made an unsuccessful attempt to flee, saying she needed to leave the bus because she felt sick. It is unknown how many people escaped from trains, collection cen-

5 Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, pp. 355-356.
6 Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 506; Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, pp. 278-279.
7 For a study of local factors, see Croes, Tammes, '*Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan*'.
8 Quoted in F. van Riet, *Handhaven onder de nieuwe orde*, pp. 415-416.

tres and camps, but it has been estimated that more than 200 successful escape attempts were made to flee the Westerbork transit camp.[9]

The difficulties of going into hiding

Going into hiding to avoid deportation presented a dilemma. Not putting up resistance against German measures may have been relatively safe for non-Jews, but for Jews doing so meant deportation. However, people who did resist became special targets of the Germans, assisted by the Dutch National Socialists, the police and local authorities. Acts of resistance usually resulted in brutal German reprisals, including being sent to notorious camps such as Mauthausen. So, both obeying the deportation order and resisting it were fraught with danger. Furthermore, Jews who went into hiding had to resort to acts that were regarded as illegal before the war, for example, by forging and using false identity papers.

False documents, including identity papers, ration cards and tokens, could be obtained from general resistance groups, but most Jews simply lacked contacts in these groups. One solution was to steal the documents. However, this meant breaking the law, which involved a radical departure from traditional law-abiding behaviour. For some individuals this did not seem to present a problem. In August 1942, 15 persons stood trial in an *Obergericht* for a burglary in a distribution office. The main suspects were the typographer Levie de Groot and the merchant Hijman Meijer. It was alleged they had stolen large quantities of ration tokens. During the trial it was claimed that the suspects had pre-war criminal records. De Groot and Meijer were sentenced to death. Other defendants received prison sentences.[10]

There were practical problems too. Many Jews did not know enough people who could offer the help needed for going into hiding. Croes and Tammes have remarked that relatively many Jewish survivors who had gone into hiding were cattle traders and musicians, who obviously had contacts in the general population, for example, through their trade with farmers and the orchestras they worked in. These authors have also pointed at the opportunities for people related to Jews in mixed marriages. This gave them contacts in the general population, who could provide hiding places and help.[11] However, the majority of the Jews in the Netherlands had great difficulty in finding a hiding place and the help needed to stay in hiding – it was not until later in the war that the general resistance groups in the Netherlands developed the means and networks to assist growing numbers

9 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VIII, pp. 738-740; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 361.
10 Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 23,54, based on NIOD, SG 34/42.
11 Croes, Tammes, *Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan*, p. 414.

of people in hiding, including the members of their own organisations and men who wanted to avoid forced labour.

Sometimes, the first hiding place for Jews who decided to ignore the deportation order was close to home, with friends and colleagues, but when this place became unsafe, another hideout was needed. There were problems with finding transport to and from the hiding place. Nobody knew for how long the refuge was needed. Food and other goods needed for daily life could only be obtained with ration cards, which had to be bought, stolen or falsified. All this usually cost a lot of money and not many people had sufficient financial means to pay for all expenses. For families with children these difficulties were multiplied. And often they had to leave one or more of their children with non-Jewish helpers. Sometimes there was only a hiding place for a child, not for its parents. It resulted in terrible choices. Should you leave your children? Would they be safe with people you hardly knew? For how long would they be safe? And all along, there was the danger of betrayal by unscrupulous bystanders or arrested Jews and their helpers who had been caught by the National Socialists. As Herzberg has written: "People had to develop a lot of energy and a more than usual amount of initiative to distract themselves from the fatal course of events."[12]

There are different figures for the total number of Jews who went into hiding in the Netherlands. Croes and Tammes have reviewed various estimates with up to 22,400 persons who tried to hide, concluding that this figure is probably too low, and they have put the number of Jews who went into hiding at 27,995, of whom about 16,100 survived the war.[13] The figure of some 28,000 people who went into hiding constitutes almost 20 per cent of the number of Jews in the Netherlands registered in 1941. There is uncertainty about the number of Jews who were caught while in hiding. According to traditional figures, 6,300 Jews were captured. Their identity papers were usually marked for special treatment as punishment cases. In addition, 3,500 Jews were arrested and mostly sent to Westerbork as a punishment case, usually because they had violated one of the many German decrees. This gives a total estimate of the number of punishment cases of about 9,800. However, Croes and Tammes have put this figure at 14,676, stating that more people were caught in hiding than has traditionally been assumed.[14]

12 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, p. 319.

13 Croes, Tammes, *Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan*, pp. 174-175, 441. See also Houwink ten Cate, "'Het Jongere Deel'", pp. 9-66.

14 Croes, Tammes, *Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan*, pp. 176-181. In Westerbork, the punishment cases were usually separated from other inmates and quickly deported. However, on their arrival in Westerbork some of them were warned about their fate by Hans Ottenstein, a German Jew who had been in the camp before the deportations started and worked in the camp administration. Some 17.7% of the punishment cases were able to get rid of their identity papers, which had been marked with an S. At least 13 of them escaped from Westerbork.

Germany, Belgium, France and Italy

There are no details available on the exact numbers of Jews who went into hiding after the start of the deportations in Germany, Belgium, France and Italy. However, estimates have been made for Germany and Belgium, while an indication can be given for France and a more general observation can be made for Italy. A comparison of all these figures shows that in Germany less Jews went into hiding than in the Netherlands, but more did so in Belgium (outside Antwerp), while relatively high numbers survived in France and Italy. The reasons for these differences can be found in the manner in which Jews were integrated into the societies in which they lived, their segregation by the National Socialists and their collaborators, and local and national circumstances, some of which have already been discussed.

The estimated number of Jews who went into hiding in Germany lies between 10,000 and 12,000, a quarter of whom survived the war. Using the higher estimate of 12,000, it appears that about 5 per cent of the German Jews went into hiding. When the transports started in 1940, almost 73,000 Jews lived in Berlin, by that time already an ageing and terrorised population, with many younger people having left Germany earlier. After the fall of Berlin in 1945 just over 1,400 came out of hiding.

In Belgium, Antwerp Jewry suffered relatively heavy losses: at least 65 per cent out of almost 14,000 Jews living in the city in 1942 were deported and killed. In Brussels about one-third of its Jewish residents were deported. The Antwerp figure must be viewed in a wider context. Antwerp had a relatively large Jewish population, which was concentrated in one district of the city. The first round-ups in Belgium took place in Antwerp, so that people in that city were surprised and unprepared, while large-scale rescue organisations had not yet been established. There was also local cooperation with the deportations and people had been intimidated by the anti-Jewish riots in April 1941.

Most deportees in Belgium were not caught in massive round-ups, but through individual arrests and apprehension of small groups. In Belgium as a whole about 16,000 Jews were deported before November 1942 and some 10,000 during the rest of the war (out of a total number that was depleted from 70,000 to 50,000 as a result of the mass exodus at time of the German invasion in May 1940). This means that about 24,000 Jews in Belgium survived the war by going into hiding or fleeing after the start of the deportations, which constitutes about 48 per cent of all the Jews in the country at the start of the deportations. Taking the heavy loss in Antwerp into account, the number of Jews in Antwerp who went in hiding was on par with Amsterdam and perhaps with the Netherlands as a whole, but in the rest of Belgium the number of Jews who avoided deportation was relatively higher.

Several reasons for the greater avoidance of deportation in Belgium can be suggested. The Germans applied a more violent approach at the start of the deportations in Belgium than in the Netherlands, which drove many Jews in Belgium into hiding, while in the Netherlands people often hoped to avoid deportation by means of the exclusions from deportation issued by the Jewish Council, which ultimately offered a very deceptive temporary reprieve. Some Jews who had moved from Antwerp to the Belgium capital, but had not been registered there, were able to avoid deportation – the registration of the Jewish population in Belgium was not as efficient as in the Netherlands. The rise of the general resistance also occurred earlier in Belgium than in the Netherlands, which offered Jews in Belgium relatively more opportunities to go into hiding. Furthermore, the country was closer to neutral and allied territory, which gave Jews in Belgium better chances to escape. Finally, most Jews in Belgium were recent immigrants. Being relative newcomers to the country, they were often used to helping themselves in difficult situations or they were connected with left-wing organisations, including groups that formed part of the general resistance movement. They may also have found it easier to leave everything behind and adopt new means of survival than the native-born Jews in the Netherlands. All these factors assisted Jews in Belgium in avoiding deportation.

There are no estimates for the number of Jews who went into hiding in France, although the rate of survival of Jews in France – about 75 per cent – suggests that the number was higher than in the Netherlands. A major difference between the Netherlands and France was the large presence of recent immigrants from Eastern Europe; almost two thirds of the total of number of Jews in France were of foreign birth and this shaped their responses to deportation in a similar way as in Belgium, as discussed above. Poznanski[15] has also argued that the urbanisation of Jews in France influenced the development of their resistance, including avoidance of deportation. Before 1940 native and immigrant Jews in France had been mainly city dwellers, concentrated in Paris. During the war many Jews in Paris fled or were forced to move to smaller towns and from there into the countryside, where they were able to escape deportation and find shelter. The Jewish resistance in France in most of its forms grew out of pre-existing help organisations, which followed their members out of Paris. These organisations, sometimes related to the Jewish Council, shifted their orientation away from aid to rescue and served as the nuclei of new and increasingly successful movements. Only Communist groups remained strong in the French capital. Other differences between the Netherlands and France were the division of the last country into two zones. The Vichy regime in the southern zone first collaborated with the Germans to enable

15 Poznanski, *The Geopolitics of Jewish Resistance in France*, p. 260.

mass deportations from July to September 1942, but it withheld this support from October 1942 (soon after that the Germans occupied the zone when Allied troops landed in French North Africa). Furthermore, relatively many Jews in France were able to flee to the temporary safe haven of Italian-occupied Nice and the neutral territory of Switzerland and Spain.

The deportation of Jews from Italy started relatively late, in 1943 when the Germans occupied the country. An estimated 7,500 Jews were deported and died, almost 17 per cent out of a 1939 total of about 44,500. Most Jews did not obey orders for deportation, sharing with their non-Jewish compatriots what Zucotti has described as "an amicable inclination to ignore the law"[16], in contrast with the law-obeying nature of the Dutch Jews. Furthermore, there was no Jewish Council in Italy, while in 1943 large resistance armies sprang up and the majority of the Italian population had grown tired of Fascism and the war; the Mussolini government had already been overthrown. Prior to his fall, Mussolini had shielded the Jews from deportation, a policy that was continued by some local authorities. Many Italian Jews engaged with the general anti-Fascist resistance. A relatively large number of Jews, between 1,000 to 2,000 men and women, joined partisan units hiding in central and northern Italy. The partisan development coincided with the start of deportations. In a sense, therefore, joining the partisans also helped individual Jews to avoid deportation.

This international comparison confirms that the number of Jews who went into hiding at the time of the deportations was mostly determined by national conditions, including differences in the composition of the Jewish populations, deportation policies, emergence of large general resistance movements, availability of hiding places and escape routes to safe havens. In Germany the number was relatively low. The deportations from Germany started early, but the Jewish population was already a decimated group. In Italy the survival rate was relatively high. Here the deportations started relatively late, coinciding with the fall of Mussolini and the rise of partisan armies, which gave thousands of Jews protection. The number of Jews who went into hiding in Antwerp was similar to the Netherlands, but in Belgium as a whole the survival rate was relatively higher as it was in France. In contrast to the Netherlands, Belgian and French Jewry had large proportions of immigrants from Eastern Europe, who were not well integrated but had their own organisations and were used to helping themselves. As relative newcomers, they were possibly more prepared to leave everything behind to escape deportation. The urbanisation of French Jewry may have played a role, but it is more likely that the division of France into two zones gave Jews in that country more opportunities to evade deportation. The manner in which Jews were

16 Zucotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust*, p. 275.

integrated into the societies in which they lived was therefore clearly a factor in the number of Jews who went into hiding, but it was a minor one and had different results. It helped some Jews finding hiding places, while it hampered others.

Jewish rescuers in the Netherlands

Of the thousands of Jews who went into hiding in the Netherlands, several hundred received help from organisations formed by Jews. Giving aid and saving the lives of individuals or groups were conducted initially through permitted activities under the umbrella of the Jewish Council but later solely by means of clandestine work. Several groups consisting almost entirely of Jews helped people in hiding and those who attempted to flee. Some of these groups supplied people with hiding places, false documents, money, food and other necessities. This required organisation, contacts with non-Jews and non-Jewish volunteers to carry out tasks. Some Jewish groups defended the lives of specific individuals; others were less selective. In the course of the final years of the war, surviving groups often got involved in other resistance work. This was usually a result of cooperation with general resistance movements or a desire to do more to defeat the National Socialists.

The first group to be reviewed here has been described by historians such as Presser.[17] It was organised around Walter Süskind. He was employed by the Jewish Council in the Hollandsche Schouwburg at the Plantage Middenlaan in Amsterdam. The Schouwburg was initially used for cabaret, revue and theatre performances with Jewish directors, actors and audiences when Jews were banned from general cultural activities. After the start of the deportations the Schouwburg became one of the main collection centres in the capital for people who were ordered to report or rounded up for deportation. While the parents stayed in the Schouwburg during the day, babies and small children were taken across the road to a crèche in the Talmud Torah building. Several individuals and groups operated in this environment, often using the position of Jewish Council employees to help people escape from deportation.

Süskind was mainly involved in rescuing children. With his collaborators, including the director of the crèche, Henriëtte Rodriguez Pimentel and later Virginnie Cohen, he found a way of smuggling children out of the crèche. The group asked the parents for permission, so that they would not panic when their children suddenly disappeared. To avoid detection, group members also removed the registration documents of the children from the Schouwburg files. Two buildings along from the crèche was a Protestant teaching college that could easily be

17 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, pp. 11-12.

reached through the back gardens. This enabled Jewish carers to take children out of the crèche to the college, from where they were handed over to a member of a general resistance group that took the children to a hiding place. On other occasions crèche nurses handed the children over to resistance members during walks with children that were allowed in the neighbourhood of the Schouwburg.

Süskind was the driving force behind this work. He also helped others[18] who assisted adults to escape from the Schouwburg. Süskind had been born in 1906 in Germany, were he found work as a factory manager. He came to the Netherlands in 1938 and obtained the Dutch nationality. In March 1942 he had to move to Amsterdam, where he lived in the city centre with his wife and daughter. Perhaps because of his managerial expertise, the Jewish Council employed Süskind as a manager in the Schouwburg. He used this position, knowledge of German and closeness to some German officials to smuggle several hundred children out of the collection centre. However, he was unable or unwilling to save himself and his family. At the end of the deportations from Amsterdam, Süskind and his family were sent to Westerbork. He could return to Amsterdam, but eventually he went back to his family in the transit camp, from where in September 1944 he was deported to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz. Süskind briefly survived his wife and daughter but died early in 1945 on one of the forced marches to evacuate the inmates from Auschwitz when the advancing Red Army was about to reach that camp.[19]

In total some 6,000 Jewish children were hidden in the Netherlands during the deportations, often with non-Jewish families. Probably up to three-quarters of the children went into hiding without their parents. Less than a third was caught.[20] Next to the Süskind group, several organisations were involved in the rescue of children. One of them was the Children Committee, which arose from an initiative of students in Utrecht and received financial support from the Roman Catholic archbishop of Utrecht. Many children were taken to families in the southern provinces of the Netherlands with their dominant Roman Catholic population. Sandor Baracs headed another group. He was a Jewish businessman who originated from Hungary, lived in the Netherlands since 1927 and had several contacts within Dutch resistance movements such as the Ordedienst.

Jacques van de Kar helped adults to escape from deportation collection centres in Amsterdam. Van de Kar had been born in 1917 in de Nieuwe Kerkstraat in the Dutch capital. His father was a market trader in second-hand furniture and met-

18 Such as Jacques van de Kar (see below). See Van de Kar, *Joods Verzet*, pp. 50-69. See also NIOD, Doc II, folder 364b/22.

19 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, pp. 343, 466; De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VI, pp. 258-259, 352-353, vol. VII, pp. 310, 382. See also Schellekens, "Op zoek naar Walter Süskind".

20 Roegholt, *Amsterdam na 1900*, p. 148.

als. When their home became too small, the family moved to Amsterdam North. Van de Kar visited a general primary school, attended Jewish evening classes and joined a Communist youth organisation. His first job was making deliveries for a Jewish baker, but as he disliked working on Sunday when his friends were off, Van de Kar moved to a non-Jewish bakery, where he got involved in union activity. In his spare time, Van de Kar was a track athlete and member of a general sports club. His first resistance work was helping to spread Communist propaganda. He took part in the fights in the Jewish neighbourhood in February 1941 and was involved in the general strike during the same month. When the Germans began arresting suspected strikers, Van de Kar went temporarily into hiding (his brother was arrested and disappeared).

In July 1942 Van de Kar was called up for deportation, which he avoided by applying to the Jewish Council for a job; he was appointed as a messenger. In his memoirs[21] Van de Kar has related his attempts to help people avoid deportation, including the names of numerous individuals who assisted him or were otherwise involved in rescue attempts. This started in a former school building in the southern part of Amsterdam, which the Germans first used as a collection centre for deportation. As a Jewish Council employee, Van de Kar had free access to the building and smuggled people out, usually by adding individuals to a group of people who were allowed to leave as they had been exempted from deportation. He simply told the guard that they were all exempted. At other times Van de Kar and his colleagues hid people in a carrier tricycle or truck. As a result of his contacts with non-Jews, he was sometimes able to give the escapees contacts for hiding places.[22] This activity was extended to the railway yard from where the deportation trains left.

Süskind helped Van de Kar to get a post in the Hollandsche Schouwburg. He mostly worked there at night. Using a set of duplicated keys, Van de Kar and a small group of seven helpers continued to help people escape. This usually concerned family and friends, but increasingly the group was called upon by resistance organisations to free specific individuals. Eventually, the group helped hundreds to get out of the Schouwburg, taking many of them to Van de Kar's nearby home on the Nieuwe Herengracht, where they were given or helped to find addresses for hiding places.[23] In September 1943 Van de Kar went into hiding, involving himself first in the Communist resistance as a courier and later joining a general group that assisted people in hiding.

21 Van de Kar, *Joods Verzet*, pp. 50-72.
22 Van de Kar, *Joods Verzet*, pp. 50, 53.
23 Van de Kar, *Joods Verzet*, p. 67.

Palestine Pioneers

Lilly Kettner also worked in the crèche of the Schouwburg. She was a Palestine Pioneer. At the start of the occupation just over 800 Pioneers were living in several locations in the Netherlands, including Loosdrecht, where Kettner had been trained, Gouda, Franeker, Elden and the Wieringermeer polder. The chances of emigration to Palestine – the purpose of their training – disappeared during the early years of the war. Initially, there were still opportunities for individuals to get away. Mirjam de Leeuw-Gerzon and others had set up the Irgoen Olei Holland (Organisation of Dutch Immigrants in Palestine) on 5 May 1940. During the occupation, it tried to save people by applying for certificates that would enable them to emigrate to Palestine.[24] However, the emigration certificates were out of reach or useless for the majority of the Palestine Pioneers. Nevertheless, their training for future settlement in Palestine was continued.

As researchers like Brasz en Regenhardt[25] have established, within the group of Palestine Pioneers discussions took place about how to react to the deportations. Some Pioneers felt that they should not try to hide or escape, but endure the suffering for religious and historical reasons. Others argued that the Pioneers should try and flee to Palestine. The initiative for building a clandestine organisation that helped Palestine Pioneers to escape was taken by two youth leaders in Loosdrecht: Menachem Pinkhof and Joachim Simon. It came about at the start of the deportations in 1942, but the plans may have been made earlier – in 1941 the Germans had unexpectedly cleared the Pioneer centre in the Wieringermeer and this may have caused the discussion of escape plans in Loosdrecht. In the summer of 1942 it also appeared that some of the Pioneers in Loosdrecht were making individual plans to get away. The leaders decided to create a set-up whereby all Pioneers would be able to go into hiding.

To organise hiding places the Pioneers had to rely on outside help. The Jewish Waterman family lived next to the Loosdrecht centre. Their daughter Mirjam worked in a children's institution in Bilthoven. One of her colleagues was Joop Westerweel. He was able to find hiding places in surrounding towns and villages

24 Boas, "Mirjam de Leeuw-Gerzon (1891-1977)". See also C. Brasz, *Irgoen Olei Holland*.

25 The illegal activity of the Palestine Pioneers has been described in Brasz, Daams Czn, Ofek, Keny, Pinkhof, *De jeugdalijah van het paviljoen Loosdrechtssche Rade 1940-1945*; Regenhardt, Groot, *Om nooit te vergeten*. Other secondary sources are Avni, "Zionist Underground in Holland and France and the Escape to Spain"; De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VI, pp. 354-356; Jakob, Van der Voort (eds), *Anne Frank war nicht allein*, pp. 169-181; Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, pp. 227-230, 270; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. I, pp. 448-451, vol. II, 12-16; Stegeman, Vorsteveld, *Het joodse werkdorp in de Wieringermeer 1934-1941*. See also NIOD, Doc II, folders 296a, 1283.

and eventually the group was called after him.[26] As Pioneers from different centres were looking for ways to hide and escape, more people learned about the plans of the Westerweel group and the national office in Amsterdam became the centre of clandestine activity. In this way, different groups came into being next to the Westerweel group, but they collaborated on aspects of their work. In August 1942 friends in Amsterdam warned the Pioneers group in Loosdrecht that the Germans intended to raid their centre. Within a few days the Pioneers went to their hiding places. After some months the group started to investigate an escape route to Allied territory. For this purpose, Simon, his wife Adina van Coevorden and two other Pioneers travelled to France. Simon was able to make some useful contacts and he returned to the Netherlands to set up the route after his wife and the two other Pioneers crossed the Swiss border.

Simon was a refugee from Germany. He had been born in 1919 in Berlin. His mother died shortly after his birth and for a year he was looked after by an aunt in Frankfurt. Back in Berlin, Simon visited a Jewish primary school and studied at a general gymnasium. His father remarried in 1932 and Simon moved again to his aunt in Frankfurt, but after his father's death in 1935 Simon returned to Berlin with his aunt, and he finished his secondary education. In the summer of 1937 Simon joined the Palestine Pioneers in Germany. He was arrested during the Kristallnacht in November 1938 and sent to Buchenwald. After his release from that camp, he moved to the Netherlands. To continue his Pioneer training, Simon worked on a Dutch farm. The physical labour could not have been easy for the young man, because he suffered from asthma. In his spare time, Simon continued to study, for which he borrowed books in Amsterdam. After May 1940 he was appointed youth leader in Loosdrecht and became an active member of the national Pioneer organisation.

Simon personified the tenacity of the Pioneers.[27] This resolve was also a recurring theme in the letters he wrote to inspire others to be equally determined to succeed. In the letter of 20 November 1942, quoted at the start of this chapter, he wrote:

> There is so much to do. I do my uttermost to succeed, but who knows, maybe it is too late and then I cannot do what is necessary. Everything is so depressing,

26 For a recent contribution to the discussion about non-Jews in Western Europe who helped to rescue Jews and their motives, aims and backgrounds, see Moore, "The Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Belgium, France and the Netherlands".

27 Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 83-88.

> sometimes I do not see an opportunity to persist. But you should not think too much. Even if everything seems almost hopeless, we may achieve something.[28]

Simon struggled with what he saw as his own shortcomings. At times, he found himself too impatient, wanting results too quickly. When he wrote about this, the escape work was not yet organised and time was pressing. He had to make far-reaching decisions, while conducting a discussion with those who did not want to go into hiding, often because they felt protected through the exemptions issued to them by the Jewish Council. Shortly before or in January 1943 he wrote about this discussion to another friend:

> If we had a meeting now [...], would I not be forced to say [...] that on the basis of deductive, logical observation of the general situation [...] that this and this are our options and that our logical reaction should be so and not any different, that is to say, not await our fate as cattle that is being taken to the slaughter? Should I not demand action from everybody [...], especially as I feel this burdensome responsibility?!!!!

Simon travelled several times to France to organise the escape network, but he was arrested. In captivity, he killed himself on 27 January 1943.

Pinkhof took over Simon's role. Some Pioneers settled along the escape route and the Westerweel group was able to build a large organisation that helped Pioneers to escape in groups of two or three persons. After the summer of 1943 the number of escapees rose, including some Pioneers who had managed to get out of Westerbork. Following Simon's death the group had several more setbacks. Waterman and Pinkhof were captured and ended up in Bergen-Belsen. Westerweel was arrested in March 1944; he was executed five months later. In the spring of 1944 the Germans destroyed the Pioneer organisation in Paris and several Pioneers in the Netherlands fell into German hands. In France Kurt Reitlinger took over the contacts with French Zionists. The group was able to obtain false identity papers, which gave people the position of construction workers. At one point a group of about 20 persons was working under this disguise on the Atlantic Wall in the Calais region.[29] In total, the Westerweel group looked after some 200 Pioneers. About 150 of them undertook the journey to Spain; 80 reached that country and 70 of them managed to settle in Palestine. Of the total of 821 Palestine Pioneers

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28 Quoted in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 86-87, which is based on NIOD Doc II, folder 1283. This folder contains a manuscript by Kochba (Adina van Coevorden) and Klinov, which incorporates this and the following letter. According to the NIW 21/6/1987, this manuscript has been published in Hebrew under the title *Hamachteret Hachalutsith BeHolland Hekevoesa*.

29 Moore, *Victims and Survivors*, p. 168.

in the Netherlands at the start of the war, just over 400 went into hiding and 361 survived the war.

Meanwhile, as Michman[30] has pointed out, the activity of other Dutch Zionist youth groups became more centralised, with heightened internal activity aimed at the expansion of education and the deepening of Jewish consciousness, while the rift between young and old became less acute. The Zionist youth movements were dissolved, officially in 1941, but in practice not until 1942-1943. Their members shared the fate of their parents. Some individuals joined general resistance groups, but the Dutch Zionist youth movement as a whole left no remarkable imprint on Jewish resistance in the Netherlands during the Holocaust.

In and around the Oosteinde home

Marga and Manfred Grünberg, two young German Jews who had fled to the Netherlands before 1940, found another solution for the problem of obtaining unmarked identity papers. They had a contact in the registry office in Amsterdam. Marga was instructed to go to the police and tell them she had lost her identity papers, but not to say that she was Jewish. A few weeks later, the new papers were ready to be picked up at the registrar's office. Through this contact, the Grünbergs were able to get others new identities too. One of their friends who benefited from this work was Leo Weil, another refugee, who had come to the Netherlands in 1938. He first tried to falsify papers, but was arrested and transported to Westerbork. He managed to escape, was arrested twice during a round-up but each time got away, on one occasion jumping from the truck that was taking him to the Schouwburg. With his new papers from the Grünberg contact, Weil decided to flee to France. There he joined a resistance group and was employed by a construction company that worked for the Germans. This job enabled him to get documents for others who came to France, disguised as labourers. In total, Weil assisted about 100 people to get away.[31]

Part of this work was related to the activity of the Palestine Pioneers, but it also formed part of the activity of a group of refugees who operated in and around the Oosteinde home in Amsterdam.[32] Their work had started before the war. In 1937 the Oosteinde home was opened as a meeting place and activity centre for

30 Michman, "Zionist Youth Movements in Holland and Belgium and Their Activities during the Shoah", pp. 154-156.

31 Interview, Marga and Manfred Grünberg with author, 13/1/1987.

32 Their stories have been recorded in my thesis, "Passage naar vrijheid". See also Braber, *Passage naar vrijheid*. These stories have been used to reconstruct their activity in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 88-94. See also Jakob, Van der Voort, *Anne Frank war nicht allein*, pp. 186-193.

Jewish refugees. Some of the refugees were politically active and a few had come to Netherlands after release from a prison or concentration camp. The political refugees such as Social Democrats and Communists usually regarded their stay in the Netherlands as temporary and expected to return to Germany following the defeat of National Socialism. With this attitude they continued their political work, for example, by collecting money for the resistance in Germany. However, refugees were not allowed by the Dutch government to engage in politics. If caught, punishment could result in deportation across the border. This was one of the reasons why they kept their activity secret. Furthermore, a number of political refugees, including Jews, had come illegally to the Netherlands and lived there without a residence permit, which meant that they had to be provided with shelter, food and money. After the German invasion in May 1940 little groups were formed that continued this activity. In the Oosteinde home Communists organised small groups of mostly young refugees, young Dutch and Polish Jews who carried out the work. The leaders included Alice Heymann-David, secretary of the home, Nathan Notowicz and Ernst Levi.

Alice Heymann-David had been born in 1909 in Dortmund.[33] She studied dentistry, passing her final exam in 1933. Later that year the National Socialists imprisoned her; she had joined the German Communist Party in 1930. After her release, Heymann-David helped to organise Communist resistance cells and propaganda work in Cologne, but she was forced to flee to the Netherlands when the German police arrested members of her group. She used her position and contacts in Amsterdam to collect money for Communist resistance work in Germany and support political and Jewish refugees who stayed illegally in the Netherlands. Some of the young Dutch and Polish Jews mentioned above joined this group as they were attracted to Communism (later also to the protection the group could offer, although not everybody was offered the same protection – see below). The pre-war care for political refugees was sustained after May 1940. They started to distribute resistance newspapers. Contacts were maintained with refugees interned in Westerbork. The clandestine work was extended after the start of the deportations. Heymann-Davids tried to obtain exemptions from deportation for group members. The group found hiding places, at first around the Oosteinde home and the buildings in the Passage across the road; later they made more hiding places at different addresses. The group also managed to get false identity papers and ration cards from their contacts in the Dutch Communist resistance. Furthermore, group members helped people to escape from the Schouwburg and the trains to Westerbork.

Members of the Oosteinde group in Westerbork organised escapes from the transit camp. The central contact in the camp was Werner Stertzenbach, a German

33 Her story has been related in Braber, *Passage naar vrijheid*, pp. 87-99.

Communist. Stertzenbach had been born in 1909 in Mühlheim. He attended a Jewish primary school in Essen and started to work in the decoration business of his father after his secondary education. Later he became an accountant. He was arrested in March 1933. After his release in September 1933, Stertzenbach crossed the Dutch border. Via the Jewish Refugee Committee he found a place in the Palestine Pioneer centre in the Wieringermeer, but as a Communist he quickly came into conflict with the Zionists, who offered him a choice: emigrate or be expelled to Belgium. He chose the last, but returned illegally to the Netherlands, where political friends hid him in Rotterdam until he was arrested in 1936 by the Dutch police and interned. When the Germans invaded the Netherlands, the interned Stertzenbach was sent back to Germany and accused of assisting the illegal German Communist Party. However, the Gestapo was unable to find evidence for the accusation and in February 1941 Stertzenbach was transported to Westerbork.

In that camp, Stertzenbach got a technical job because he had acquired bricklaying skills during his internment. As his job concerned building and maintaining the sewers that run outside the camp, Stertzenbach was given a card that allowed him to go beyond the barbed wire fence. He used this position to help people escape. The Oosteinde group members in Westerbork had contact with their friends in Amsterdam through the mail, couriers of the Jewish Council and Ger van Reemst, the non-Jewish brother-in-law of Trudel van Reemst-de Vries, a member of the group. When Stertzenbach and his comrades learned that a group member or another person important to the group was to escape from Westerbork, they ensured their papers were removed from of the camp records and helped them to get out. Stertzenbach also assisted non-group members. In about 20 cases he smuggled individuals and on one occasion a couple outside the fence, where Van Reemst waited.[34] He took them to their first hiding address. In addition to the people rescued by Stertzenbach and Van Reemst, about 40 other persons related to the group managed to get out of Westerbork. In September 1943 Stertzenbach escaped himself and went into hiding.

By 1943 the Oosteinde group was producing false identity documents and was increasingly working with other resistance groups in order to care for the growing number of people in hiding. In addition, the group distributed pamphlets among German soldiers, calling on them to desert. When a few soldiers answered this call, the number of people in hiding grew. In September 1944, under the name groep-Oosteinde or groep-Van Dien, they joined the Free Groups Amsterdam, an association of general resistance groups in the capital. The Oosteinde group also formed the nucleus of the Association of German and Stateless Anti-Fascists. It started its own clandestine publications in 1944 and had about 600 members

34 One of the persons Stertzenbach helped to escape was Hanny Levy, fiancée of Rudolf Bloemgarten (see the next chapter).

after the war. Its main aims were to return to Germany and build a post-war Socialist state in that country.

The Oosteinde group was lead by a small core of dedicated Communists. It was joined by and helped people with other political ideologies such as Joseph Mahler.[35] He had been born in 1894 in Krefeld, attended a Jewish primary school and went on to general secondary education. During the First World War Mahler volunteered for the German army, was wounded and received the Iron Cross for bravery. An unobtrusive and quiet man, he went into the printing business after his discharge from the army and joined the German Social Democratic Party. In 1922 he married Hedwig Abraham. Thirteen years later the Mahlers left Germany and settled just across the Dutch border in Venlo, where they started Refaka, a firm that traded in office supplies. Mahler came under the suspicion of the Dutch police, tipped off by the German authorities, for printing materials for the outlawed German Social Democrats and receiving couriers from the German resistance in his Venlo home. In 1937 the Mahler was arrested and extradited to Belgium.

Mahler was deported from the Netherlands because of his political activity, which was prohibited to refugees, and an issue was made of the allegation that he had been involved in conducting Communist propaganda. Mahler told a reporter of the Socialist newspaper *Het Volk*, which strongly protested against the extradition, about his motives to help people: "It does not interest me at all what politics these people adhere to. They may be Centrum members, Communists, Social Democrats or Jews – for me the qualification is that the National Socialists persecute them."[36] The Mahlers got into problems in Belgium, possibly because of an involvement of Hedwig in smuggling. The Belgian authorities returned the couple to the Netherlands in March 1940, from where the Dutch police handed them over to the Gestapo across the German border. During his interrogation by the German police, Mahler denied all accusations relating to Communist propaganda and maintained he was a Social Democrat. In April 1941 the couple was sent to Westerbork, where Mahler got a job in the post room and camp administration, helping Stertzenbach and his group. In March 1943 Mahler was arrested again and taken to Düsseldorf, where he died in prison. His wife was deported.

The leadership of the Oosteinde group enforced a strict discipline among its members – Heymann-David was known as "Alie with the iron hand"[37] – and they made a clear distinction in the way they treated leaders and ordinary members. This resulted in unpleasant experiences for some group members. Sera Anstadt, a young Polish Jew who had joined the group, has written in her post-war memoirs

35 The story of Mahler is reconstructed in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 91-94, based on documents in Hauptstaatsarchiv Nordrhein-Westphalen, Gestapo-akten, RW 58, folders 869, 3933 and 53199.

36 *Het Volk*, 7/7/1937. Compare *Dagblad voor Noord-Limburg*, 24/10/1987.

37 Braber, *Passage naar vrijheid*, p. 98.

about a meeting with two group leaders, one of whom was Notowicz: "[There was] an important official. He [Notowicz] had never spoken to me before".[38] Sera was told she had to give her hiding place to Notowicz:

> Now [Notowicz] opened his mouth for the first time. "Would you like to come with me to give me the address." It was evident that I had to cooperate. [Notowicz] was [...] an important official. If I refused, I would be expelled and could not expect any more help from the [Communist] party. What [Notowicz] said had not sounded as a question either. I went along and gave him the address.[39]

As it turned out, Anstadt did not receive any further help from the group. She and her sister Selma ended up hiding with a woman who betrayed them. Sera survived the war, but her sister Selma was deported and died.

Jewish rescue groups in Germany, Belgium and France

In a few instances people fleeing or in hiding were supported by Jewish groups in Germany. A radicalisation of the German Zionist youth movement had taken place in the 1920s, partly because renewed segregation of the Jewish population – the radicalisation of Zionist youth in the Netherlands came about partly through the experience of the Jews in Germany. Just as in the Netherlands but earlier, the radical young Zionists were looking for a purer form of Zionism, disengagement from the society in which they lived and preparation for settlement in Palestine. This resulted in an extensive network of Palestine Pioneer training centres. The movement furnished young Jews with groups associations, access to Jewish culture and a taste of freedom in the countryside as opposed to the hostile urban environment. After the National Socialists came to power, the movement assumed a position of greater importance. The creation of the Jüdische Jugendhilfe in 1933 also offered practical solutions for settlement in Palestine. Although the movement drew on traditional Jewish thought, unorthodox thinkers such as Buber and left-wing ideology also influenced many young German Zionists.

After 1933 the frustration among young Zionist leaders about the inability of the German Jewish establishment to deal with the growing problems encouraged them in assuming overall leadership and seeking practical solutions. They opposed the established leaders, who before 1938 did not encourage large-scale emigration from Germany because they believed that an exodus would mean abandonment of positions and constitute a blow to their struggle to safeguard

38 Anstadt, *Een eigen plek*, p. 69. For her brother's autobiography, see Anstadt, *Kruis of munt*.
39 Anstadt, *Een eigen plek*, p. 70.

Jewish rights. Furthermore, organisations such as the Reichsvertretung asserted that the scope of emigration should be based on the possibilities of absorption in the receiving countries, including Palestine, not the demands of Jews in Germany to emigrate. This position was abandoned in 1938 and emigration became a deliberate attempt to save German Jewry. In contrast, the Zionist youth groups had promoted step-by-step evacuation before 1938. Other than most German Jews, who were not accustomed to forging passports, bribing consular officials and illegally crossing borders, the young Zionists were able to overcome practical problems. Many fled, including Simon, who led the Pioneer resistance in the Netherlands, and with great resourcefulness the youth groups took almost 1,700 young German Jews to Palestine between March 1939 and September 1940.

The Zionist youth organisation Chug Chaluzi (Pioneer Circle) started the rescue of children from Germany in 1942. The group consisted of about 20 persons, one whom regarded this work also as political resistance: "We are combating Hitler with every life we save."[40] The group had earlier attempted to develop Jewish consciousness, strengthen Jewish solidarity and prepare for settlement in Palestine after the war. For this purpose, they organised meetings, study groups and religious practice – activities that evolved into rescue work after the start of the deportations. The main organiser of the Chug group was Edith Wolff. She had a non-Jewish mother and was baptised, but converted to Judaism in 1933. Before that year Wolff had been a member of a pacifist youth movement and was on familiar terms with Communists and Zionists. The National Socialists regarded her as a *Mischling* (a person of mixed birth), which meant she was able to move around and obtain rations. Most of the inner circle of the group survived the war, probably because of help from non-Jews, particularly those who were connected with the Communist resistance, Christian organisations and non-Jewish partners in mixed marriages.

In relation to giving aid to people in hiding, one of the main differences between the Netherlands and Belgium was the Belgian Comité de Défense des Juifs (CDJ). Hertz Jospa, a Communist of Romanian extraction, founded the CDJ in September 1942. It was quickly enlarged with representatives of other groups such as the Zionists. The organisation was connected to general resistance groups, became part of the general Belgian resistance movement and had informants in the Jewish Council, so that it occasionally knew that German actions were forthcoming. The CDJ advised people not to report at the deportation departure points. It set up hiding places, at first with a temporary character but later more permanently. The organisation rescued about 3,000 children from deportation and by February 1943 the organisation had grown sufficiently to help thousands of Jews in hiding

40 Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 212-213, 215.

(before that most Jews had to depend on their own means and contacts to find hiding places and remain in hiding). The CDJ received assistance from the Roman Catholic Church in Belgium, and it benefited from the early participation of a significant number of foreign Jews and refugees who were affiliated with the Belgian Communist Party or left-wing Zionist organisations, particularly the Communist organisation Main d'Oeuvre Immigrée. The Belgian Communists were influential in the general Belgian resistance at a time when the Dutch Communists were still isolated, an influence from which the CDJ benefited.

The Belgian Zionist youth movement consisted of a wide range of groups, from the religious Mizrachi to the political Poalei Zion. Most of these organisations were united in 1937 in the Fédération de la Jeunesse Sioniste, which had its headquarters in Antwerp. A number of Palestine Pioneer centres had been set up, where just as in the Netherlands mostly German refugees were trained. However, in comparison to the Dutch Zionists, relatively many young immigrants from Eastern Europe and children of older immigrants joined the movement. The influence of Socialist and Communist ideas was also larger than in the Netherlands. On the eve of the Second World War the Zionist youth movement in Belgium had about 1,500 members.

During the war the Belgian Zionist youth groups continued their educational, cultural and pioneering activities rather than merging them with the activities of adult Zionists. In addition, the youth groups got involved in aid work, first for their own members, eventually for broader circles, and with growing cooperation between groups. Individuals joined general resistance groups, but negotiations to incorporate the Zionist youth groups into the CDJ and the general resistance movement failed. According to Michman,[41] most of the young Zionists did not want to spend their efforts on a struggle in Belgium, but they hoped to leave the country and get to Palestine. Although there was no organised flight, dozens of members succeeded in fleeing to Switzerland. Those who remained in Belgium often went into hiding, using their personal contacts to find hiding places and continuing their group activities clandestinely.

An example of an organisation that first operated under the Jewish Council umbrella in France was the Organisation de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), which placed some 6,000 children with families and institutions and helped another 1,500 to escape to Switzerland out of the total of about 30,000 Jewish children living in France in 1940. This organisation had come forth out of traditional welfare work that had started well before the war and continued after 1940, caring also for the numerous Jewish refugees interned in French camps. After the start

41 Michman, "Zionist Youth Movements in Holland and Belgium and Their Activities during the Shoah", p. 169. For his description of the Zionist youth in Belgium, see pp. 158-170.

of the deportations this welfare work was increasingly conducted in a clandestine manner, but the activity built on the experience and contacts established during the early years of the war.

Outside the established community, immigrants took their own initiatives. The often somewhat isolated Jews of recent Eastern European origin in France had formed independent groups before the war, including separate sections in political and trade union movements. They were also ideologically motivated, for example, as Communists or Zionists. Furthermore, foreign Jews in France were used to helping themselves. So, reacting, for example, to the internment of foreign Jews and early arrests, they were better prepared to continue their activities – some of them still allowed, the rest clandestine – and part of this work was turned into rescue operations after the start of the deportations.

In the German-occupied northern zone of France, notably in Paris, several Jewish groups were active from the start of the war, sometimes continuing pre-war activity in social aid and welfare. Some of this was extended to refugees and Jews who were interned in the southern zone. By January 1941 the coordination of this work improved and it galvanised into several committees. At the start of the deportations pre-war groups of Palestine Pioneers and Socialist Zionists also began to organise rescue operations for their members, including the provision of hiding places, false papers and passages to the unoccupied zone. In Vichy France, Jewish youth groups merged into a single organisation, the Mouvement de Jeunesse Sioniste. It established an underground network and was closely associated with the EIF organisation of Jewish scouts in France. This cooperation, which was later accomplished in the northern zone, contributed to the success of the rescue operations. After the start of the deportations in 1942 and the German occupation of the southern zone, rescuing people became the main activity for most Jewish organisations. During the rescue work the differences between native and immigrant Jews diminished, because now they had a common purpose. Employees of the youth section of the Jewish Council joined the OSE to continue their work clandestinely. Three out of every four Jews living in France in 1940 survived the war. Thousands of them owed their survival to the activity of the youth movements, including the children who were in their care.

Other Jewish aid and spiritual support

A few smaller groups helped people in hiding in the Netherlands. One of them was centred on Barend Drukarch. He had studied at the rabbinical seminary in Amsterdam and after the German occupation did a variety of jobs in order to make a living, from being a Hebrew teacher and *chazan* to producing raincoats and leather wallets. In May 1943 Drukarch and his wife Klara Teitler went into

hiding in a house in the Conradstraat in Amsterdam, which they rented under a false name. Several persons joined them, until there were too many people in the house. Some then left, following Drukarch's example of renting houses under false names. Eventually only five people remained in the Conradstraat. Meanwhile, Drukarch organised the provision of religious articles and kosher food for the people in hiding. The group also held Sabbath services in the home of Sal Mendes Coutinho on the Nieuwe Keizersgracht. A problem arose when one of their group died. Drukarch prepared the body according to Jewish rites and Mendes Coutinho and his wife Liesje took it to the Jewish cemetery in Diemen, where it was buried. Later more burials took place.[42]

In the area of Het Gooi Jews in hiding published four issues of a periodical called *De Keten* (*The Chain*) between March and May 1945. It was published by S. van Gelder, the *chazan* of the congregation in Bussum, and contained contributions from Rabbi A. Prins and Professor S. van Creveld. Van Gelder was a member of a small group that provided about 500 people in hiding with papers, food and money. The *chazan* had taken the initiative for this work at the start of the deportations and involved the local congregations. Eventually, the group was supported by larger general organisations that assisted people in hiding and in the course of 1944 started illegal publications, which evolved into *De Keten*.[43]

In addition to helping people escape from deportation and going into hiding, there were other responses. Chief Rabbi Davids urged Jews in Rotterdam who were about to be deported to keep their faith:

> And finally, think about this: A human being is not only the body we see, but also the invisible soul. That is the eternal thing within us, which remains, even when the body succumbs. Every suffering has an end. No pain lasts forever. But your soul is immortal and will overcome the suffering in a world of Peace and Truth.[44]

The words of Davids were an example of the main reaction of the spiritual establishment. After the deportations started, the chief rabbi tried to give his people courage. Overall, Davids' aims were to assist people during increasingly difficult

42 Interview, B. Drukarch with author, 29/4/1987.

43 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 18; Winkel, *De Ondergrondse Pers 1940-1945*, pp. 130, 146.

44 Quoted in Michman, "Problems of Religious Life in the Netherlands during the Holocaust", p. 399. Davids' words echo those of Lion Wagenaar, leader of the Seminary in Amsterdam since 1917: "As long as the light of heavenly mercy shines inside you, and you believe in God's hand that connects the soul to the body, He will resurrect life in the future by returning your soul to your body and re-awaken life" (quoted in Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, p. 113).

times and strengthen Judaism as he saw it.[45] In 1943 Davids was deported. He died the next year in Bergen-Belsen.

Responses to deportation sometimes took the form of a refusal to be exempted or the rejection of a suggestion to go into hiding. This was usually motivated by a desire to remain with family members, friends and other Jews in general. M.H. Gans has related the actions of nurse E. Mok. She had worked in the Joodsche Invalide hospital and care home for many years and was much loved by patients and their families. After the deportations started, the Jewish Council granted nurse Mok a *Sperre* – a stamp on her identity papers that barred her from deportation. She had it annulled, refused to go into hiding and went into a cornered-off area of Amsterdam to accompany the Gans family and others who were to be deported. Gans has written that "together in life, not separated in death" was rarely such a strong motto as for this woman, who has been called a martyr and whose life and death have been described by the historian as a *Kidoesj Hasjeem* (sanctification of the name of God).[46]

In the Westerbork transit camp activities took place that were aimed at what Bauer has called "keeping body and soul together" and "bearing witness to faith".[47] Inmates celebrated the festivals, often with special celebrations for young people. Children were educated. A small nursery and orphanage catered for children, who sometimes arrived parentless. These activities were organised by lay leaders and religious men such as Chief Rabbi Levisson, who was nicknamed "Rebbe Simche" as he helped people to find solace and strength in their belief.[48] On Pesach in Vught, a relatively smaller transit camp, Naomi Kohn organised a Seder meal for about 700 women with *matzoth* supplied by the Jewish Council in Amsterdam. It was a solemn and moving occasion. Meanwhile, in Westerbork, Palestine Pioneers upheld their spirit, even when some of them went on transport, with those inside the train cars and the others who had come to the barbed wire together singing the "Hatikvah" ("The Song of Hope").[49] People in dire circumstances were welcomed by women who brought them bread, milk, warm food and fruit. Presser has quoted a woman who had been in hiding, was caught and sent to the punishment barrack in Westerbork:

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45 Davids also helped to lay the foundations for Jewish help to those who went into hiding after the deportations started. According to Michman, Beem, Michman, *Pinkas*, p. 510, A.J.U. Cohen set up a secret synagogue for Jews in hiding in and around Rotterdam. It was decorated with ritual articles he had secretly taken from locked communal buildings and synagogues. A *chazan* attended the services. Apparently, even a marriage was solemnised in secret.

46 Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom*, p. 144. See also Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 728. Gans' father Isaäc had been director of the Joodsche Invalide before his death in 1938.

47 Bauer, *They Chose Life*, pp. 32-33.

48 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 338.

49 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, p. 229.

> [Already] friends from the [...] camp were informed about our arrival and sent or brought us necessary things. They could of course also be punished for that, but they did it, wrote small notes and gave us courage [...] [All] these valuable things formed an unforgettable gift and [strengthened] above all a communal feeling.[50]

Rabbi Meyer de Hond, an outsider in the religious establishment because of his personal character and strongly expressed views, was also in Westerbork. On the eve of the war he had said: "Build air raid shelters? The synagogue is our shelter and the tefillin are our anti-aircraft guns."[51] He maintained this attitude and remained with his beloved Jewish poor who were deported from Amsterdam. His response to deportation stood out. When in 1943 De Hond's name was called for the transport train that would leave Westerbork for one of the death camps, he replied with a fierce "*Hinneinie!*"[52] (Here I am!).

The responses to deportation in the Netherlands described in this chapter varied from the deeply felt and religiously motivated acceptance of fate in the case of De Hond and the spiritual guidance and support offered by people like Davids, Mok and Kohn to acts from individuals and small Jewish groups that conducted rescue and aid work to assist people to escape and go into hiding. They included men and women like Süskind, Rodriguez Pimentel. Virginnie Cohen, Van de Kar, Drukarch and Van Gelder. All of them used their contacts in the wider society as well as their positions in the Jewish Council for this work. Some of the rescue and aid activity was organised by Jews who were not well integrated into Dutch society, for example, because they had only recently come to the Netherlands as refugees, but who had strong ideological convictions. They included the Palestine Pioneers Simon and Pinkhof, individuals such as the Grünbergs and Weil, and members of the Oosteinde group like Heymann-David, Stertzenbach and Mahler. These people formed part of and had contacts in wider Jewish organisations such as the Zionist youth or international political movements such as the Communists, but they relied for the success of their rescue and aid work on other Jews with a more advanced social position and non-Jews like Westerweel. In short, being integrated

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50 Quoted in Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. 11, p. 338. For Presser's overview of the camp, see pp. 332-363. For Vught, see pp. 381-404. See also Boas, *Boulevard des Misères*. The title of this last book is a reference to the nickname of the main passageway in the camp. This nickname was an example of camp humour. The passageway was also called Rachmones-Allee or Tsores-Allee (Piety or Misery Avenue). Despite being far removed from the sea, the camp itself was sometimes called mockingly Westerbork-les-Bains.

51 Quoted in Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 593.

52 According to Gans, *Memorboek*, p. 591, the Hebrew word that Abraham said to God when he was ordered to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22:1). The word *Hinneinie* was also said by the prophet Samuel, who was repeatedly called by God and told Eli: "It is God, let Him do what seems good to Him" (1 Samuel 3:1-19, followed by 4:1: "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel").

into Dutch society helped people to escape deportation and support other Jews in hiding, but not all the organisers of the rescue and aid activity were well integrated into the Dutch society.

7 Desperation (July 1942 – May 1945)

In 1943 Rudolf Bloemgarten, awaiting execution in prison, wrote in a farewell note to a friend:

> Today we had to compile our final menu, but my cellmates and I do not wish a deviation from the daily ration. You have no idea how united we are in everything and go to our execution full of confidence. We did what we had to do and are completely reconciled with death [...] God is calling – we are waiting impatiently.[1]

Bloemgarten was one of the Jews in the Netherlands who took part in armed resistance against the Germans. The nature of their work took shape in the course of 1942 and 1943, coinciding with the deportation of Jews from the Netherlands.

By September 1943 the Germans regarded Amsterdam as a city from where all Jews had been cleansed – *judenrein*. The deportations from transit camps in the Netherlands continued until by September 1944 there were only a few hundred inmates incarcerated there. Nevertheless, thousands of Jews had managed to escape deportation by going into hiding. They received help from large general Dutch resistance organisations that were now arising with support from the Dutch population, which was growing more hostile towards the occupiers following German measures such as the execution of hostages, rationing of essential goods, requisition and seizure of products and the means of production to be sent to Germany, forced labour decrees for men and German police raids to find the men who refused to report for forced labour. The war had also passed a turning point, marked by the German defeats at Stalingrad, El Alamein and the allied landings in North Africa at the end of 1942. However, for the majority of the Jews the growth of the Dutch resistance movement came too late – they had been or were about to be deported and perished in slave labour and death camps. Many of the remaining Jews in hiding participated in the activity of general resistance groups. This was often an outcome of their integration into the Dutch society, but their positions in these organisations changed during and after the deportations as they disappeared from leading roles. The nature of their work changed too. This was

1 Quoted in De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VI, p. 733.

most noticeable in armed resistance, where some individuals and groups resorted to assassination of opponents. A few groups also attempted to sabotage the deportations, but as these attempts remained unsuccessful, an element of despair crept into the armed resistance of Jews in the Netherlands.

CS-6

Jews had joined the general but relatively still small resistance groups before the start of the deportations in July 1942.[2] One of these groups was CS-6, which was associated with the Dutch Communists but acted independently. CS-6 consisted mainly of students from Amsterdam. Among them were Hans Katan and Leo Frijda. Katan had been born in 1919 and studied biology. He also wrote for *De Vrije Katheder*, a clandestine publication set up by Communist students. Frijda was four years younger and studied medicine. He was a son of the earlier mentioned Professor Frijda, who had refused to join the Jewish Council. Later Pam Pooters joined the group and he in turn collaborated with the independent Socialist Jacques Gans. Although the Communists were wary of Pooters and Gans, they provided CS-6 with weapons, ammunition and explosives.

In the course of 1942 CS-6 got in touch with Gerrit Kastein, a neurologist from The Hague. Kastein had been born in 1909. He studied medicine in Groningen and in 1932 went to Heidelberg in Germany to attend lectures, returning in 1933 to finish his studies and settle down in The Hague. He was married to a German woman. Before the war Kastein joined the Communist Party, wrote for a Communist periodical and participated in several anti-Fascist groups. Kastein gained experienced in clandestine work before the war, helped political refugees to escape from Germany and fought in the Spanish Civil War. In 1938 the Communist publishers Pegasus brought out his booklet *Het Rassenvraagstuk* (The Race Question). Kastein may have been attracted to CS-6 because of their activity – the group was engaged in sabotage acts and tried to derail deportation trains. This activity can be regarded as a response to the persecution of the Jews. In 1943 the group attempted unsuccessfully to set the Schouwburg collection centre on fire.

CS-6 was also involved in other, more general resistance activity. As recorded by De Jong,[3] the group liquidated Dutch National Socialists and collaborators. On 5 February 1943 two group members, including Kastein, shot Lieutenant-General Seyffardt, a former Dutch professional soldier who promoted the Dutch SS. Four days later three CS-6 men, including Kastein and Frijda, entered the residence

2 For an overview of groups and individuals, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 41-56.

3 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. V, p. 779, vol. VI, pp. 167, 613-614, vol. VII, pp. 957-962.

of H. Reydon, one of the Dutch Secretaries General who headed the civil service departments that continued their work after the German invasion in May 1940. Reydon was not at home. His wife was shot. The National Socialist newspaper *Volk en Vaderland* wrote: "[The] Communist Jew Dr Kastein, with all the heartlessness of his race against Arian people, [waited] by the corpse of Mrs Reydon in the lounge for the homecoming of [...] Reydon".[4] Kastein was arrested shortly after this attack, which was possibly aimed at destabilising a government formed by Dutch National Socialists and the work of the civil service. He was taken to The Hague for questioning. During the interrogation Kastein jumped up, threw himself through a window on the second floor and died as a result.

The remaining group members tried to continue their attacks, but in the summer of 1943 most of them were arrested. Frijda and Katan were tried by a German police court. Frijda accepted responsibility for a number of assaults. The court mentioned him and Katan as the main culprits. Katan was said to have been "the driving force behind all railway and arson attacks committed by the members of the terror group".[5] Frijda, Katan and 17 others were sentenced to death on 30 September 1943 and executed the next day.

The Dutch People's Militia

Another armed group was called the Dutch People's Militia. It was formed by Sally Dormits. Born in 1908 in Rotterdam, Dormits had spent part of his youth in Latin America and volunteered for the Republican army in the Spanish Civil War. He was married to Anette Hartog. After his return from Spain, Dormits traded in radio parts. He started his illegal work in the autumn of 1941. Dormits wanted to attract a large number of people who like him had fought in Spain. For this purpose he built an extensive system of records that contained personal details, including addresses. In the summer of 1942 Dormits carried out a number of attacks, mostly on trains. He was arrested on 17 October 1942 when he tried to steal a handbag, probably to acquire identity papers for his wife. In the police station Dormits shot himself through the head. Meanwhile, the police had established that Dormits was behind several attacks; in The Hague he had to leave his bicycle after an attack and the registration number of the bike lead the police to

4 *Volk en Vaderland*, 28/1/1944. Compare *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 14/1/1944. Reydon was shot after he came home and died later in 1943. According to Ben Polak, who was active in the Communist resistance, Kastein was not a Jew (interview, B. Polak with author, 27/1/1987).

5 Quoted in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, p. 112, based on NIOD, Doc 1, folder 1763a.

his home address. There they found the Militia records and subsequently made hundreds of arrests.[6]

In their actions against the Militia the German and Dutch police arrested many Jews, who may have been contacted by Dormits. The trail also led to the Hollandia-Kattenburg clothing factory in Amsterdam. A number of the factory staff was arrested and all Jewish employees were rounded up and deported with their families. Several trials against suspected Militia members took place. There were at least 10 Jews among the 35 accused in the trials who were sentenced to death, which suggests that relatively many Jews were active in this organisation. However, it is possible that the Germans singled out Jews because of propaganda reasons or because they were trying to prove their accusation that generally Jews were behind armed resistance acts. One of the Jewish accused was 28-year-old Eduard Waas, a seller of cigarette papers. He was said to have provided the Militia with explosives and was sentenced to death in December 1942. A week later five persons related to Hollandia-Kattenburg were tried, including four Jews. The main defendant was Bernard or Barend Luza.

Luza had been born in Amsterdam in 1903. After primary school he worked in the cigarette industry and joined Hollandia at the age of 14. He left the company and was unemployed for a while, but returned to Hollandia in 1940, where he worked in the department that waterproofed raincoats. He had first been a Social Democrat, then joined the Communist Party in 1935 and became treasurer of the Communist group in the clothing industry. Luza lost his job in July 1941, moved to Hilversum and worked as a hawker. He was accused of distributing *De Waarheid* at Hollandia and instigating the sabotage of the production of coats for the German army in the factory. Furthermore, he was said to have gone to Rotterdam in order to obtain a firebomb with which he intended to attack Hollandia. Luza was sentenced to death.

Persoonsbewijzencentrale

Relatively many Jews were members of the resistance groups formed around Gerrit van der Veen and other artists such as Willem Arondeus.[7] These groups operated independently but had ties with Communists and other illegal workers. The first resistance from artists took shape with an illegal publication by Arondeus in March 1941, which merged a year later with a clandestine periodical started and edited by Van der Veen. After the registration of Jews, a typical illegal activity of

6 For the NVM, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 112-115, based on NIOD, Doc I, folder 2068 and HSSPF 101, folder 158kj; De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VI, pp. 66, 70, 168-170, 172.

7 For these groups, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 123-126.

artists became the production of false identity papers. Eduard Veterman, a Jewish writer and graphic designer, was one of the first to concentrate on this work, notably the copying of the watermark in the paper used for these documents. He was active until his arrest in October 1943, but survived the war in German prisons.[8] Meanwhile, Van der Veen had set up the Persoonsbewijzencentrale (Identity Papers Centre). In April 1943 the group used an ss uniform to disguise one of their members and hold up a printing company in The Hague that produced identity documents. It captured thousands of documents that could be used for people in hiding, including members of the general resistance and Jews.

Several members of the group around the Persoonsbewijzencentrale were Jews. They included Bloemgarten, Coos Hartogh and Henri Halberstadt. Bloemgarten had been born in 1920 in Maastricht. By the mid 1930s his parents had divorced, and his mother moved to the Dutch capital, where he began studying medicine at the University of Amsterdam. After 1940 Bloemgarten, who had passed his candidate examination, got involved in the student resistance against the dismissal of Jewish lecturers. He was engaged to Hanny Levy. Bloemgarten had contacts with cs-6 and Communist students. Hartogh had been born in 1917. It is uncertain where he was born, possibly in Haarlem or in Soerabaja in the Dutch East Indies. His father was of Jewish origin and his family came from Suriname; his mother was born in Heemstede. Hartogh may also have studied medicine or was a dental technician, but he also worked as a travelling salesman. Halberstadt, like Hartogh also regarded as a half-Jew by the Germans, had been born in 1911 in Amsterdam. Since 1932 he wrote poems and radio plays. To earn a living during the war Halberstadt worked as an office clerk.

Through the dentist H.C.E. Gotjé, the trio met the Austrian Karl Gröger, who had been in the German army and had some military experience. They formed a group that published the clandestine magazine *Rattekruid* (*Rat Poison*) and provided people with hiding places, food, identity papers and ration cards.[9] *Rattekruid* started to appear in August 1942, first weekly and later bi-monthly. In total the group published 17 issues of the magazine. In 1943 they embarked on a series of attacks, using weapons and explosives provided by Arondeus and members of armed resistance and Communist groups. Bloemgarten and his comrades planned to shoot the Dutch National Socialist Jan Feitsma, who had been appointed Procurator General in Amsterdam, as revenge for the execution of ten hostages by the Germans in Bloemendaal. However, on 2 February 1943, at the front door of Feitsma's home they were unexpectedly confronted by the son of the Procurator General, possibly a Waffen-ss volunteer. Bloemgarten shot and seriously wounded him.

8 For a biography on Veterman, see Regenhardt, *Het Gemaskerde Leven van Eduard Veterman*.

9 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. vi, p. 717; Paape, *Bericht van de tweede wereldoorlog*, p. 1493.

Another target of the *Rattekruid* group was the railway line between Haarlem and Amsterdam. Shortly after 4 am in the morning of 16 March 1943 Bloemgarten, Halberstadt and Gröger met in the home of the Austrian. Armed with explosives and pistols, they cycled to the Haarlemmerweg, hiding their bikes in nearby bushes. Earlier in the day they had selected the spot for the attack. Bloemgarten remained near the bikes, armed with his own and Halberstadt's gun, to cover their retreat. The other two walked across the meadows to the railway, jumping over several ditches that cut across the grassland. They let the 4.45 am train pass and fixed cubes of two hundred grams of trotyl to the masts of the overhead electrical wiring. Halberstadt set the time mechanism to 15 minutes. After about five minutes the couple returned to Bloemgarten. Suddenly an unexpected train came by, which caused an explosion. The trio quickly cycled home. According to German reports the damage was limited; the railway traffic was disrupted only for a short period.

It is unclear whether the railway attack was aimed at disrupting the deportation of Jews. One of the most spectacular actions of the Persoonsbewijzencentrale was an assault on the registry office in Amsterdam. The card-index in the office contained detailed information on Jews in the Dutch capital, including addresses, and so the assault could have been intended to sabotage the deportation process. However, as the register held information on non-Jews as well, the assault can also be regarded as an act of general resistance. After two aborted attempts it took place on Saturday 27 March 1943.[10] Disguised in police uniforms, which they had received from a contact in Hollandia-Kattenburg, the group entered the building. They used explosives that came from Albert Schlösser, a German refugee. The aim was to blow up the card-trays and set fire to the index-cards. Unfortunately, the attack failed in destroying the entire register. Within two weeks the police arrested eight of the suspected perpetrators and a large number of alleged accomplices. Gröger and Hartogh were caught. Bloemgarten first managed to escape, killing a policeman during a firefight, but he was later arrested. By that time, Halberstadt had also been caught. In June 1943 their trial took place in the ss- und Polizeigericht in Amsterdam. During the trial Bloemgarten was singled out as a Jew. In total 21 persons were accused and 13 of them were sentenced to death, including Bloemgarten, Hartogh and Halberstadt. They were executed on 1 July 1943.

The main organiser of the attack on the registry office, Van der Veen, was later arrested and executed. Gerhard Badrian, a Jewish refugee from Germany, took over Van der Veen's position. Badrian had been born in 1905 and worked as an

10 The reconstruction of the assaults on the Amsterdam-Haarlem railway line and the Amsterdam registry office in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 124-125, have been based on the trial papers of the men accused of the attacks in NIOD, HSSPF folder 12f, and a post-war statement by H.C.E. Gotjé in NIOD, Doc 11 folder 97. See also De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. VI, pp. 718-733.

art photographer. He experienced persecution and resistance in Germany before the war and continued his activity in the Netherlands after May 1940. Badrian had given Van der Veen the ss uniform used for the earlier mentioned hold-up of the printers in The Hague. From the summer of 1942 he got involved in forging identity documents and armed resistance. In June 1944 the German police tried to arrest him in the Rubensstraat in Amsterdam. Badrian managed to shoot one German policeman but was hit by a rain of bullets and died on the street.

Bitterness and leadership

Like the transformation in the activity from the Jews in cs-6, the Dutch People's Militia and the *Rattekruid* group, the nature of Badrian's resistance work changed, which can be construed as a response to the deportations. One of the most remarkable activities of some of the armed groups described above is the liquidation of opponents. Although it mostly concerned traitors, collaborators or Dutch National Socialists, the assaults were controversial because they resulted in further German reprisals, such as the execution of hostages. Some resistance groups disapproved of the assaults and questioned, for example, whether the shooting of the wife of Secretary General Reydon had been necessary and wise. The liquidations also caused conflicts of conscience. De Jong has quoted a Dutch policeman who worked with Badrian. One day Badrian collected the police officer. It was exactly one year after Badrian's family had been deported from The Hague. Badrian had made a hit list and he wanted to kill a traitor in The Hague, apparently as revenge for the deportation of his family: "We went there. We had to wait a long time. The man came home. When he was inside, Badrian rang the bell. The door opened, it was dead easy, but he could not fire a shot. So, we just went for a drink."[11]

Many factors determined the decision to liquidate a person.[12] In the attitude of the resistance workers a sense of bitterness can be deducted, which was fed by the German terror. In this, the Jewish origin of some of the resisters was important, because after two years of occupation, their disappointment about the course of the war and the persecution of Jews will have overshadowed any optimism about Allied successes. The Jewish participants in the armed resistance mostly started their work because of their pre-war membership in general organisations, their contact networks or their political motives or ideology, but the deportation of Jews, including family and friends, will have strengthened their determination to resist. Nevertheless, in the course of 1942 and 1943 it became clear they were powerless

11 De Jong, *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, vol. vii, p. 1009.

12 For a wider review of this issue, see Kooistra, Oostboek, *Recht op wraak*.

against deportation, and being unable to prevent the success of deportation may have increased their desperation.

None of the armed resistance groups described above consisted solely of Jews or can be classified as Jewish. A couple of other observations can be made. As Romijn[13] has noted, Dutch Jews and German refugees helped to get several resistance groups off the ground. The evidence presented in this chapter supports this observation. It also shows they often took a leading role. The general resistance movement also gained from the experiences of the early Jewish resistance, both in terms of finding the means to resist and learning about mistakes. The connections of some Jews with Communists such as Kastein and the experience of German refugees such as Badrian may also have been useful. However, as a result of arrests and deportation, Jews disappeared from the leadership of most resistance groups. Non-Jews were arrested too, but other non-Jews took their places. In general, Jews did not fill the vacancies left by arrested resistance leaders. After the earlier described arrests of the Jewish Social Democrats and the editors of *Het Parool*, *De Vonk* and *Spartacus*, De Groot's forced withdrawal from Communist activity and the execution of the leaders of the Revolutionary Socialists, Jews no longer played a significant role at the top of the left-wing resistance movements. A similar phenomenon occurred in the armed resistance.

Jewish armed groups in Belgium and France

While no Jewish armed resistance groups were formed in the Netherlands, recent immigrants from Eastern Europe organised such groups in Belgium and France. In Belgium the groups were united in the CDJ. In 1942 they attacked the office of the Jewish Council in Brussels, destroying its index-card cabinet. CDJ members also assaulted a deportation train. This assault, which was unique in Western Europe, enabled up to 700 people to escape from the train, although half of them were later caught again. During a daring raid the group rescued eight wounded deportees who had been caught and taken to a hospital. In addition, CDJ groups were involved in sabotage and elimination of informers and collaborators. Individual Jewish Communists and Zionists in France began planning armed resistance, possibly as early as August 1940. This eventually resulted in the formation of the Armée Juive. In the winter of 1943 Jewish partisan units started to come together, including members of the EIF scouts headed by Gamzon and the Zionist youth movement. After the Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944, units of the Armée Juive took part in the operations of the general French partisans.

13 P. Romijn, "The Experience of the Jews in the Netherlands during the German Occupation", p. 269.

An insight into the process of the formation of a Jewish armed resistance group can be provided through Abraham Lissner's diary. Lissner had been born in Poland and came to France in 1929. He fought in the Spanish Civil War, but returned to Paris before 1940. Members of his unit in Spain got together in March 1942 to form a group that consisted entirely of Jews, mainly immigrants from Eastern Europe. In April 1942 they planned their first attack, aimed at German barracks in the French capital, but it failed when explosives in the bomb-making room detonated early. The group also suffered from a shortage of weapons. In June 1942 they became part of one of the four units organised by the Mouvement Ouvrier Immigrés and got involved in sabotage, bombings and liquidations.

Outside the Jewish groups, the general, Gaullist, Socialist and Communist resistance movements in France grew, and more Jews were able to participate in their activity, despite some anti-Semitism that had permeated into resistance groups. It has been estimated that up to a fifth of all resistance members in France was of Jewish origin and about 10,000 Jews met their death as members of the resistance. Half of all the executed Communists in France were Jews.[14] However, not all Jewish resistance members came from the ranks of the Communist Party or supported its policies. As early as September 1939, following the German-Soviet pact and the outbreak of war, some Jewish Communists in Paris, generally from Eastern European origin, broke ranks with the party and advocated a more active military participation from France in the war. They published the Yiddish paper *Unzer Vort*, which re-appeared clandestinely after the fall of Paris in 1940 and preceded their armed resistance.

As noted earlier, in Italy thousands of Jews joined the general partisan armies. Germany provides yet another picture. According to Paucker,[15] about two thousand Jews participated in the German resistance. Among them were the members of the pro-Communist Herbert Baum Group in Berlin. It was probably formed before 1938, meeting first as a study and hiking group for young people. The programme of the group was largely copied from Communist models and it was based on cells formed before 1941. When the young Jewish members of the group became forced labourers, they recruited new members. The core of the group consisted of about 30 persons, with an outer circle of about 40 to 50 men and women. In total about 150 people were connected to the group, including people outside Berlin and also non-Communists. It printed anti-Fascist leaflets and sabotaged National Socialist propaganda, notably after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The group was isolated from the general German population,

14 Cohen, Wall, "French Communism and the Jews"; Schuker, "Origins of the 'Jewish Problem' in the Later Third Republic", pp. 137-138.

15 Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, p. 28. Compare Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance 1933-1945*, pp. 17, 23.

stood outside the Jewish community and remained an outsider in the general German resistance. In May 1942 the group attacked an anti-Soviet exhibition in Berlin and possibly made plans for armed resistance. However, after the attack Baum and many of his comrades were arrested and shot. So the group was destroyed before it could engage in armed resistance.

Although no exact numbers can be supplied, this international comparison suggests that in all the countries under review relatively many Jews conducted armed resistance in relation to their proportion of the total population. In Belgium and France Jewish armed groups were formed, unlike the Netherlands and Italy, while the initiative to form such a group in Germany failed. In the Netherlands Jews in general groups made attempts to stop the deportations and in Belgium Jewish groups carried out similar attacks. Communists and recent immigrants from Eastern Europe set up the Belgian and French Jewish groups. In the course of the war they became part of wider resistance movements, which operated in Belgium and France until the liberation of these countries and were often lead by Jews like the scout and partisan leader Gamzon.

Resistance activity while in hiding in the Netherlands

After the start of the deportations in the Netherlands, Jews were only able to operate in resistance activity if they had false identity documents and hiding places. During the second half of the occupation, thousands of Jews in hiding were cared for by the National Organisation for Aid to People in Hiding, which had come into being in 1942 and grew in strength after many non-Jews were forced into hiding because they had taken part in protest strikes in April and May 1943 against German forced labour decrees or because they tried to avoid forced labour.[16] In the summer of 1943 the National Organisation began working with the National Armed Groups formation. Of the Jews who were in hiding, numerous individuals made a contribution to the work of the general resistance groups that helped and looked after them, for example, by forging documents. Others contributed in the production and distribution of clandestine publications. Some Jews were able to assist the National Organisation and Armed Groups in their work, for example, as couriers. One of these couriers was Celine Kuyper. She was a Jewish hairdresser from Rotterdam. The 20-year-old Kuyper was arrested in July 1943 and sent to Westerbork. There she refused to escape, because her fellow inmates would be punished. In a farewell note, Kuyper wrote: "My life is not so important. I feel safe with God."[17] She was deported and died in August 1943 in Auschwitz.

16 For an overview, see Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 126-133.

17 Quoted in *Het Grote Gebod, Gedenkboek van het verzet in* L.O. en L.K.P., p. 369.

Another example of a Jew in the National Organisation and Armed Groups was the reservist De Leeuw, who was in hiding with his wife. He had been born in 1914 in The Hague, went to Amsterdam to study economics, but changed his studies to agriculture in order to prepare himself for emigration to Palestine. De Leeuw may have been in contact with the Palestine Pioneers, but his attempt to flee the Netherlands after the German invasion failed. During the mobilisation and war days in May 1940 he had served in the Dutch army. This experience helped him to become a local Armed Group commander. His group attacked a distribution office and a railway line. After the railway assault failed, De Leeuw was arrested and executed on 20 November 1944.[18]

Individual acts of defiance

After being caught in hiding, some Jews were able to make a personal stand. Presser has written about A. Lehmann, a lawyer who had fled Germany before the war and became the head of the daily administration in Vught, the second transit camp.[19] Lehmann defended the interests of his fellow inmates and stood with them, for example, voluntarily undergoing a collective punishment during a roll call.

Presser[20] has quoted Lehmann's report about an incident in Vught that concerned the boxer and Maccabi champion Bril. He had been born in 1912 in the Valkenburgerstraat in Amsterdam, the sixth of seven children of a fishmonger. Bril was a street fighter, but after visiting a boxing school when he was 11, he took up boxing, which gave him the discipline to avoid the street brawls.[21] He was aged 15 when he became Dutch champion and in 1928 he won a bronze medal at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam just after his sixteenth birthday. Bril won seven more Dutch titles, but retained his amateur status, working during the day as a butcher – being right-handed, he used his left hand to chop meat in order to strengthen his left jab. During the second part of the 1930s Bril started to wear the Star of David on his boxing shorts, showing he wanted to be identified as a Jew. In 1936 he was selected to box at the Olympic Games in Berlin, but he refused to protest against the persecution of Jews in Germany. Bril went into hiding after the start of the deportations, but was possibly betrayed by a fellow boxer, caught and sent to Vught with his wife and young son. According to Lehmann, Bril was the only person he knew in the camp who refused to carry out a German order. The

18 Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*, pp. 128-129, based on NIOD, collection 10/LKP KP-EB 4.
19 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 387.
20 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 392.
21 Interview, B. Bril with author, 18/3/1986. For a biography, see Van Opzeeland, *Ben Bril*.

Germans knew Bril was a boxer. During a role call, a boy who had tried to escape, was brought out to be whipped. The German deputy commander of the camp shouted for the boxer to step out. Bril was ordered to whip the boy. If he refused, Bril would receive a double punishment. The boxer has recalled the incident as follows:

> I grabbed that whip, but when I had to hit, I struck too high. "Not like that," [the German commander] shouted and he took the whip out of my hands and started to beat like mad. I walked back to my line.[22]

Via Westerbork, Bril and his family ended up in Bergen-Belsen, from where they were freed in one of the prisoner exchanges towards the end of the war.

Bril survived the camps, but his story shows the limit of what was possible. Unlike the boxer, the majority of Jews from the Netherlands were transported to Auschwitz. Again there were acts of resistance. Presser[23] has quoted Greet van Amstel who describes how her daughter refused to work in the gas chamber commando. There were other instances. Ronnie van Cleef and Frida Bromet hid under a barracks and were kept alive there by two women, one of whom was Frida's mother. Van Cleef has recalled:

> They [the two women] made a hole in the wooden floor. They brought us food. Because I was physically in the best shape, I went to collect it. That is how we stayed alive. That was also a form of resistance; like a mother caring for her child.[24]

The boxer Leen Sanders from Rotterdam also helped his fellow inmates in Auschwitz. He had been boxing since he was a teenager and turned professional in 1928. For several years Sanders was Dutch champion. He gave boxing lessons in Auschwitz and under pressure from camp guards fought a match against another prisoner. Because of his boxing activity, Sanders had been given access to food, which he distributed among inmates.[25]

While prisoner revolts in Auschwitz were rare, the death camp of Sobibor was destroyed after an uprising of inmates. Between March and July 1943 more than 34,000 Jews from the Netherlands were murdered in Sobibor. In contrast to Auschwitz, Sobibor did not have an industrial complex where Jews and other inmates worked as slave labourers. Only a small number of mostly young persons

22 Interview, B. Bril with author, 18/3/1986.
23 Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, pp. 459-460.
24 Interview, R. Goldstein-Van Cleef with author, 24/4/1987.
25 Interview, L. Sanders with author, 19/3/1986.

were selected on arrival to run the camp, the others were gassed instantly. Jozef Jacobs, a petty officer in the Dutch navy, was involved in an attempt to escape, but his plan was betrayed and the would-be escapers were killed. Shortly after that, on 14 October 1943, an uprising took place. In the chaos that followed dozens of prisoners managed to escape, including a handful of Dutch women.[26]

A final example of an individual act of defiance concerns the typographer and artist Fré Cohen. After the start of the deportations she had hidden in at least five places across the Netherlands. The number of hiding places suggests the difficulties she had to go through in order to avoid deportation. It also shows that she had many contacts in the wider society as a result of her pre-war work, while it brings out the tenacity and energy that this woman possessed. Cohen had been born in 1903. She was the eldest child of a diamond worker and grew up in Antwerp, where her family had moved. After 1914 the Cohens returned to Amsterdam, where they rented a home in the east of the city. She went to secondary school, which was unusual for children from ordinary workers. Although she had artistic talent, her parents were unable to send her to an institution for art education. Instead, she found an office job and attended evening classes in drawing. Working for the Draka company, Cohen was given an opportunity to design advertisements. From there she moved to the publishing house of the Social Democrats, working in the administration department, and the municipality of Amsterdam. So, in a roundabout but determined way she found her way into typography and the arts. Next to her political engagement, Cohen maintained an interest in Judaism. She was a rather small but very lively woman, an idealist who used her art to express the desire for freedom and the needs for self-development and community. It could not have been easy for her to remain in hiding. She continued working until she was caught. After being arrested, Cohen took the suicide pills she carried with her. Following two days in coma, she died on 14 June 1943.

The death of Cohen illustrates the final acts of defiance made by people who were caught in hiding. In the camps, the actions of Bril, the daughter of Van Amstel, the mother of Bromet, Sanders and Jacobs show that it was still possible to stand up against persecution after deportation, but also that the outcome of these acts could do little to save the lives of many deportees. The desperation about being unable to stop the deportations and save people can be detected in the activity of Jews in the wider armed resistance, including Katan, Frijda, Pooters and Kastein in CS-6 and Bloemgarten, Hartogh, Halberstadt and Badrian in the Persoonsbewijzencentrale. Some of them tried to sabotage the deportations with attacks on the Schouwburg collection centre and the Amsterdam registry office, but their attempts failed.

26 Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging*, p. 285; NRC/*Handelsblad*,13/10/1984; NIW, 14/10/1988; Pechersky, "Revolt in Sobibor"; Presser, *Ondergang*, vol. II, p. 425; Steinberg, *The Jews against Hitler*, p. 277.

They also took part in other resistance work, just like Veterman who produced false documents and Dormits, Waas and Luza in and around the Dutch People's Militia, who committed acts of sabotage. It appears that some liquidations of Dutch National Socialist and collaborators carried out by Jews were motivated by a desire to exact revenge for family and friends who had been deported.

In terms of the role that integration played in the participation of Jews in general armed resistance groups, the examples of resistance fighters described in this chapter demonstrate that they mostly got involved in these groups and were able to obtain weapons and explosives through the contacts in the wider society that they had made before May 1940. No Jewish armed groups existed in the Netherlands, in contrast with Belgium and France, where Jewish Communists and recent immigrants from Eastern Europe formed such groups. This suggests that Jews who were less well integrated were more likely to establish Jewish units. We can only speculate why in the Netherlands after Badrian's death no more leading positions were filled by Jews in hiding who remained active in the resistance, including Kuyper and De Leeuw in the National Organisation and Armed Groups. Perhaps they did not represent the population group from which the resistance organisation that helped them had arisen. There could have been a variety of other reasons: practical problems may have stood in the way of Jews taking up leading posts; the risk they ran for their organisation in terms of detection and arrest may have been too great; or they may have been held back by anti-Jewish feelings and National Socialist propaganda that seeped through into the work of some groups. Or perhaps there were simply not enough Jewish candidates left for leadership roles after the deportation of so many Jews from the Netherlands.

Conclusion

This book set out to review the integration of Jews into Dutch society before 1940, determine what was specifically Dutch, explain how different forms of Jewish resistance came into being in the Netherlands during the period of German occupation in the Second World War, and ask how integration and personal circumstances shaped that resistance. This is of course not the ultimate work on Jewish resistance in the Netherlands; it has been written to reinvigorate the debate about that subject and encourage further publications in order to clarify and broaden our understanding of Dutch and Jewish history. To achieve a deeper comprehension of Jewish resistance much more research remains to be done, for example, on the daily life of the Jews in the Netherlands under German occupation and on suicide as a form of Jewish resistance as highlighted earlier. So, this book cannot provide ready answers or make all contradictions consistent, and the conclusions drawn here can only be of a provisional nature.

As noted in the introduction of this book, the integration of Jews into Dutch society is subject of an on-going debate. Currently, public discussions about integration of minorities in modern societies tend to become polarised, often adopting a good or bad perspective. In this manner of polarisation, there is a similarity with the discussion about Jewish resistance shortly after the Second World War, as described in the introduction of this book, when history writing started as an emotional debate with entrenched notions, either over-emphasising the occurrence of Jewish resistance or denigrating those Jews who could or would not resist. However, the historiography eventually moved on to achieve a greater understanding of this subject through a more inclusive definition of Jewish resistance. The discourse about integration would also benefit from applying a more measured assessment of integration processes that gives all aspects of integration their comparative importance. The findings summarised below will hopefully contribute to that application.

By utilising a conceptual framework of integration and three yardsticks, this book has found that before the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940 Jews were becoming part of a changing Dutch society. Their integration was a non-linear, multi-faceted and long-term process that created a diversity of individual and group experiences. This process was hampered and partly reversed

during the 1930s, caused by the economic crisis, the effects of Hitler's rise to power (such as the German refugee problem in the Netherlands), and the emergence of Dutch National Socialism. Dutch Jewry, overall a numerically declining and aging group with internal differences in terms of income, education, religion and political adherence, had once again become more conspicuous in Dutch society. Negative attitudes towards Jews in the general Dutch population, which varied from group to group in that population but were rarely expressed violently, were revived and supplemented by new anti-Jewish sentiments. The traditional Jewish responses to these attitudes were mostly muted and apologetic, emphasising the law-abiding character of Jews and their deference for authority. These responses still dominated the behaviour of the relatively strong lay leadership of Dutch Jewry during the 1930s, but they were questioned by individual Jews, Zionists and radicalised Jewish youth groups. Participation in the wider economy continued in some industry sectors but stagnated in others, with on-going poverty for lower-middle-class, working-class and unemployed Jews. In politics individual Jews made contributions to national policies and administration at local level, but they had little influence as a population group. The arts world remained open to Jewish participation, but only a few Jewish artists achieved acclaimed artistic success. By 1940 most Jews in the Netherlands still adhered to a Jewish identity, but this was less defined by religion than before and more by a wide range of features such as maintenance of family ties, food preference and language use.

The comparisons with Germany, Belgium, France and Italy have shown that in broad terms the following aspects of integration were typically Dutch and therefore could have given Jewish resistance in the Netherlands a specific direction: the nature of the attitudes towards Jews in the general population; the lack of anti-Jewish violence; the acceptance of authority and resignation when faced with economic, social and political adversity; the necessity of political compromise and cooperation between the leaders of population segments; the lack of opportunities for wider participation of Jews in parts of the economy and national politics; and the powerful influence of the Dutch Socialists on the lifestyle of organised working-class Jews in urban centres, notably in Amsterdam.

As stated in the introduction, a comprehensive study of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands with a comparative approach has so far not been undertaken. This book makes a first, but limited attempt in that direction and hopes that others will follow. It has found that what differentiated Jewish resistance in the Netherlands in a Western European context, which could have been the result of the integration of Jews into Dutch society, was: the manner of the rabbinical response; the way in which men like the former Supreme Court president Visser used their position in the wider society; the demise of the JCC and the influence of the Jewish Council; the compliance with the registration order; the lack of large rescue organisations;

the absence of organised Zionist groups in rescue work – apart from the Palestine Pioneers; the collaboration rather than the merger of the Jewish groups with general resistance movements; the non-existence of Jewish armed groups; and the disappearance of Jews from the top of the general resistance movement during the second half of the German occupation.

Concentrating on these outcomes of the comparative approach, this book has focussed on the influence of integration on Jewish resistance. This focus revealed that the rabbinical response in the Netherlands was influenced by the development of Jewish religious life during the process of integration of Jews into Dutch society, which had given a small group of lay leaders a dominating position over the spiritual foremen. Faced with wartime persecution, Dutch rabbis in general sought to continue or increase their efforts to maintain and strengthen Judaism. Their attempts were influenced by the pre-war changes in rituals, habits and lifestyles among Jews. Some rabbis went further, including Chief Rabbi Davids, who tried to establish a stronger rabbinical leadership to offer people solace, spiritual guidance and practical solutions, and Chief Rabbi Frank, who addressed an audience outside the religious congregations and reminded all Jews they formed part of a chain that could not be destroyed. During the deportations most rabbis did not go into hiding but remained with their flock, with some such as Rabbi De Hond setting examples as Jews who were resigned to their fate and prepared to obey what they saw as God's word. The rabbinical spiritual response can be classified as symbolic resistance. Similar resistance occurred outside the religious leadership, where it found an outlet in the prison poems written by the journalist Salomonson.

Other responses to persecution that followed directly from the speed and direction of the process of integration of the Jews into Dutch society were the public protests against segregation, the formation of the JCC, and the compliance with the registration decree. The protests – polemic resistance – came from socially successful men with relatively advanced positions in the wider society, such as the teacher Hemelrijk, the academic Polak, the lawyer Visser and the businessman Kahn. They rejected the idea that Jews could be denied their civic rights. In a Dutch tradition they cherished equality. However, personal characteristics and circumstances also determined people's decisions to protest and the way in which they protested. Visser, for example, used his position in the pre-war judiciary to voice his protest, although he did so loudly and publicly, which would have been unusual before the war.

Visser was also instrumental in setting up the JCC to act on behalf of Dutch Jewry, but he refused to cooperate with the Germans through the Jewish Council. Visser emphasised resistance. His strategy differed from the policy adopted by Cohen, one of the chairmen of the Jewish Council. Both man acted in a manner that was typical of the pre-war segmented Dutch society, where the leaders of

population segments worked with the authorities in the interest of their group. However, Visser refused to work with the German authorities. The fact that Visser had fully participated in the Dutch judiciary could have resulted in his choice of strategy, but Cohen was equally well integrated into the Dutch academic world, which suggests that the dispute about strategy was caused by a combination of different personal characters and dissimilar assessments of the situation in which Jews had found themselves.

Integration shaped the general Jewish response to registration. The traditional deference to authority and the Dutch sense of civic duty caused the large-scale compliance with the registration decree in 1940 and 1941. The Jews acted in a similar way as the majority of the population, which generally obeyed German orders at this time. Furthermore, compliance was also encouraged as Dutch civil servants administered the decree. In addition, the information that was required was already available, because the members of religious congregations were listed in congregational records. Finally, as the decision to mark identity papers of Jews with a J was not taken until the registration was in progress, it was not immediately clear how the Jews who registered would be singled out.

Eventually it emerged that registration was part of a range of measures that resulted in the segregation of Jews. It can be argued that the apparent ease with which the Germans segregated the Jews in the Netherlands was a result of their hampered and partly reversed integration into Dutch society. However, the National Socialists in Germany, the Fascists in Italy, the German occupiers in Belgium and the German and Vichy officials in France also managed to separate the Jews from the rest of the population. This means that the hampered integration of Jews into Dutch society cannot be regarded as the sole cause of the segregation success in the Netherlands. It must be noted that the segregation measures were implemented through an enormous pressure that was piled on the Jews and the non-Jewish populations.

In 1942 deportation followed segregation. The deportation orders were more widely disobeyed than the registration decree. Despite all the dangers and problems, thousands of Jews in the Netherlands went into hiding, including the typographer and artist Fré Cohen. Apart from coincidence and chance, the opportunities for going into hiding depended on the degree of integration of individuals into Dutch society, for example, because they knew non-Jews who could be trusted for hiding places and help. Surviving for up to three years in hiding also relied on general aspects of integration. For example, the attitudes towards Jews in Dutch society were crucial. While anti-Jewish feelings sometimes resulted in people not assisting Jews or even betraying them, the changing attitudes among Protestants and Catholics meant that increasingly non-Jews were prepared to help Jews, a readiness that grew further as the general population was more affected by German measures and wartime circumstances. Only about 16,000 of the 27,000

Jews who went into hiding in the Netherlands survived the war – Fré Cohen, for example, committed suicide after being caught in 1943. This illustrates the difficulties Jews encountered in finding trustworthy non-Jews to shelter them as well as safe places, reliable transport and money to pay for it all. Sometimes being detected was purely accidental; bad luck played a role too.

Some of the complications of going into hiding, such as having insufficient contacts with non-Jews, resulted from a lack of integration. Above it has been implied that the German occupiers would have found the segregation of the Jews in the Netherlands more difficult to achieve if Jewish integration into Dutch society had gone further rather than being hampered and partly reversed during the 1930s. In relation to attempts to avoid deportation, it can be argued that if the integration of Jews into Dutch society had been further advanced before May 1940 and Jews had been better connected, more of them would have been able to escape deportation by going into hiding.

However, integration worked in other ways too. It also hindered people going into hiding, because it meant leaving family and friends, deserting homes and goods, abandoning habits and lifestyles, and resorting to means which were deemed illegal before the war such as falsifying official documents. Jews who were able to leave everything behind, change their life completely and adopt new means of survival were more likely to be successful in staying out of German hands. Some individuals and small groups like refugees and Palestine Pioneers who were not well integrated into Dutch society had this ability, but that was not the case for the majority of Jews in the Netherlands. Furthermore, there were other factors than integration that determined the success of going into hiding. A major problem was that general resistance movements, which had the means and networks to assist large numbers of people in hiding, did not develop until later in the war, well after the start of the deportation of the Jews. Meanwhile, the safety of neutral or Allied territory was geographically far away and difficult to reach.

Some Jews managed to escape deportation and go into hiding with the help of Jewish individuals such as the Jewish Council employee Van de Kar and Rabbi Drukarch, and Jewish groups like those organised around the Jewish Council employee Süskind and his colleagues Rodriguez Pimentel and Virginnie Cohen, the Palestine Pioneers and the refugees in the Oosteinde home. This defensive resistance – in the form of rescue and aid work – often came from German and Polish Jews who had fled or migrated to the Netherlands before May 1940, such as the Palestine Pioneer Simon and the Communist Heymann-David. They were not well integrated, suffered most from negative attitudes, were less inclined to follow traditional responses, and had distinctive habits and lifestyles. As these refugees were outsiders in Dutch society, they had to rely on their own initiative and help themselves to escape deportation. These refugees could of course also use their experience in clandestine work gained before May 1940 in Germany and

the Netherlands, and their contacts in the international Zionist and Communist movements.

The Jewish rescue and aid groups were formed around people who just wanted to help and persons with strong ideological, moral or religious motives to help. They were able to attract and involve others, sometimes continuing activity that initially may have been permitted but went underground after the start of the deportations. Their work consisted mostly of helping people going into hiding and in the case of the Palestine Pioneers fleeing from the Netherlands. Some of the groups embarked on other resistance activities. In this way, organisations came into being, consisting of people who happened to be in the same place or position or shared an ideology. Overall, the groups remained small and were not tightly organised but consisted of loosely arranged associations and overlapping networks of people. However, they could not succeed without the assistance of non-Jews who were prepared to help, like the teacher Westerweel, and people who shared an ideology, like the Communist helpers of Heymann-David.

The Jewish rescue and aid groups in the Netherlands did not develop into large organisations, organised Zionist groups were absent in the Dutch rescue work – apart from the Palestine Pioneers, and the Jewish groups in the Netherlands collaborated rather than merged with general resistance movements. This was a result of specifically Dutch factors, one of which was the relatively small number of recent Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who helped to build rescue organisations and Zionist groups that became part of wider resistance movements in other countries such as Belgium and France. The consequences of the changes in the course and speed of the integration process in the Netherlands during the 1930s can be detected in the awkward collaboration between Jewish groups and the general resistance – Jews remained outsiders in the eyes of many non-Jews, even resistance organisers.

Integration had therefore different effects on the rescue and aid activity and was not always a decisive factor in its birth and growth; sometimes a lack of integration of a specific group determined this form of resistance and its success, sometimes it did not. Age played a role too. Most of the individuals involved in the defensive resistance were young adults. They had not yet started families, were less restricted by responsibilities to relatives and not set in their ways. This meant it was easier for them to go into hiding or flee. It also enabled them to embark on dangerous activities and clandestine work. However, again they could only succeed with the help of others, who were often older.

Integration also influenced Jewish participation in armed resistance. Unlike Belgium and France, no Jewish armed resistance groups were formed in the Netherlands. As a result of the course of the process of their integration into Dutch society, Jews in the Netherlands had not experienced anti-Jewish violence on a large scale, were unused to forming defence groups and few had professional

military experience. In this context, the Jewish fighting groups in Amsterdam stood out. In 1941 young working-class Jews, such as the Communist and commercial artist Zilverberg, fought Dutch National Socialists and protected their neighbourhoods, families and businesses against violent attacks. That was exceptional because many of the young men who fought in Amsterdam may have been used to street fighting before the war, but the events on the Waterlooplein can hardly be compared to the street quarrels before May 1940. The street fighters were not well organised, which contributed to the evaporation of this form of resistance after February 1941.

The armed groups like the Ordedienst, CS-6 and *Rattekruid* were more tightly organised than the street fighters. Armed resistance required organisation in terms of preparation and planning, for example, in the formation of units, collection of weapons and explosives, and the selection of targets. Integration was an important factor in the ability to participate in the armed resistance. Jews like the student Bloemgarten and the refugee Badrian joined groups that were formed by people from non-Jewish population segments, who often had or developed positive attitudes towards Jews or simply ignored a person's Jewish origin. Social standing often played a role too. A relatively high number of the Jewish members of the armed groups came from middle-class backgrounds. They got involved in these groups through pre-war military service contacts or other non-Jews who they knew personally or socially, for example, through education, politics and the arts. Or, like the courier Kuyper and the armed group commander De Leeuw, they got involved with the organisations that helped them in hiding. Again, in addition to integration and social standing, age was often a determining factor as relatively many Jews in the armed resistance were young adults who had the energy and ability to take up arms and were not held back by family commitments.

The manner in which Jews conducted armed resistance in the Netherlands did not always result from the way in which they were integrated into Dutch society. Occasionally, it was an outcome of wanting to react to persecution or the feeling of despair about the deportations. While the armed activity by Jews was mostly aimed at resisting the Germans in general, an objective Jewish armed resisters shared with non-Jews, they tried on a few occasions to disrupt the deportation of Jews, for instance when the CS-6 group of the students Katan and Frijda attempted to set fire to a collection centre. Some of the Jewish members of armed resistance groups such as Badrian sporadically acted out of revenge when they took aim at Dutch National Socialists and collaborators. That had little to do with integration. Furthermore, to take up firearms and place explosives, let alone kill people, were acts so far unknown to Jews in the Netherlands, apart of course to those who had fought in the Spanish Civil War or the Dutch army in May 1940.

Relatively many Jews resorted earlier to violent resistance than non-Jews and had leading roles in armed resistance groups, just as men like Warendorf, De

Groot and Menist did in the Social Democratic *Parool* group and the Communist and Revolutionary Socialist organisations. This can be ascribed to integration as well as the fierce persecution of the Jews, which preceded the German maltreatment of the general population. However, following the arrests and deaths of numerous Jewish resistance members and after the start of the deportations, Jews disappeared from the leadership of the resistance organisations. Possible causes for this disappearance were: practical problems that stood in the way of Jews taking up leading posts; the risk they ran for their organisation in terms of detection; anti-Jewish feelings that seeped through into the work of some groups; or the lack of Jewish candidates for leadership roles after the deportation of so many Jews from the Netherlands. The inability to lead the resistance must have contributed to feelings of despair among Jewish armed resisters, who were also powerless when it came to stopping the deportations. This despair was vented in acts of extreme violence against individual National Socialists and collaborators.

Varying effects of integration can also be gauged from the letters of Jewish members of the resistance, such as Menist and Bloemgarten, who were sentenced to death and awaiting execution. What often stood out was the resignation with their fate. This could be interpreted as an occurrence of what is sometimes seen as the typical Dutch phenomenon of being resigned to one's fate, and as such the feelings expressed in the letters may be regarded as signs of integration. However, these statements also included declarations from self-confident individuals, who knew they had done the right thing and felt no remorse. Some were grounded in religious and political beliefs that offered people support in the face of imminent death. Some were intended as reassurances for those who were left behind, urging the readers to remain courageous. Some were adoptions of the traditional Jewish response to persecution, with the condemned now resorting to tradition, showing they held body and soul together. In short, the statements about resignation cannot simply be regarded as outcomes of the integration of Jews into Dutch society.

So, the focus on integration in this book has clarified how some forms of Jewish resistance came into being and occasionally a clear cause-and-effect link between integration and resistance could be established. In short, integration directly influenced the symbolic resistance conducted by rabbis and individuals outside the religious leadership. It lay behind many public protests uttered by Jews. It moulded the participation of Jews in general resistance organisations, including armed groups and organisations related to pre-war political parties. However, integration did not affect the manner in which Jews conducted armed resistance in the Netherlands. It assisted as well as hindered people going into hiding. It had different effects on Jewish rescue and aid work, which was often conducted by people who were not well integrated, but could not succeed without the help of non-Jews or well-integrated Jews.

Often so many and occasionally contradicting factors determined a form of Jewish resistance that it is impossible to emphasise one factor. It cannot be quantified, but coincidence frequently decided the shape of Jewish resistance. For example, the history of the Palestine Pioneers in the Netherlands shows they were able to set up an underground network with the help of Westerweel, with whom they got in contact through the Waterman family, which happened to live close to the Pioneers' centre in Loosdrecht. Furthermore, the occurrence of some forms of Jewish resistance can be explained by the severity and totality of the persecution, but German actions did not necessarily cause all Jewish resistance.

Personal motives influenced people too. However, it is hazardous to generalise personal motives. People may have common aspirations but act differently in practice. Individual actions cannot be fully understood without viewing people in their different social surroundings, but they will never be comprehended without reviewing personal character and circumstances – nobody reacts independently from the situation in which they live, everybody acts within their own mental framework. People also respond to other events and developments, and use their knowledge or instinct. People do not act consistently or always in their best interest; on the same day individuals can make different choices in a variety of situations. Often small things make a difference. There is a constant historical dynamic, but people also contribute to that dynamic with decisions to take action or remain passive, whether they are conscious or not about these actions and their repercussions.

Taking the individual circumstances of the men and women in the Jewish resistance into account, this book has stressed that in addition to the already noted factors such as age and family position, people's personal life and character traits played important roles in their decision to resist and the form that their resistance took. The outstanding example was Visser, who chose resistance and spoke out publicly when Cohen in the Jewish Council opted for cooperation and conveyed Germans orders without public protest. An outstanding character trait of members of the Jewish resistance was the tenacity of men and women like Davids, Fré Cohen, Simon, Heymann-David and Badrian. These are just some examples. All the persons mentioned in this book had specific characteristics that set them apart from others. Unfortunately, despite the available biographical material, we still know little about the majority of the members of the Jewish resistance. This book has barely scratched the surface. So, the individual background of the persons who took part in Jewish resistance is yet another subject that lends itself to further research.

One final observation can be made. This concerns common patterns of human behaviour. In some aspects Jewish resistance in the Netherlands was similar to general Dutch resistance. Jews acted in the same way as the vast majority of the

Dutch population, who mostly awaited developments, hoped for the best and started to conduct resistance only after their lives were severely disrupted by the German occupation through measures such as the execution of hostages, rationing of essential goods, requisition and seizure of products and the means of production, forced labour decrees and raids to find the men who refused to report for forced labour. For instance, the Palestine Pioneers probably started their plans to hide when the Germans rounded up their friends in the Wieringermeer, and they went into hiding when all Pioneers were threatened by deportation, similar to non-Jews who set up general resistance organisations like the National Organisation for Aid to People in Hiding, which was created to shelter railway strikers and men who wanted to avoid forced labour. Of course, some of the Jews who joined the general resistance groups and others who resisted individually did not wait until they were personally affected by German measures, but neither did those non-Jews who started engaging in resistance before they personally experienced the effects of the German occupation.

If the similarity between Jewish and general resistance is accepted, it follows that the causes for Jewish resistance and the factors that shaped its forms can also be found in aspects of human behaviour. Writing about human behaviour in times of crisis, Romein has asserted that a serious crisis is usually marked by a deterioration and loss of prevailing standards, because people question tradition, which then loses its value:

> A crisis knows all -isms except traditionalism. There is no example that people follow [...] They are left to their own devices. They must choose who to follow but run the risk of being unable to find a single example.[1]

This assertion can be modified with McCaffrey's insight – a group of people cannot simply be regarded as a monolith, acting in response to or being acted upon by external forces. Individuals have various levels of awareness, identities, ideologies and philosophies. They try to reconcile their circumstances with the inner beliefs that give those circumstances meaning. When circumstances change, not everybody is prepared to discard their beliefs because for many they still hold a deep meaning.[2]

This happened during the German occupation of the Netherlands. As the persecution became unbearable, and for some the crisis point was reached earlier than others, many Jews responded in a traditional manner. Lay leaders took up the task of representing their population segment and working with the authorities. Rabbis gave spiritual guidance and emphasised their belief in God. Everyday peo-

1 Romein, "De crisis van onze beschaving in historisch perspectief", pp. 306-307.
2 McCaffrey, "Irish Issues in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century", p. 123.

ple were resigned and trusted their foremen. However, thousands of Jews questioned and rejected traditional behaviour, because it no longer seemed to work. They resisted – protesting loudly, fighting back, going into hiding, organising rescue and aid work, and taking up arms. Not all tradition was lost. Some sought the means of resistance entirely in the past. Some adopted from their tradition only what they regarded as continuing to be useful. Some found new solutions. All these reactions, taken consciously or without thought, depended on individual characteristics, such as personality and family circumstances, as well as group traits, such as social position and level of integration.

In short, Jews in the Netherlands were integrating into a new Dutch society, in the making of which their contribution was an intrinsic part. But Dutch Jewry was not a single body. The course and speed of the integration process increased the diversity among the Jews in the Netherlands. The wartime persecution therefore caused a range of reactions. People made choices, but not everybody was able to choose. Much depended on character and opportunity. Being integrated into the society in which they lived helped some Jews to resist, but it also hampered the resistance of others. The course and speed of the integration process did influence some, but not all the Jewish resistance. That resistance was often connected to the way in which Jews had or had not found their place in Dutch society, but sometimes it was unrelated to integration, because Jewish resistance in the Netherlands during the period of German occupation in the Second World War followed group traits and personal characteristics as well as general patterns of human behaviour in times of unbearable distress.

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