

“Poor devils” of the Camps

Dutch Jews in Theresienstadt, 1943–1945¹

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Anne Frank, the young diarist from Amsterdam, may be the best-known victim of the Holocaust.² Her diary breaks off with the capture of the Jews hiding at 263 Prinsengracht Street, and, with the termination of the diary, Anne Frank is as good as dead. Anne’s incarceration in Auschwitz-Birkenau and later in Bergen-Belsen, where she died seven months after her arrest, are often presented as a footnote to her story.³

This treatment of Anne Frank’s last seven months is symptomatic of the story of the Dutch Jews once they were deported outside of the Netherlands; this topic has been widely neglected in large parts of the historiography of the Holocaust of Dutch Jewry.⁴ Many scholars of the

- 1 This article was a long time in the making, and I am extremely grateful to many colleagues and friends for their help, advice, support, and reading and commenting along the way. Among others, I’d like to thank Guido Abuys, Merav Amir, Doris Bergen, Hubert Berkhout, Hartmut Kaelble, the late René Kruis, Anna Manchin, Jaroslava Milotová, Ted Muller, the late Miloš Pojar, Corinna Unger, and Lynne Viola; and the many people who in 2001 were so helpful and generous talking with me about their Terezín experience.
- 2 On Anne Frank as the point of departure for an important new history of the Holocaust in the Netherlands, see Katja Happe, “Die Geschichte der Judenverfolgung in den Niederlanden: Schwerpunktsetzungen innerhalb eines neuen Projekts” in Krijn Thijs und Rüdiger Haude, eds., *Grenzfälle: Transfer und Konflikt zwischen Deutschland, Belgien und den Niederlanden im 20. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2013), pp. 55–68.
- 3 With the exception of Willy Lindwer, *The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991).
- 4 Abel Herzberg, *Kroniek der jodenvervolging* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1951); Jacques Presser, *Ondergang: De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse jodendom, 1940–1945* (Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1965); Louis de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 14 vols. (Amsterdam: SDU Uitgeverij, 1969–1995). An important exception is the wonderful account of the Philips commando: Peter W. Klein, Justus van de Kamp, *Het Philips-Kommando in Kamp Vught* (Amsterdam and Antwerp: Contact, 2003). For a good overview, see Bob

Holocaust in the Netherlands simply conclude their studies at the point when the Jews were transported out of the country. The first wave of historical research, which is still regarded as embodying the standard accounts, focused primarily on the developments in the country. In the event that these authors discussed incidents after the deportation, they were not dealt with as key to the narrative. Similarly neglected is the fact that Anne Frank was a native of Frankfurt am Main and was stateless at the time of her death.⁵ This omission is equally symptomatic: ethnicity (interestingly, not citizenship)⁶ is literally absent as an analytical category in the research on Holocaust victims.

This article demonstrates that the ethnicity of the victims, together with habitus, were important categories for understanding the dynamics and logic of the victims’ society. “Ethnicity,” “nationality,” and “race” are terms describing the same larger concept, with certain differences in size and quantity, or proportions, of those described and often also containing political connotations. Influenced by the constructivist school of ethnicity — in particular, Fredrik Barth and Rogers Brubaker — I argue that we need to break these essentially artificial boundaries, and hence I use the term “ethnicity.”⁷ This conceptualization helps to grasp better the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the Holocaust victims, shows how interconnected these were, and does justice to the victims’ heterogeneity. By referring to all victims as members of a Jewish nation is to see them as a homogeneous body — which they were not — and also conceals the nature of ethnicity.

Moore, *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940–1945* (London and New York: Arnold, 1997).

- 5 The Dutch public realized that Anne was never a Dutch subject only after she was nominated to the *De Grootste Nederlander*, the Dutch version of *The Greatest Briton*: “Bid Fails to Grant Anne Frank Posthumous Dutch Citizenship,” *Haaretz*, October 3, 2004.
- 6 On the wider context of statelessness, see Miriam Rürup, “Lives in Limbo: Statelessness after Two World Wars,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 49 (Fall 2011), pp. 113–134; and Kathrin Kollmeier, “Staatenlos in einer staatlich geordneten Welt: Eine politische Signatur des 20. Jahrhunderts im Spannungsfeld von Souveränität, Menschenrechten und Zugehörigkeit,” *Neue Politische Literatur*, 57 (2012), pp. 49–66.
- 7 Fredrik Barth, “Introduction,” in idem, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little & Brown, 1969); Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), pp. 1–47; Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

This article offers a window into the history of Dutch Jewry, and, specifically, how the account of their destruction can shed light on their pre-war social and cultural histories. By examining the Dutch Jews in Theresienstadt (Terezín) in the context of other prisoner groups, I bring to the fore critical issues about Jewishness and, simultaneously, illuminate the Holocaust as a transnational event. This study of a small group of West European Jews deported to the only ghetto⁸ in Greater Germany with a Western Jewish population allows us to examine larger issues of ethnicity, habitus, and inclusion and exclusion. Instead of maintaining the exceptional status of Theresienstadt – in reference to its Nazi propaganda use – this article is an analysis of the ghetto as a society based on a theoretical framework built upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Erving Goffman.⁹ This article also contributes to examining Jewish victims from a multitude of perspectives. Drawing on a variety of sources in Dutch, German, Czech, English, Hebrew, and Italian, it demonstrates that a systematic reading of various vantage points of witnesses, both contemporaneous and those testimonies written after the events, enables us to see the position, agency, and interactions of the Jewish groups in a deeper dimension.

Much of the recent scholarship on the persecution of the Dutch Jews examined the “Dutch paradox”: the fact that 78 percent of Jews from the Netherlands were deported to killing centers,¹⁰ compared to

- 8 This article argues that Terezín was a ghetto. See Anna Hájková, *Prisoner Society in the Terezín Ghetto, 1941–1945* (PhD diss, University of Toronto, 2013), Introduction, pp. 24ff; and Peter Klein, “Theresienstadt: Ghetto oder Konzentrationslager?” *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente* (2005), pp. 111–123.
- 9 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961). See also Michael Pollak, *Die Grenzen des Sagbaren: Lebensgeschichten von KZ-Überlebenden als Augenzeugenberichte und als Identitätsarbeit* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus, 1988), and Maja Suderland, *Inside Concentration Camps: Social Life at the Extremes* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014 [2009]).
- 10 In the obligatory registration of all Jewish residents of the Netherlands in February 1941, all together about 140,000 people were marked by the racial laws as Jews; 100,657 people were deported. See Hájková, ‘Das Polizeiliche Durchgangslager Westerbork,’ in Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel, eds., *Terror im Westen: Nationalsozialistische Lager in den Niederlanden, Belgien und Luxemburg 1940–1945 (Geschichte der Konzentrationslager 1933–1945)* (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), pp. 217–248, 244–248. See also Gerhard Hirschfeld, “Niederlande,” in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimension des Völkermords: Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Beck, 1996), pp. 137–166.

44 percent in Belgium and 25 percent in France.¹¹ This historiography, however, neglects what happened to the Dutch Jews after deportation. There is a second Dutch paradox: strikingly, few among the deported Dutch Jews survived. In a programmatic article written in 1989, Hans Blom, an eminent historian of World War II in the Netherlands, noted that

for all but one of these countries, very few deported Jews survived. The survival rates varied from one to five percent. Dutch Jews may perhaps have survived on average a few weeks less in the camps, but this makes very little difference to the overall figures.¹²

Exact numbers are helpful here. Of the 100,657 people who were deported from the Netherlands, between July 1942 and September 1944, 57,552 were sent to Auschwitz.¹³ Of those, only 854 returned.¹⁴ This number is unusually low compared to other countries. From the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, for example, about 28,368 people were deported to Auschwitz in about the same period, of whom 2,922 survived.¹⁵ The rate of the selection upon arrival in Auschwitz was

- 11 Hans Blom, “The Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands in a Comparative International Perspective,” in Jozeph Michman, ed., *Dutch Jewish History*, vol. 2 (Assen and Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1989), pp. 273–289. For newer studies, see Insa Meinen, *Die Schoah in Belgien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, *Jodenvervolging in Nederland, Frankrijk en België 1940–1945: Overeenkomsten, verschillen, oorzaken* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011). See also Marnix Croes and Peter Tammes, “Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan:” *Een onderzoek naar de overlevingskansen van joden in de Nederlandse gemeenten, 1940–1945* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2006); Marnix Croes, “The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 20:3 (2006), pp. 474–499.
- 12 Blom, “Persecution,” p. 278. See also Moore, *Victims and Survivors*, p. 270, n. 36.
- 13 Between March and July 1943, 34,314 people were deported from the Netherlands to Sobibór, which was exclusively an extermination camp; there were only nineteen Dutch survivors. Jules Schelvis, *Sobibor: A History of a Nazi Death Camp* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007).
- 14 Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis, ed., *Auschwitz*, 6 vols. (The Hague: Nederlandsche Roode Kruis, 1947–1953).
- 15 Late October 1942–late October 1944. Data are based on the Terezín (Theresienstadt) prisoners’ database, Theresienstadt Initiative Institute. This database contains the data of all the deportees to Theresienstadt, when and where they were deported further, and if they died or were liberated in Theresienstadt. Apart from the deportees from the Netherlands, the database contains very reliable information about survivors.

about the same for both regions.¹⁶ The percentage of Dutch survivors was 1.48 percent, in contrast to 10.3 percent for the Czech Jews. The Dutch Jews had a strikingly low survival rate. Even the Jews of Salonika, who spoke no German and were unaccustomed to the Central European climate, had higher survival rates: 2.52 percent.¹⁷ The difference in proportions of survival is significantly higher than in Blom's portrayal. These numbers indicate a strikingly high mortality of Dutch Jews in the camps, which has been neglected by the scholarship. The question at hand, then, is what factors influenced this second Dutch paradox?

In this article I argue that the high mortality of Dutch Jews can be explained by their specific adaptation to the camps. Nearly all deported Dutch Jews adopted a mode of withdrawal, a passive and isolating strategy. This behavior was common for almost all Dutch Jews, regardless of gender, age, or class. This regressive mode goes back to a specific Dutch-wide habitus: Jewish assimilation in the Netherlands was different from that in France, Germany, and Central Europe generally. The traditional Dutch Jewish society had limited contact with the majority Gentile society. This historic experience created a fairly isolated community, which experienced only little external influence, war, or antisemitism.

Research on the Jewish deportees should not be reduced to an analysis of their mortality rates. Nevertheless, these offer a telling mark of life in the camps, leading to wider questions examining life in extremis. What were the adaptation strategies of prisoners, and how did they play out in everyday life? The Dutch Jews who were sent to Theresienstadt were a small group — fewer than 5,000 people — enabling us to approach these large questions in a compact yet complex manner. Following the principle that exceptions help us to discover general rules, the Dutch Jews help us deduce overarching patterns of the Theresienstadt society.

The Theresienstadt transit ghetto presents an excellent example

16 Franciszek Piper, *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz: Aufgrund der Quellen und der Erträge der Forschung 1945 bis 1990* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 1993), p. 178.

17 The numbers are from Hagen Fleischer, "Griechenland," in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimensionen des Völkermords: Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991); Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts* (New York: Knopf, 2005), p. 418ff. (1,157 survivors; over 46,000 deportees).

of the dynamics of a persecuted society, and hence makes this a particularly suitable case study. The people deported here by the Nazis included heterogeneous groups of Jews from Central and Western Europe, with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and ages. At the same time, however, they had similarities: most of them were middle class, urban, assimilated, liberal in faith, or non-observant. A large part of the deportees from the Netherlands were emigrants. However, native Dutch Jews and the emigrants experienced identical persecution and were deported as the same group. The native Dutch Jews and the German emigrants experienced the same ghetto; yet their adaptation into the prisoner community was distinctly different.

This article is organized in three parts. The first section presents a sketch of the history of Dutch Jews before World War II and explains why some of them were sent to Theresienstadt. The next and longest section examines the key features of the Dutch Jews’ everyday life in the ghetto with regard to food, work, knowledge about the infrastructure, and child care. The last part contextualizes the findings into the patterns of integration of both Jewish and Gentile Dutch prisoners in other Nazi camps.

Dutch Jewry Before World War II¹⁸

In May 1940, at the onset of the German occupation, 140,000 Jews lived in the Netherlands; the vast majority in the urban West. Dutch Jews were assimilated,¹⁹ spoke Dutch, and worked in most sectors of the economy. While in this respect they could be counted among the Western Jews, in comparison with other Western Jewish communities, the Dutch Jews were less integrated into the majority society. The rate

18 This section is based on Selma Leydesdorff, *We Lived With Dignity: The Jewish Proletariat of Amsterdam, 1900–1940* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995); Hans Blom, Renate Fuks-Mansfeld, and Ivo Schöffer, eds., *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford and Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002), pp. 230–295; Emanuel Boekman, *Demografie van de joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1936); Siegfried van Praag, “Hoe ze spraken,” *Maandblad voor de geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland* (1947/1948), pp. 225–230; Jakob Kruijt, “Het jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving,” in Hendrik Pos, ed., *Anti-semitisme en jodendom* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1939), pp. 190–231.

19 For a critical discussion of assimilation, see Till van Rahden, “Verrat, Schicksal oder Chance: Lesarten des Assimilationsbegriffs in der Historiographie zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden,” *Historische Anthropologie*, 13 (2005), pp. 245–264.

of intermarriage was low — only 15 percent of all Jewish marriages in 1930, as compared to 25 percent in what is today the Czech Republic, and 28 percent in Germany.²⁰ Immigration and marriages to Jews from abroad, so common in Central Europe, was much less frequent. Few Jews left the religious community, and those who did, such as some Communists, still considered their cultural identification as Jews as being decisive.²¹

The situation of the Dutch Jews was largely influenced by the overall setting of pre-war Dutch society, divided into four clear ideological segments. These were the *verzuiling*, or “pillarization,” encompassing four pillars: Protestant, Catholic, socialist, and liberal.²² A Dutch Catholic attended a Catholic school, read *De Volkskrant*, the Catholic newspaper, played chess in a Catholic chess club, and married a Catholic partner. Numbers were too low to constitute a Jewish pillar, or, if there was such a thing, it was a Jewish subculture rather than a pillar.²³ People of different segments lived alongside rather than with one another, and the pillarization led to a routine of little social contact outside of one’s group. The pillarization was a significant factor in the isolation of Dutch Jews in the camps.

- 20 Franz Friedmann, *Einige Zahlen über die tschechoslovakischen Juden: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie der Judenheit, Schriften zur Diskussion des Zionismus* (Prague: Barissia, 1933); Kerstin Meiring, *Die christlich-jüdische Mischehe in Deutschland 1840–1933* (Hamburg: Dölling & Galitz, 1998); Arthur Ruppin, “Die Verbreitung der Mischehe unter den Juden,” *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, vol. 5, no. 4 (October 1930).
- 21 Leydesdorff, in her study based on extensive oral histories, showed how the Jewish working class ultimately lived very much in a Jewish milieu. Evelien Gans, in her thoughtful examination of the Jewish left in the 1930s and 1940s, demonstrated the deep connections the Dutch social democrats had to their Jewishness: *De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken: Een historische studie naar joodse sociaal-democraten en socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Vassallucci, 1999).
- 22 Other European countries had a corresponding phenomenon, but never so strongly developed as in the Netherlands. M. Rainer Lepsius wrote of “milieus”: “Parteiensystem und Sozialstruktur: Zum Problem der Demokratisierung der Deutschen Gesellschaft,” *Demokratie in Deutschland: Soziologisch-historische Konstellationsanalysen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), p. 38.
- 23 There is no agreement on whether a Jewish pillar actually existed or whether it was marginal. For example, there was no Jewish university or newspaper. Many Jews joined the liberal and socialist pillar.

After the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, many political and Jewish refugees from Germany emigrated to the Netherlands.²⁴ This immigration, the largest in recent Dutch history, evoked varied responses. There were traditional animosities against the Germans, as in Dutch eyes the refugees appeared loud, arrogant, and showy. The emigrants also experienced the Netherlands as a culture shock, encountering a quiet country, which had experienced neither World War I nor the “Roaring Twenties.” After the November pogrom of 1938, the Netherlands received desperate Jewish asylum seekers, for whom the Dutch government erected camps, including Westerbork, located on the inhospitable moor in the northeast of the country.²⁵

Deportations to Theresienstadt

After attacking the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the Germans established a civil administration there. German authorities also set up a Joodse Raad, a Jewish Council, to administer all Jews living in the country.²⁶ By July 1942, the Nazis started sending Jews to Westerbork, now designated as the “Police Central Transit Camp.” Between July 1942 and February 1943, and again from August 1943 on, 57,552 people were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Between March and July 1943, the destination of the transports was Sobibór, numbering 34,313 victims.

Deportations to Theresienstadt, like those to Bergen-Belsen, were the exception. Soon after the beginning of the deportations, people summoned for “relocation” failed to appear. The SS switched to picking

24 Bob Moore, *Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands, 1933–1940* (Dordrecht and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986). Volker Jakob and Annett van der Voort, *Anne Frank war nicht allein: Lebensgeschichten deutscher Juden in der Niederlande* (Berlin and Bonn: Dietz, 1995).

25 Corrie Berghuis, ed., *Joodse vluchtelingen in Nederland 1938–1940: Documenten betreffende toelating, uitleiding en kampopname* (Kampen: Kok, 1990), p. 46f., document 26.

26 On the Dutch Joodse Raad (Jewish Council), see Dan Michman, “De oprichting van de ‘Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam’ vanuit een vergelijkend perspectief,” *Oorlogsdocumentatie* (1992), pp. 74–100; Johannes Houwink ten Cate, “Heydrich’s Security Police and the Amsterdam Jewish Council (February 1941–October 1942),” in Jozeph Michman, ed., *Dutch Jewish History*, vol. 3 (Assen and Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1993), pp. 381–393; Friso Roest and Jos Scheren, *Oorlog in de stad: Amsterdam 1939–1941* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1998).

up Jews at home and later to raiding the streets. Consequently, many people went into hiding. The SS then developed a system of exceptions. By imposing a protected category, this encouraged people to try to be classified in this way rather than go into hiding. In the autumn of 1942, Adolf Eichmann, head of the RSHA IVB4 came up with the idea of sending “Jews with merits” from the Netherlands to Theresienstadt.²⁷ Theresienstadt was the destination for Jews on a number of exception lists; these exceptions were defined similarly to the regulations for deportations to Theresienstadt from Germany and Austria.²⁸

The Hague branch of IVB4 set up categories “qualifying” Jews for Theresienstadt. Classifications that made people eligible included decorated Jewish war veterans, “Jewish partners from no-longer-existing intermarriages that produced children,” and those with “services for the erection of the camp Westerbork.”²⁹

Between April 1943 and September 1944, eight transports with almost 5,000 people left the Netherlands for Theresienstadt. Administration of the lists was in the hands of IVB4 in The Hague, but the Jewish self-administration in Westerbork exerted influence, too. Theresienstadt was advertised as a Czech spa town surrounded by beautiful mountains, where people would live until the end of the war.³⁰ The categories were set up in a way that most people who qualified were German or Austrian emigrants: Westerbork was initially a camp for refugees, and these inmates constituted the camp’s elite thanks to their seniority.

Yet many Dutch Jews were also included in the Theresienstadt categories. Many were on the list for “services for the erection of the Westerbork camp,” or because they were associated with the Joodse Raad or its regional branches. Furthermore, several groups were sent to Theresienstadt under direct German orders. Among these were a number of so-called Portuguese — Sephardic — Jews.³¹ Two other large

27 Memorandum Willy Zöpf, October 5, 1942, Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (NIOD), HSSPF collection, 1290.

28 Alfred Gottwaldt and Diana Schulle, *Die “Judendeportationen” aus dem Deutschen Reich* (Wiesbaden: Matrix, 2005), pp. 266–278.

29 These exceptions lists are in NIOD, HSSPF, 1290–1297.

30 Testimony of Else Dormitzer, NIOD, testimonies collection (250d), box 25.

31 Moore, *Victims and Survivors*, pp. 120–123, Geraldien von Frijtag Drabbe Künzel, *Het geval Calmeyer* (Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt, 2008), pp. 127–141. For a wonderful early modern cultural history of the Portuguese Dutch Jewish community, see

exemption groups, the so-called Barneveld and Protestant groups, were also mostly native Dutch. The Barneveld group consisted of Dutch Jews who were considered worth saving by two permanent state secretaries as a result of their contribution to the Dutch state and culture: these were the Jewish *crème de la crème* of Dutch society, including the legal scholar Eduard Meijers, the eminent colonial politician Emanuel Moresco, and the members of the Councertgebouw orchestra.³² The Protestant group consisted of Protestant Christians of Jewish origin, or those whose false baptismal certificates enabled them to pass as such. The two large Dutch Protestant churches, the Dutch Reformed Church and Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Hervormde and Gereformeerde Kerk), successfully negotiated the protection of “their” Jews with the Nazis.³³

The Dutch in Theresienstadt

Transports from the Netherlands to Theresienstadt³⁴

	Departure Westerbork	Arrival Theresienstadt	People on the transport
XXIV/1	21.4.1943	22.4.1943	295
XXIV/2	18.1.1944	20.1.1944	872
XXIV/3	14.9.1943	27.1.1944	283
XXIV/4	25.2.1944	26.2.1944	804
XXIV/5	5.4.1944	7.4.1944	289
XXIV/6	31.7.1944	2.8.1944	216
XXIV/7	4.9.1944	6.9.1944	2,074
From XXIV/7 Barneveld and Protestant groups			1,114
XXIV/8	13.9.1944	20.11.1944	51

Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

32 After the Dutch government escaped to Great Britain, the state secretaries who remained worked in a surrogate government that functioned alongside the German occupation authorities. Boris de Munnick, *Uitverkoren in uitzondering? Het verhaal van de Joodse “Barneveld-groep” 1942–1945* (Barneveld: BDU, 1991).

33 Johan M. Snoek, *De Nederlandse kerken en de joden, 1940–1945: De protesten bij Seyss-Inquart, hulp aan joodse onderduikers, de motieven voor hulpverlening* (Kampen: Kok, 1990).

34 Transport codes in bold were sent via Bergen-Belsen.

All together, 4,887 persons were deported from the Netherlands to Theresienstadt; 3,009 of them were deported to Auschwitz, most of them in May 1944 to the Theresienstadt Family Camp in Birkenau, and the others in the autumn of 1944. At the end of the war, 1,287 Dutch prisoners were liberated in Theresienstadt, and 434 were exchanged to Switzerland in February 1945.³⁵ Another 157 died in the ghetto, while six children were born throughout the period their mothers were there. We do not know how many of the Dutch who were deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz survived; based on the samples below, my estimate is 300–400.³⁶ Nearly all the members of the Barneveld and Protestant groups were protected from the transports to Auschwitz; they also constituted over 80 percent of those Dutch who were not deported to the East.

Many people from the Netherlands arrived in family units, a feature that they shared with the Czech Jews, all of whom were deported to Theresienstadt as whole families. In contrast, Jews deported from Germany and Austria were usually older and female. A large part of the Dutch deportees, 60–70 percent, were emigrants: German, Austrian, and, in smaller numbers, Czechoslovak and Polish. The other 30–40 percent were native Dutch; however, the percentage can only be estimated.³⁷ The adults had learned some Dutch; their children grew up with two cultures and languages, and often considered themselves

35 The 434 Dutch Jews sent to Switzerland in February 1945 were part of a larger group of some 1,200 Jews sent at that time from Terezín to Switzerland. This release was part of the broader negotiations undertaken by former Swiss President Jean-Marie Musy with Heinrich Himmler beginning in late 1944 in an effort to procure the release of hundreds of thousands of concentration camp prisoners. Musy acted on behalf of Recha and Yitzhak Sternbuch of the Orthodox Vaad Hatzalah in Switzerland, the Joint Distribution Committee, and other Jewish groups. See for example, Hans Günther Adler, *Theresienstadt 1941–1945: Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005 [1955]), pp. 199–200; Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 225–231.

36 The Dutch survivors bring the overall number of the survivors among Theresienstadt prisoners sent to the East to approximately 4,000 from the usual assessment of 3,600, such as in Joseph White, “Terezín,” in Geoffrey Megargee, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press and USHMM, 2009), pp. 179–184; Hans Günther Adler estimates 3,500 survivors, *Theresienstadt*, p. 59; Karel Lagus and Josef Polák estimate 3,097 in their book *Město za mřížemi* (Prague: Naše vojsko, 1964), p. 332.

37 The places of birth are indicated on the transport lists; however, only the first

Dutch. In order to mark the difference, in this article “German Dutch” or “German refugees” refers to the former, and “native Dutch” to the latter.

The German Dutch and the native Dutch were deported as a single group and appeared as one in the eyes of the veteran Theresienstadt prisoners. All deportees from the Netherlands wore a Star of David with the inscription “Jood,” unlike everyone else, whose stars bore the word “Jude.”³⁸ Between January 1944 and September 1944, most arrivals from the Netherlands were accommodated in the Hamburg barracks. The sign “XXIV” on their ghetto identity cards, indicating the twenty-fourth deportation area outside of the Protectorate to Theresienstadt, denoted the Dutch deportees. Veteran prisoners usually did not distinguish between the native Dutch and the German Dutch. To many of the Czech Jews the difference either did not matter, or they never noticed it. For them, the “pleasant, easygoing girls” with wooden shoes were Dutch, irrespective of their true place of birth.³⁹

Ernst Kantorowicz was one of several German Dutch who in Theresienstadt was defined as Dutch rather than German.⁴⁰ He was a professor of sociology at the University of Frankfurt; his Dutch-born wife Margarete was the reason the family relocated, in 1939, to Amsterdam. Deported to Theresienstadt in January 1944, Kantorowicz worked in the Recreation Department, which administered the cultural activities, and suggested organizing a “Dutch week,” in order to showcase the newly arrived Dutch artists and scholars.⁴¹ Even though the organizers of the Recreation Department knew that the “Dutch” (“*Holländer*”) were often from Germany — for example, Kurt Gerron, the famous director and actor, joined after his arrival from Westerbork

six lists indicate the nationality or place of birth, and the last two (XXIV/7 and XXIV/8) do not. See the transport lists in NIOD, HSSPF, 1294.

- 38 The three French Jews present, Léon Meyer, his wife Susanne and daughter Denise wore a star with inscription “Juif.” The Slovak and Hungarian Jews who arrived in the winter 1944/45 wore blank yellow stars.
- 39 Interview with Petr Erben, Prague, December, 29, 2000 (all interviews, unless otherwise stated, were conducted by the author; all interviews were donated to the NIOD).
- 40 On March 21, 1944, several “*Holländer*” submitted a letter to Moritz Henschel, head of the Recreation Department, asking to pay attention to their cultural interests; Minutes of the Recreation Department, Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), O.64/65.
- 41 Minutes of the Recreation Department, February 29, 1944, *ibid*.

in February 1944⁴² — the veterans still called the newly arrived Jews from the Netherlands Dutch.

Most of the native Dutch spoke German either fluently or well, due to their class background, or from having picked it up in Westerbork. As stated above, members of the Barneveld and Protestant groups belonged to the upper and upper-middle classes.⁴³ The Dutch educated classes usually attended high schools where they studied two modern foreign languages; those who went to university learned three. In the Netherlands, German and French were then the most frequently studied foreign languages.

Anny Morpurgo was then a teenage daughter of a well-known art restorer. To my question as to whether she and her parents spoke German, she answered in a decisive affirmative: “My parents were a bit educated, after all.”⁴⁴

Moreover, almost everyone who was deported to Theresienstadt had spent nine months or longer in Westerbork. The prisoner-functionaries in Westerbork communicated almost entirely in German, and the Dutch prisoners usually had to be well connected with them in order to be sent to Theresienstadt. The only exception was the approximately 300 members of the Portuguese list, whose language capacities cannot be ascertained.⁴⁵

Labor and Infrastructure

When the first two transports of young men from Prague arrived in Theresienstadt in November 1941, they found a desolate town. At one point in September 1942, the ghetto accommodated up to 60,000 people in the space of about one square kilometer.⁴⁶ The Jewish self-administration organized and distributed work among the prisoners, both for the internal needs of the ghetto and less for the SS. The prisoner community in Theresienstadt created a master narrative interpreting

42 Minutes of the Recreation Department, April 1, 1944, *ibid.*

43 Johannes Houwink ten Cate, “Het jongere deel: Demografische en sociale kenmerken van het jodendom in Nederland tijdens de vervolging,” *Oorlogsdocumentatie*, 1 (1989), pp. 9–66.

44 Interview with Anny Wafelman-Morpurgo, Amsterdam, July 10, 2001.

45 The “Portuguese Jews” also spent only one to three months in Westerbork.

46 This is the equivalent of 0.39 sq. mile. By January 1944, when the first large Dutch transport arrived, the population dropped to approximately 30,000.

the place as an adversity through which the Jews, banished from their homes and marked as pariahs, could prove that they could salvage something good from a bad situation. In Theresienstadt, this master narrative maintained, Jews demonstrated that they could excel at manual labor, take care of the most vulnerable — the children — and produce outstanding cultural events. Work for the ghetto, in particular physical labor, assumed great importance and was perceived as particularly deserving; the Jewish administration also imposed a labor duty on all inmates between sixteen and sixty.

The inmates were aware that they lived in conditions that they had literally built themselves. Most prisoners shouldered the necessary responsibility in relation to their jobs, very much aware that the ghetto infrastructure was directly dependent on their work.⁴⁷ The master narrative triggered a defined work ethic in specific job areas, with certain sets of rules and social control. The inmate community expected the newcomers to recognize this work ethic.

The labor situation in the ghetto was shaped by the presence of many highly educated people: due to the traditionally high concentration of Central European Jewry in white-collar professions, there were many physicians, attorneys, architects, and university professors, but only a few craftsmen, farmers, and cooks. The density of certain professions had an impact on how easily a newly arrived expert could get a job in his or her profession. Medical doctors often struggled to find an adequate job in the ghetto hospital. This was not only a matter of their qualifications but also of their ethnicity and social capital.

Some of the German Dutch managed to get jobs in their former professions. One such example was the twenty-four-year-old nurse Illa Loeb from Wuppertal, who, soon after her arrival in February 1944, got a position in the surgery. Loeb remembered with ardor how her department got hold of a new technique, the *Heilgasmethode*, speeding up the healing process by surrounding the wound with a gas.⁴⁸ Loeb followed the same narrative as other Czech, Austrian, and

47 Among others, interview of Irena S., Jewish Museum Prague (ŽMP), *Vzpomínky*, 407; interview of Ella R.-B.-C., *ibid.*, 317; interview with Dr. Franz Hahn, Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, interview collection, 510.

48 Ellen Loeb, “Liebe Trude, lieber Rudy” (1945), in Roger A. Ritvo and Diane M. Plotkin, eds., *Sisters in Sorrow: Voices of Care in the Holocaust* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), pp. 107–125, 112.

German nurses.⁴⁹ The tasks, friendships, and collective experience shape the main line of their testimonies. They stressed the satisfaction they gained from their work, how they learned new skills, and how they endeavored to improve the conditions of their patients. Several German Dutch made their way up into some of the most sought-after jobs, as cooks, bakers or butchers, or as children's supervisors, a sector closely monitored by the self-administration.⁵⁰ Still others were able to find their particular niche. For example, the orthopedist Hellmut Horowicz from Berlin found out about the existence of a small "Orthopedic Institute" and enrolled there.⁵¹

The native Dutch had a very different approach to work. One German Dutch described their stance as "passive resistance."⁵² Testimonies of Czech, Austrian, and German prisoners recurrently point out that their Dutch colleagues avoided work and made teamwork difficult.⁵³ Many of the native Dutch believed that their work was for the benefit of the Nazis. One of my interviewees, then eighteen-year-old Ina, who worked in a workshop that stuffed blankets, remembered:

If you worked quickly, you could get extra food, a bit of bread or so. Well I did that sometimes. But I didn't want to. I didn't feel like doing that. Well, I mean, my hunger was not serious enough to move me to work seriously. I thought, I will sabotage them.⁵⁴

Ina did not realize that the blankets were destined for the prisoners.

The native Dutch, when describing the ghetto organization, often used stereotypes and were vague. Indeed, to a large extent they seemed to be ignorant of the Theresienstadt infrastructure. Several Dutch survivors maintained that the entire Council of Elders was Czech, even if this had not been true since October 1942, six months before the

49 Federica Spitzer, "Verlorene Jahre," in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Theresienstadt: Aufzeichnungen von Federica Spitzer und Ruth Weisz* (Berlin: Metropol, 1997); Thea Höchster, YVA, O.33/7136; Trude Groag, Beit Terezin Archives (BTA), 81; Zdenka Bínová, Archive of the Terezín Memorial, Sbíрка vzpomínek, 68.

50 Interview with Willy G., ŽMP.

51 Testimony of Hellmuth Horowicz, NIOD, 250d, box 30.

52 Report Albert Hess, NIOD, 250d, box 28.

53 To that effect see Benjamin Murelstein, "Terezin. Il ghetto-modello di Eichmann," edited by Anna Hájková (2005, unpublished manuscript of translation [1963]), p. 175; see also Emil Utitz, *Psychologie des Lebens im Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt* (Vienna: A. Söxl, 1948), p. 60.

54 Interview with Ina Frenkel, Amsterdam, February 5, 2001.

first Dutch arrivals. The newly arrived David Cohen was invited to join the Council of Elders as a guest in September 1944; later, he was replaced by Eduard Meijers.⁵⁵ Cohen went on to become the Elder of the Hamburg barracks, and, in May 1945, was replaced by Ina Kisch-Houthakker.⁵⁶

Some native Dutch blamed the Jewish administration for filling the Czech quota for transports with Dutch Jews instead.⁵⁷ Indeed, it was the Jewish administration who, following the orders of the SS, selected people for the transports,⁵⁸ but this accusation does not stand up to examination. When we analyze the numbers of the deported Jews with the help of the Theresienstadt prisoner database, we can see that the proportion of Dutch Jews in each of the transports correlated to their percentage in the overall ghetto population, or was even below. A small number of native Dutch seemed not to be aware of the existence of the Jewish self-administration and believed that the SS ran the ghetto directly.⁵⁹ This lack of knowledge is quite surprising. The Jewish self-administration in Theresienstadt ran the organization of the ghetto and was omnipresent, much more so than the Dutch Jewish Council. The self-administration was represented by room and house elders supervising the inhabitants, superiors at work, or clerks who re-categorized people for purposes of the food categories.

Many native Dutch also noted that the most preferential jobs were in the hands of the Czechs, characterized as a well-fed elite receiving large food parcels.⁶⁰ Indeed, the young Czech Jews were the social elite in the ghetto.⁶¹ The Czechs' large parcels were a frequent

55 Adler, *Theresienstadt*, 253.

56 Interview with Ronald Waterman, February 24, 2001, Delft; letter of recommendation for Ina Kisch, June 5, 1945 (signature illegible, Building Administration), private archive of Hanan Kisch.

57 Testimony of Raphael Acohen, NIOD, 250d, box 20.

58 Testimony of Vilém Cantor from February 13, 1946, Archive of the Ministry of Interior (Prague), 305-633-1, pp. 192-194.

59 Interview with Greetje Cohen-Roselaar, Amsterdam, August 3, 2001, Amsterdam; interview with Lea P.-A., Amsterdam, March 11, 2001.

60 Interview of Mirjam Pinkhof with Martha Hazon Wijler (1994, handwritten transcript), Ghetto Fighters' House Archive, Nr. 426; testimony of Isidore de Jong, NIOD, 250d, box 31; diary of Isaac Cohen, YVA, O.33/913/1222, entry for September 8, 1944; interview with Aline Akker, Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (VHF), Nr. 10510.

61 Anna Hájková, "Die fabelhaften Jungs aus Theresienstadt: Junge tschechische Männer als dominante soziale Elite im Theresienstädter Ghetto," in Christoph

point in the narratives of many others, including German, Austrian, and, initially, also Danish prisoners; the grass appeared greener and the parcels of others always appeared larger than one's own.⁶² Yet the native Dutch differed from other inmates in maintaining that correspondence with the Netherlands was prohibited. This was never the case. In fact, people in Westerbork and in Amsterdam corresponded with Theresienstadt.⁶³ However, the Dutch Jews rarely received mail. The reason was connected to the pillarization back home: they did not have Gentile relatives or friends to send parcels. These issues hint at deeper issues of perception. The Dutch believed in malicious administration and mail prohibition and blamed others for absent parcels or the threat of transports.

Children

One of the best-known aspects of Theresienstadt involves child care.⁶⁴ All children under the age of sixteen were entitled to be accommodated in a youth home, and most parents took advantage of this opportunity.⁶⁵ Youth homes were organized according to age, sex, and language (Czech or German). Compared to the general environment, conditions in the youth homes were much better. Children received larger food rations and had better and cleaner housing conditions.⁶⁶

Dieckmann and Babette Quinkert, eds., *Im Ghetto: Neue Forschungen zu Alltag und Umfeld* (Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus, 25, 2009): pp. 116–135.

- 62 For a fascinating examination of a similar situation among the Danish, see Silvia Goldbaum Tarabini Fracapane, “‘Wir erfuhren, was es heißt, hungrig zu sein.’ Aspekte des Alltagslebens dänischer Juden in Theresienstadt,” in Doris Bergen, Andrea Löw, and Anna Hájková, eds., *Der Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013), pp. 199–216.
- 63 František Beneš and Patricia Tošnerová, *Pošta v ghettu Terezín = Die Post im Ghetto Theresienstadt = Mail service in the ghetto Terezín* (Prague: Filatelie, 1996); JHM, D 7859; list of correspondents from Theresienstadt, NIOD, 187, 166h; letter of JCC to Jogi van Aspermont, September 1944, YVA, M.16/22.
- 64 See Marie Rút Křížková, ed., *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín* (Prague: Aventinum, 1995); see also Hannelore Brenner-Wonschick, *Die Mädchen von Zimmer 28: Freundschaft, Hoffnung und Überleben in Theresienstadt* (Munich: Droemer, 2004).
- 65 For one of the best-known accounts, see Ruth Klüger, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (New York: Feminist Press, 2001), pp. 70–88.
- 66 Luisa Fischerová, “Sociální zpráva,” in “One year of L 417,” YVA, O64/57; ŽMP, Vzpomínky, 407, interview of Irena S.; Willy Groag, “Sociální péče o mládež” (1945),

Parents usually visited once a day. The self-administration selected supervisors rigorously, with a preference for Zionists and people who had experience in child care. Youth care also featured prominently in the master narrative of the prisoner community.

The German Dutch usually placed their children in the youth homes. My interviewees and authors of testimonies who were teenagers at the time mentioned that they were accommodated in a youth home.⁶⁷ Many women among the German emigrants worked as care workers in youth homes. The thirty-seven-year-old Malka Weinmann-Wieselmann from Vienna was a certified child care worker. In Westerbork she ran a nursery, and when she was deported to Theresienstadt in February 1944, she took eight orphaned children under her wings. Here she started a nursery for Dutch children under the age of fourteen, again focusing on orphans. When nearly all of the children were sent to Auschwitz in May 1944 — in the SS effort to “beautify” the ghetto for the visit of the International Red Cross, they ordered the orphans and those ill with tuberculosis to be deported — the self-administration appointed Weinmann-Wieselmann as director of a large German-language youth home. Weinmann-Wieselmann remained in Theresienstadt through the transports in the autumn of 1944, when almost all the inmates and all but forty of her children were deported. She survived, remarried, and kept in contact with “her” children until her death in Swiss Lugano more than forty years later.⁶⁸

Weinmann-Wieselmann’s story is typical of the German Dutch. She started working in the youth care sector on her own, had to prove herself, and after some time was offered a position within the already organized youth care system of Theresienstadt. Hers is an account both of a career and of an emerging social structure.

Testimonies of native Dutch hardly ever mention the existence of the child care. Given the prominent role of child care in Theresienstadt,

Moreshet Archive, C, 01; Lisa Wurzel and Hana Fischl, *Terezín* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Labor Party, 1947), p. 146. Thanks to Nir Cohen for the translation.

67 Interview with Ellen Eliel-Wallach, Amsterdam, December 19, 2001; Hannelore Grünberg-Klein, “Zolang er nog tranen zijn,” NIOD, collection diaries [*sic*, this is a postwar testimony] (244), 1289, p. 70f.

68 Malka Pollaczek to Pinda Shefa, August 12, 1981, BTA, Nr. 127. On Pollaczek, see also Salomon Floersheim to Lola Kramarsky, October 12 and December 10, 1945, BTA, 402. See also Leo Blumensohn, YVA, O.3/1713, and Grünberg-Klein, “Zolang er nog tranen zijn,” p. 73.

the silence of the native Dutch is striking. They depict children as unsupervised and wild, playing in the streets.⁶⁹ Henriette, then a young married but childless woman, spoke of children in her interview in the early 1990s: “[In Theresienstadt] the saddest thing were the children [*kindertjes*]. There was nothing for the children, no school....There were still children there, later in Auschwitz there were no more children left.”⁷⁰

One might ask whether there was a language barrier. But Danish mothers of little babies, who often did not speak much German, moved them into the infants’ homes (*Säuglingsheime*).⁷¹ Two Danish teachers also organized a day school for twenty-five Danish children under the age of fourteen.⁷² Upon arrival, a representative of the self-administration informed newcomers about the most important parts of the infrastructure, including the youth care. Moreover, people such as Malka Weinmann-Wiesenmann, who kept ties to the Dutch group and lived in the Hamburg barracks with the other Dutch, were excellent contacts to the child care system.

The isolation of the Dutch children became a topic among youth care workers. The fifty-two-year-old care worker Eugenie Böhm from Telč reported on the problem in June 1944. She related: After a disinfection a month earlier, the Hamburg barracks were evacuated; the ghetto was plagued by insects, and the buildings were cleaned periodically. All infants and their mothers from the Hamburg barracks were sent to Böhm’s toddler’s home (*Kriechlingsheim*). But after the disinfection was finished, the Dutch mothers refused to return to Böhm’s home. Böhm implied that the women seemed wary about leaving the Hamburg barracks, although her home offered better facilities: here mothers could wash diapers and cook for their children. As a result, she reported, the children seemed neglected.⁷³

Stella Moses-Simon from Amsterdam expected her second baby

69 Testimony of Genda Mok-Jacobs, NIOD, 250d, box 36.

70 Henriette van den Bergh, Amsterdam, VHF, Nr. 16674.

71 Sven and Corrie Meyer, “Onze belevenissen wijdens de jodenvervolgingen in den tweeden wereldoorlog” (1945), NIOD, 244, 920.

72 Silvia Tarabini Goldbaum Fracapane, *Danish Testimonies about Theresienstadt: Experiences of Deportation and Ghetto Life* (Ph.D. dissertation, Technische Universität Berlin, in progress).

73 Eugenie Böhm, “Report Kleinkinderfürsorge, Fürsorgestelle II” (June 1944), NIOD, papers of H.G. Adler (250n), 12b.

in January 1945. She was alone; her German-Dutch husband had been deported in the fall transports. After the birth of her child, Moses-Simon left her older boy, Stefan, in the toddler's home. She soon felt uncomfortable, however, and after three months, took Stefan back, even though she had had a difficult delivery and was recovering slowly. In her diary she complained that her fellow Dutch prisoners would not help her and she was always on her own.⁷⁴

Although native Dutch prisoners were the only group apart from the Czechs with a relatively high proportion of children, they did not make use of the child care in the ghetto. Some of them were skeptical of these facilities, and they did not want to be separated from their children; others were unaware of the existence of this framework, despite its prominent position in Theresienstadt. Thus, Dutch mothers with small children had a difficult time coping, having to handle both their work assignments and care for the children. The fact that the Dutch parents did not make use of the child care frameworks, distancing themselves from this established institution that offered real help, and perceiving it as threatening, or even having no knowledge of its existence, is of great importance in making the case in regard to the withdrawn position of the Dutch.

Food

For most people in Theresienstadt hunger was a defining experience. The Jewish self-administration organized the food distribution to the workers according to their labor status. The overwhelming majority of those who died in Theresienstadt as a result of diseases caused by malnourishment were elderly. But even younger people experienced hunger: they grew thinner, and women often stopped menstruating. There were no fruits and vegetables and little protein. The food was prepared in centralized kitchens and distributed at distribution points, where inmates collected their lunch, dinner, and surrogate coffee. Bread became the central item of exchange.

The kitchen workers were somewhat better off, as they ate at their

74 Diary of Stella Simon-Moses, entries between January 3 and March 13, 1945, copy in the possession of the author. On a similar note of conflicting solidarity among the Dutch, see the testimony of Ab Caransa, "Theresienstadt, schizofrenie in steen," *Oorlogsdocumentatie 40-45*, 9 (1998), pp. 112-139.

jobs and received food scraps. Most of the kitchen staff took food for their families and friends, as well as for barter, further reducing the already meager food rations.⁷⁵ Consequently, cooking jobs brought prestige and often translated into romantic success. “Every cook has ten girlfriends,” the Theresienstadt saying went.⁷⁶

In contrast to their otherwise limited knowledge of the infrastructure of Theresienstadt, native Dutch inmates were well informed about the food distribution system, and they interacted with other prisoners in this context. They knew where their respective kitchen was located and how to receive food stamps. They knew how much food children, laborers, normal workers, and other categories received.⁷⁷ Many native Dutch pilfered food or wood, be it for their own use or for bartering.⁷⁸ They also developed vigorous activities on the Theresienstadt black market.

Barend Kronenberg, a twenty-six-year-old cook from Amsterdam, first tried to work as a cook but was turned down; instead, he started working in the fields outside the ghetto.⁷⁹ Kronenberg had his own system of smuggling in vegetables and developed special stockings to carry in cucumbers or tomatoes. In his early postwar testimony, he went into great detail about how he bartered his booty on the black market, how the Czech Jews were particularly fond of the Dutch condensed milk, and about the evolution of the prices. Kronenberg was eventually caught and lost his job. He considered himself lucky — others nabbed by the gendarmes were often sent to the Small Fortress, a nearby Gestapo prison, independent of the ghetto. Barend re-applied

75 Malka Zimmet to her brother, November 1, 1945, YVA, O.7/381; interview of Ota K., ŽMP, Vzpomínky, 103; Adolphe Metz, “Ghetto Theresienstadt,” YVA, O.33/3257; Bedřich Hoffenreich, APT, Sbírka vzpomínek, 1095; Otto and Ella Deutsch, BTA, 114.

76 Personal communication from Nava Shan to the author, Telz Stone, October 1999.

77 Diary of Stella Martin-Simons, entries for December 12, 15, and 18, 1944; Siegfried van den Bergh, *Kroonprins van Mandelstein* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum, 1977), p. 126.

78 Testimony of Isidore de Jong, NIOD, 250d, box 31, 250d; the reports of the Council of Elders mention an above-average number of Dutch prisoners punished for thefts, see Anna Hyndráková, Raisa Machatková, and Jaroslava Milotová, eds., *Denní rozkazy Rady starších a Sdělení židovské samosprávy Terezín 1941–1945 (Regesta)* (Prague: Sefer, 2003).

79 On the black market and corruption in Theresienstadt, see Hájková, *Prisoner Society*, chapter 4.

to serve as a cook, and thanks to his previous experience and black-market connections, he was successful.⁸⁰

Food appears prominently in all the prisoners’ narratives, be it in diaries or later testimonies.⁸¹ Yet in the Dutch testimonies food is markedly salient. Whereas Czech, German, Austrian, and other diarists usually mention food in regard to some exceptional event — for example, when they received a food parcel — the Dutch diarists mention food throughout; indeed, they were extremely preoccupied with it. They noted what was for lunch each day, offered detailed descriptions of Czech cuisine, and reported whether there was an extra portion. Food remained the central narrative even in the face of major outside events.

This difference between native Dutch and other Jews was particularly striking during the fall transports of 1944. People agonized over who would be next, hoping that they and their families would be spared. Many diarists stopped writing altogether; others changed their style into fractioned entries, decrying the horror.⁸² Food was not a topic. Yet the Dutch diarists continued as usual. On September 28, 1944, a day when 2,500 young men were sent to an unknown destination and which was also Yom Kippur, the twenty-two-year old Eli van Beever noted: “This night the train did arrive. The men for the first tr[ansport] are being loaded. The second transport is being prepared. We had a lovely lunch today. Risotto, a mixture of rice and meat!”⁸³

The diarist reported the disaster that took place for the majority, claiming many of his Dutch acquaintances. But the calamity appeared as something of secondary interest as long the Dutch diarists were themselves not in danger.

Eating also signified an important social occasion. Families got together during dinners, usually in the women’s lodgings. Strangers approached each other in food lines, even flirted, and acquaintances recognized one another. The native Dutch, however, never mentioned striking up an acquaintance in the public space. Here again the Dutch

80 Testimony of Barend Kronenberg, NIOD, 250d, box 32.

81 This is a general phenomenon in Terezín and other ghettos and camps, irrespective of the person’s age, gender, or territorial background.

82 See Eva Mändlová Roubíčková, “*We’re alive and life goes on:*” *A Theresienstadt Diary* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998); Alisah Shek, “Alisa Sheks Tagebuch (Oktober 1944–Mai 1945),” *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente* (1994), pp. 169–206.

83 Diary of Eli van Beever, entry for September 28, 1944, NIOD, 250d, box 23.

inmates were set apart by their disregard for one of the characteristic features of “normality” in Theresienstadt.

Consider one particular aspect of the usual street encounters: One of the fixtures of Theresienstadt social life was that attractive young women could approach cooks in a flirtatious manner and try to get extra food.⁸⁴ This strategy was adopted by several German Dutch women. One example was related by Renate Kamp, then a twenty-year-old from Bielefeld:

My dad, he had problems with his stomach and was entitled to get food from the special diet kitchen. And there worked one cook called Peppi, and he had an eye on me. And he asked me once, “Renate, would you go out with me?” Well, and I said yes. Well, and he asked, “don’t you want to accompany me to my room?” Well, and why not? I was so innocent and naïve, you cannot imagine. And then he had expectations. And I told him, “No, Peppi, I am not that kind of girl.” Because we spoke together in English, to exercise. And then my stepmother told me, “Why did you not do that, he would have given Dad more food?”⁸⁵

Renate went on to stress that Peppi actually took no offense and continued their relationship on friendly terms, providing her with extra food. However “innocent and naïve” Renate may have been, she recognized and conformed to the prevalent custom — which brought her family a tangible advantage.

In Theresienstadt many German Dutch made new friends, fell in love, and some even got married.⁸⁶ Many of the German Dutch were helped by their German relatives who were veteran prisoners. But even those emigrant Dutch who did not encounter any acquaintances

84 Lucy Drachsler-Mandelstam, “Memoirs 1931–1998,” Leo Baeck Institute, ME 1472; on sexual barter in Terezín in general, see Hájková, “Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide: Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto,” in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 38, no. 3 (spring 2013), pp. 503–533.

85 Interview with Renate van Hinte-Kamp, July 25, 2001 in Bloemendaal. English quote in original.

86 Marriage certificate of Robert Fuldauer and Clara Ittmann (from the then-German Glogau), August 3, 1944, Jewish Historical Museum Amsterdam, D 2661. Fuldauer emigrated from Dinslaken to Amsterdam; his first Dutch wife, Jeanette, died three months after arrival in Theresienstadt. Robert and Clara survived.

purposely made their way into the new environment and got to know people.⁸⁷

Stories like these never come up in the testimonies of native Dutch women. Most of the women I interviewed remembered that Czech men would call after them “*Hezká holka, dej mi pusul!*” (“Pretty girl, give me a kiss!”). But apparently Dutch women did not kiss.

Several Dutch women engaged in sexual barter in exchange for food. The he-Halutz member Šimon Kopolovič worked in the ghetto bakery where the bakers were issued an additional loaf of bread per shift. Sometimes women would be waiting around for the bakers in the bakery courtyard at the end of the shift; once a Dutch woman suggested to Šimon that they have sex in trade for the bread.⁸⁸ Symptomatically, we only hear these narratives from non-Dutch men, never from Dutch women.

Unlike sexual barter, romantic relationships between Dutch and non-Dutch prisoners were extremely rare, even though inter-ethnic relationships in the ghetto were quite common.⁸⁹ When I asked about romantic relationships outside of the Dutch group in Theresienstadt, my interviewees declined with the notion that, “This was gone.”⁹⁰ I found only two native Dutch women who were involved in romantic relationships with young Czech men.⁹¹ Both women were outsiders well before the deportation. In Theresienstadt, they became objects of calumny. Ellen Danby was a twenty-four-year-old figure-skater from Amsterdam, the daughter of wealthy German Jews who had been living in the Netherlands for a long time. She started dating Petr Burka, a young Czech painter and artisan, in the autumn of 1944. She posed for him as a model, and, after the liberation, the two of them

87 See the memoirs of a Dutch-born Polish Jew, Norbert Buchsbaum, born in 1925, *Fotograaf zonder camera: Herinneringen van Norbert Buchsbaum* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1991).

88 Conversation with Šimon Kolský né Kopolovič (pseudonym), January 16, 2009, Haifa. For a similar story, see Jerry Valfer with Kate Rutherford, *Jerry’s Story: Sometimes I Did Not Think, I Just Kept on Living; A Heart-Rending Saga* (Coon Valley, WI: Aavery Counseling, 2000), p. 56.

89 Drachsler-Mandelstam, “Memoirs 1931–1998”; Beate Meyer’s interview of Elena Bork (pseudonym by request of the archive), July 7, 1993 and November 20, 1998, Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte, Werkstatt der Erinnerung, 112.

90 Interview with Lea P.- A.

91 Apart from Ellen Danby-Burka, the other woman was Mary Gobes. See Mary Gobes-Schmitz’ interview, VHF, 23566; see also Ellen van de Boomgaard, “Een stoel en een verhaal leveren boeiende tv op,” *De Volkskrant*, February 22, 1997.

left for the Netherlands and got married; in 1950 they immigrated to Canada, where Ellen became a celebrated figure-skating coach.⁹² This seemingly everyday story was perceived in a different light within the Dutch community, and some among the Dutch considered Ellen to be promiscuous.⁹³

Questioning the integrity of a woman's sexual behavior is the gravest criticism society can level at her. Such ostracism is an indication of the root values of the group. Social encounters in general, and romantic relationships in particular, if they were with partners outside of the Dutch group, did not fit in with the self-perception of native Dutch Jews. Dutch Jews also displayed skepticism toward the ghetto facilities even when older inmates mediated and explained their value. The native Dutch were the only geographically defined group in Theresienstadt who did not integrate well.⁹⁴

Life in the Extreme

If the different mode of adaptation of Dutch Jews in Theresienstadt was not related to matters in the ghetto, we must consider the characteristics of the group itself and its background. Were there similar patterns in the Dutch prisoners' behavior in other camps? The following analysis offers an examination of the Dutch Jews' position in concentration camps elsewhere. It is also a veritable extension of our narrative, as many Dutch deportees, as well as their Czech, Austrian, and German fellow inmates, were sent from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz-Birkenau. If they survived the selection there, they were usually sent on to smaller auxiliary camps for forced labor.

Erich Müller was a Czech Jew who had lived in the part of Czechoslovak Silesia occupied by Poland in the autumn of 1938. After passing through several German ghettos and camps, he arrived in Klettendorf, a camp near Breslau where prisoners were building a highway. In the summer of 1944, a transport of Jewish Dutch workers arrived. They

92 The marriage ended in divorce in the mid-1950s; interview with Jan Burka, *L'Isle sur la Sorgue*, December 2004 and January 2005; Astra Burka, director, *Skate to Survive* (Omni Television, 2007).

93 Interview with Kitty Nijstad-Kok-de Wijze, Lochem, May 4, 2001; interview with Anny Wafelman Morpurgo.

94 The only other group that was not geographically defined was the Czech Jewish spouses from intermarriages who arrived in the winter of 1945.

had been working for Philips in a factory located inside the Vught concentration camp. For a long time the Philips management successfully protected their Jewish workers from deportation.⁹⁵ Eventually, however, the Philips Jews were deported to Westerbork and from there to Auschwitz. But even then Philips succeeded to shield its workers from selection; they were distributed to several labor camps, one of which was Klettendorf, where Müller witnessed their arrival:

One day there arrived a huge transport of Dutch Jews....They were really poor devils [*chudáci*], most of them intelligentsia, and they were not accustomed at all to physical labor....I remember that they were so hungry, poor devils, that they went behind the kitchen where the rotten scraps were thrown out, and the Dutch prisoners went there to search for food.⁹⁶

Müller’s description of the Dutch newcomers is surprising, because the Philips Jews were very much working class, not intelligentsia. This mistaking workers for intelligentsia was a result of the Dutch Jews’ behavior. They seemed unfit for labor; the newcomers suffered greatly from hunger, so much so that they ate food others were not willing to touch. They were the “poor devils” of the camp. The point here is not whether Dutch Jews in general were able to conduct physical work but rather that in Klettendorf the Dutch Jewish workers came across as impractical intellectuals.

Pre-war Dutch Jewry was socially heterogeneous, spanning from diamond cutters and orange sellers to university professors and journalists. But this class diversity (which was possibly more evenly distributed than elsewhere in Europe) and class in general were not factors in the adaptation of the Dutch to the world of the camps. Statements similar to the one above appear in many testimonies, irrespective of the class background of the Dutch prisoners.

According to the late Robert Kuwałek, the Dutch Jews in Majdanek kept close together, stressed their Jewish identity, were religious, and had very little contact with other prisoners.⁹⁷ The Slovak Jew Josef Neumann, who was deported to Auschwitz in the spring of 1942, testified

95 See Klein and van de Kamp, *Het Philips-Kommando*.

96 Interview by Lukáš Příbyl with Thea and Erich Müller, April 10 and May 4, 1998. My thanks to Lukáš Příbyl.

97 Email from Robert Kuwałek, Majdanek State Museum, to the author, December 14, 2001.

at the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, and told of the two-and-a-half years he spent in Auschwitz-Birkenau, assigned to the corpse-collecting squad. Every morning his group came to collect the dead bodies of new arrivals who had committed suicide the night before by throwing themselves on the electric fences.⁹⁸ He said that the number of dead from the Dutch transports was three times higher than the average.⁹⁹

Nira Schnurmann's 1957 questionnaire offers a perceptive observation about the Dutch Jews, while drawing our attention to salient issues about survivor testimonies and the boundaries of the narratable. Born as Lotte Wald, a German Jewish Zionist from Bochum, Nira Schnurmann later related her wartime experience for the Committee for Collecting Documentation on the Pioneer Underground in Holland.¹⁰⁰ The Vereeniging tot Vakopleiding van Palestina Pioniers (Association for Training Palestine Pioneers) was a Zionist agricultural training youth organization most of whose members during this time were German-Jewish emigrants who had connections to the resistance, in particular to Joop Westerweel's group.¹⁰¹ Of the many Palestine Pioniers who went into hiding, some were captured and deported to Auschwitz or Theresienstadt.¹⁰² Others succeeded in escaping to Spain via Belgium and France.¹⁰³ In 1939, when she was twenty-three years old, Lotte Wald emigrated to the Netherlands to work on farms, thus training for agricultural work in Palestine. Deported in December 1942, she survived two-and-a-half years in Westerbork, in Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was on the block for medical experiments, and in Bergen-Belsen. She ended her description of her camp incarceration

98 On suicide in concentration camps, see Christian Goeschel, "Suicide in Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933–9" *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 45, no. 3 (July 2010), pp. 628–648.

99 Hermann Langbein, *Der Auschwitz-Prozeß: Eine Dokumentation*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 1995), pp. 115f. See also Neumann's testimony at <http://www.auschwitz-prozess.de/index.php?show=Neumann-Josef> (accessed on April 1, 2014).

100 Testimony of Nira Schnurmann, YVA, O.33/913/103.

101 See Mirjam Pinkhof, ed., *De jeugdaliyah van het Paviljoen Loosdrechtsche Rade: 1939–1945* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998); Sytske de Jong, *De Westerweelgroep* (M.A. thesis, University of Groningen, 2001).

102 Questionnaire of Eva Fränkl, YVA, O33/913; also Fränkl to the author, phone interview, May 2001.

103 Shaul Sagiv, "In ungleichem Kampf:" *Christlich-jüdische Rettungsaktion der Westerweel-Gruppe. Von Köln nach Holland durch Westerbork über Frankreich und Spanien nach Israel 1924–1947* (Constance: Hartung Gorre, 2001).

with an abrupt postscript: “It is noteworthy that the Dutch in general could not hold their ground, possibly because they were too soft and egocentric, and rapidly threw in the towel.”¹⁰⁴ Her declaration manifests a bluntness typical of the early testimonies, which included topics that would later be seen as inappropriate or became simply unnarratable.¹⁰⁵

Fifty years later, in a memoir written for her daughters (pointedly named *Guarded Memories*), Nira stressed the multi-ethnic solidarity and respect among the prisoners in Auschwitz. Here she was more subtle, and we have to look out for seemingly off-handed remarks that might otherwise go unnoticed. For example, after a longer passage outlining the mutual assistance among fellow prisoners, Schnurmann ended with: “obviously, there were also exceptions.”¹⁰⁶ Earlier on, when talking about her boss in the farm where she worked and that was closed following the German occupation, she remarked that he had failed in his efforts to flee to England with his family, and they were deported and died “like most Dutch Jews in the camps.”¹⁰⁷ She did not elaborate further as to what these exceptions were, nor did she really explain that her statement about the majority of the dead Dutch Jews actually relates to the exceptionally high mortality of Dutch Jews in the camps. Only an interested eye informed by background research could catch the importance of these remarks, which would probably be lost on the average reader.

It is particularly interesting that the behavior and the mortality of Dutch Gentiles in the concentration camps followed the very same pattern of the Dutch Jews. Neuengamme was the destination for many non-Jewish Dutch prisoners, most of them men.¹⁰⁸ Some 5,500 Dutch were incarcerated there, and the prisoners in the camp and its satellites

104 Testimony of Nira Schnurmann, YVA, O.33/913/103.

105 Na’ama Shik, “Infinite Loneliness: Some Aspects Concerning the Lives of Jewish Women in the Auschwitz Camps According to the Corpus of Testimonies and Autobiographies: 1945–1948,” in Doris Bergen, ed., *Lessons and Legacies: vol. 8, From Generation to Generation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), pp. 125–156; for a more general discussion see Ulrike Jureit, *Erinnerungsmuster: Zur Methodik lebensgeschichtlicher Interviews mit Überlebenden der Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslager* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 1999).

106 Nira Schnurmann, *Guarded Memories: The Story of Nira Schnurmann* (Hebrew) (Kibbutz Dalia, 2006), p. 117. Thanks to Erika and Wolfgang Hering, Bochum, for sending me a copy of the memoir, and to Merav Amir, Belfast, for help with the translation.

107 Schnurmann, *Guarded Memories*, p. 96.

108 Judith Schuyf, ed., *Nederlanders in Neuengamme: De ervaringen van ruim 5500*

had to work in the construction industry, producing bricks and building bunkers. The conditions, particularly in the satellite camps, were appalling.¹⁰⁹ However, no other group had such a high mortality as the Dutch, even among the prisoners who were treated the worst, such as the male Polish Jews or Soviet POWs. Only about 20 percent of the Dutch survived; they also died more quickly than other prisoners.¹¹⁰

Scholars who study the inmates' life and survival in Neuengamme usually concentrate on the gender discrepancy, because most of the women prisoners survived.¹¹¹ Those who address the high Dutch mortality explain it with reference to their alleged religious background, their class — white-collar jobs and coming from a better economic living standard back home — or crueler treatment in the camp.¹¹² However, these claims apply either to only a fraction of the Dutch prisoners, or do not hold up in a comparative context, as many of the Dutch prisoners came from the working classes or were farmers.¹¹³ Most of the Czech prisoners in Neuengamme were used to a good standard of living and had diverse educational backgrounds.¹¹⁴ By April 1945, 90 percent of them were still alive.¹¹⁵ The Gentile Dutch prisoners in Neuengamme had a very similar mortality rate to the Dutch Jews, but we can only discern this similarity when we examine their mortality in a comparative framework.

Nederlanders in een Duits concentratiekamp 1940–1945 (Zaltbommel: Aprilis, 2005).

- 109 For an insightful analysis of the conditions at Neuengamme, see Marc Buggeln, *Arbeit und Gewalt: Das Aussenlagersystem des KZ Neuengamme* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009).
- 110 Sietse Geertsema, “Omgekomenen en overlevenden,” in *Nederlanders in Neuengamme*; Geertsema, “Statistiek van de weg naar vernietiging,” in Schuyf, *Nederlanders*.
- 111 Hans Ellger, *Zwangsarbeit und weibliche Überlebensstrategien* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007).
- 112 Buggeln, *Arbeit und Gewalt*.
- 113 One of the largest transports from the Netherlands to Neuengamme consisted of 602 men from the village of Putten, arrested in a raid in 1944; forty-nine of them returned. See Madelon de Keizer, *Razzia in Putten: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht in einem niederländischem Dorf* (Cologne: Dittrich, 2001).
- 114 Anna Hájková, “Život po Neuengamme: Zapomenutý koncentrační tábor v Hamburku a Svaz bojovníků za svobodu 1945–2000,” *Dějiny a současnost*, 3 (2005), pp. 14–17.
- 115 Many of the Czech prisoners died on the Cap Arcona (the Dutch died before April 1945); information from the Neuengamme Memorial prisoners' database was obtained thanks to Christian Römmer.

The “second Dutch paradox” describes the fact that remarkably few Dutch Jews survived the deportation. It is almost impossible to draw quantitative conclusions for most of the camps, as we lack data on which to base an analysis. For Theresienstadt, however, a quantitative analysis can be carried out thanks to the Theresienstadt prisoners’ database. Thus, I was able to examine the survival rates among young Czech, native Dutch, and German Dutch male prisoners. I compared the survival of young men between eighteen and thirty who were deported in the autumn of 1944 with the two first all-male transports (Ek and El).¹¹⁶ To keep the analysis manageable, I took a sample of 25 percent of the Dutch deportees.¹¹⁷ The people in the sample had to survive for a relatively short period in the labor camps’ system until liberation: between four (if sent from Auschwitz to Upper Silesia, such as Gleiwitz) and nine months (if sent to the heart of the Reich, such as Kaufering).

The difference is significant, especially when we take into consideration the relatively brief time the victims had to endure in the camps and the homogeneous conditions they experienced.¹¹⁸

Mortality Among the Theresienstadt Prisoners Deported to Auschwitz

	Total deportees	Survivors total	Survivors percentage
Czech Jews	558	217	38.9%
Sample deportees from the Netherlands	45	19	42.2%
Native Dutch in the sample	24	9	37.5%
German Dutch in the sample	21	10	47.7%

116 I compared male survival only, because an indeterminate number of women were pregnant or accompanied by children.

117 I selected each fourth name from the alphabetic list of all the Dutch deportees who were listed on Ek and El in this age range in order not to skew the sample alphabetically. For the Czech deportees I could work with total numbers, thanks to the inmates’ database, offering reliable data on all Czech Holocaust victims.

118 All the Terezín arrivals were treated identically in Auschwitz, and the “able-bodied” were sent in the same transports, irrespective of whether they were originally Dutch, Czech, or German.

The survival rate was 37.5 percent for native Dutch Jews; 38.9 percent for Czech Jews; and 47.4 percent for the German Dutch.¹¹⁹ With 85 percent confidence level, the mean survival rate of the native Dutch is lower than that of the German Dutch.¹²⁰ The difference between the emigrants and native Dutch is clear. It is also quite interesting that the Czech Jews have a lower survival rate than the German emigrants. Perhaps it is related to the duration of their stay in Theresienstadt: most Czech Jews arrived in Theresienstadt in the course of 1942, whereas most of the Dutch transports arrived two years later.

Conclusion

The Dutch Jews in the concentration camps acted similarly to the Dutch Jews in Theresienstadt: distancing themselves from others; retreating into isolation; manifesting an inability or unwillingness to work; becoming withdrawn, either within a group, or through suicide. The overall behavior of Dutch Jews was that of a snail retreating into its shell. And there were no differences in this behavior stemming from previous class background. The native Dutch in Theresienstadt, the majority of whom were middle- and upper-middle class, the Gentile Putten farmers, and the Dutch in Klettendorf, who belonged to the working class, all acted in the same way. In this case the class characteristic, which is used so widely in historical analysis, was simply irrelevant. This conduct, distinct to both Jewish and Gentile Dutch deportees in the camps, implies a specific Dutch factor.

In some of the most fruitful scholarship on prisoner society in the concentration camps, there is a focus on how this “extreme case of social life” (Sunderland) relates to the normal society outside. The sociologist and survivor Paul Neurath, the literature scholar Terrence des Pres, and the psychiatrist Shamaï Davidson demonstrated that the prisoner society was indeed a society with stringent rules.¹²¹ They also

119 Thanks to Victor Laurentius from the Nederlandse Rode Kruis, The Hague.

120 One-tailed t-test with confidence level of 85 percent was applied to data, and the hypothesis “mean survival rate of the native Dutch is lower than the mean of the German Dutch” has not been rejected. Thanks to Nevena Francetić and Stephan Sturm for help with formulating the confidence level and taking the aspect of binomial distribution into their capable hands.

121 Paul Martin Neurath, *The Society of Terror: Inside the Dachau and Buchenwald Concentration Camps* (Boulder and London: Paradigm, 2005); Terrence des Pres,

pointed to the emergence of social structures, prisoners forging bonds, and living, and surviving, in small groups. However, while these authors sometimes noted the ethnic and cultural differences among the prisoners, they did not study them systematically.

In his classic *Asylums*, the sociologist Erving Goffman developed a model of behavior in what he termed the “total institutions,” tightly regulated establishments that keep their inhabitants, sometimes involuntarily, under a restrictive regime.¹²² Total institutions can be monasteries, mental asylums, prisons, or concentration camps. He differentiated between four modes of prisoners’ adaptation: regression (retreat into the self); resistance (actively fighting the oppressor); colonization (finding one’s way in the total institution); and conversion (adopting the view of the guards). The first, regressive, mode, “situational withdrawal,” describes individuals who perceive matters only closely around them, and also in a perspective not shared by other prisoners. The behavior of the Dutch Jews in the camps exactly fits the description of regression: their withdrawal, passivity, and different perception from the community are precisely described by this mode.

Goffman also suggested that prisoners bring with them into the total institution their “presenting culture,” the way they live in “normal society.” Goffman’s “presenting culture” is better known as what Pierre Bourdieu described as “habitus”: the sum total of all a person’s experience; traits related to class and culture; the environment in which they grew up, their taste, humor, education, and so on. Habitus is a social framework through which we make sense of and act, particularly in a new setting. Bourdieu is best known for his application of habitus in his studies of French society, especially with regard to the distinctions in taste that turn people into who they are, and as they are seen socially.¹²³

The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Shamaï Davidson, “Group Formation and Human Reciprocity in the Nazi Concentration Camps,” *Holding on to Humanity: The Message of Holocaust Survivors: The Shamaï Davidson Papers* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1992), pp. 121–142. See also Kim Wünschmann, “The ‘Scientification’ of the Concentration Camp: Early Theories of Terror and Their Reception by American Academia,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 58 (2013), pp. 111–126.

122 Goffman, “On the Characteristics of Total Institutions,” in idem, *Asylums*, pp. 1–124.

123 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); idem, *The Logic of Practice*.

Bourdieu himself addressed the interconnection of ethnicity and habitus only briefly.¹²⁴

Perhaps because habitus is a concept used in sociology, which is sometimes viewed as a contemporaneous discipline, it has not been used often by Holocaust historians. However, the sociologist Michael Pollak did apply this concept in his study of German, Austrian, and French women survivors of Auschwitz.¹²⁵ Pollak showed how habitus influenced how these women survived their imprisonment and how it structured their narratives: Nira Schnurmann's testimony, which grew more general and socially acceptable over time, is an example of this phenomenon.

Applying the concept of habitus to the victims' society leads us to key insights. The historical and cultural background of the deportees from the Netherlands was crucial in their adaptation to the enforced community. The society from which the Dutch Jews and their Gentile counterparts came was relatively isolated, both historically and due to the pillarization; people "minded their own business" and stayed within their group rather than mingle with strangers. This specific historical context created a distinct habitus that entailed regressive adaptation to unknown, enemy surroundings. The high mortality among the Dutch was one of the most extreme consequences of the regressive adaptation — so telling because it was so conspicuous. In contrast, the German Dutch had lived in two cultures; they had already been uprooted, and settling down in the Netherlands had been an experience in adaptation to a new environment. Thus, the adjustment of the German Dutch to Theresienstadt largely corresponded with the overall patterns. It is very probable that their experience made them more skilled in managing life in strange conditions.¹²⁶ This skill would also explain their high survival rates in the camps, better than those of the veteran Czech inmates.

It would be advantageous if future scholarship were to examine

124 Bourdieu, "Social Space and the Genesis of Classes," in Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 229–251. Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov address this gap in "Ethnicity as Cognition," *Theory and Society*, 33:1 (2004), pp. 31–64.

125 Pollak, *Die Grenzen des Sargbaren*; see also Suderland, *Inside Concentration Camps*.

126 Bob Moore indicates agreement with this interpretation, *Victims and Survivors*, p. 215.

what percentage of the overall numbers of Dutch survivors were German (and other) emigrants, and how this number relates to their proportion among the Jews in the Netherlands.¹²⁷ Recent Dutch scholarship has addressed the survival chances of the 28,000 Jews in the Netherlands who went into hiding; unfortunately, the results concerning the Jewish emigrants were presented inaccurately.¹²⁸ Therefore it would be worthwhile to reexamine the results more carefully.

The concentration camps and ghettos constituted a society that functioned according to rules not dissimilar to the normal, outside world. However, in contrast to the “normal” world, the world of the camps held different consequences: death became an everyday possibility. Since everyone was deported — toddlers, housewives, workers, alcoholics, businessmen — the camp society reflected all facets of human society. But even more, the inmate society took in all these people, with their various class, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and created its own new rules. Class was immensely important in the camps, but it was a new kind of class; the prisoners’ social position was not linked to their former class. Rather, ethnicity became crucial. The inmates made sense of others by using stereotypes that corresponded in the most part with one’s real or assumed origin. Teresienstadt did not produce a feeling of common Jewishness. *Habitus* was the element that determined the people’s reactions to the new environment and, thus, was an important factor in the adaptation to the camps. It is *habitus* that reminds us that although all people sent to Teresienstadt came there because they were marked as Jewish, the way they lived and tried to survive shows how much they shared with places and people they had considered home.

127 See also Blom, “Persecution.”

128 Croes, “Holocaust,” p. 484. Croes examined the survival chances of the Dutch, German, and “other foreign Jews” who went into hiding (unfortunately, the author kept the latter two groups separate, which historically does not make sense). He indicates that the “other foreign” Jews were the most successful group, and that the German Jews were also disproportionately successful in Amsterdam but not in the countryside. His explanation — namely, that the German Jews were protected by the German Jews in the Jewish Council and therefore were more successful in going into hiding and surviving there — does not hold: the impact of the German Jews within the Jewish Council was weak, and most German emigrants had little contact with it. However, it would be important to examine the overall number of those German Jews who went into hiding in the capital versus the countryside. It is also worth investigating whether the foreign Jews, who were often of urban background, went into hiding successfully in cities.



Malka Pollaczek
Weinmann
with relatives,
Netherlands,
September 1945
From Left:
Malka Pollaczek
Weinmann; Peter
Wieselmann (child);
Roe Wieselmann-
Wijnberg, personal
papers Stefan
White and Peter
Wieselmann.

Renate
van Hinte
Kamp,
1951,
expecting
her first-
born,
personal
papers Ed
van Hinte.



