



Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

World War II and its aftermath in the Netherlands

Edited by
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, The Netherlands
Department of Victims and Remembrance WWII

In cooperation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
and Ministry of Finance

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1 Introduction

1.1

World War II as a permanent historical point of reference

The course of history defies predetermination. Although events occur before our eyes, in our presence, they have their own dynamic. All we can do is consider them in retrospect – often with interest, sometimes in amazement, and sadly also frequently with horror.

Considering past events raises questions. Did events have to progress the way that they did, or could things have turned out differently? In such questions the dynamics of the past are not up for discussion, but whether those who played a part were free to act is a matter of debate. Reflecting on this issue inevitably leads to the question of whether we can use past events to guide our actions in any way in the present. Second World War was without doubt one of the most momentous events in world history. From a perspective of analysis and reflection, this period offers virtually limitless possibilities for continual contemplation – not only to improve our knowledge of the past, but also to continue to place the present in its historical context. In the Netherlands, reflection on World War II is still very active and is certainly not limited to historians. Time and again, society places a new emphasis on the discussion and analysis of this period in history. Time and again, less well known aspects are brought to light, and the interpretation of events and their consequences changes.

1.2

A new stage of commemoration, remembrance, research and reflection

In our time, this approach to World War II is entering a new stage in which three developments in particular will play a major role in determining how we handle the legacy of World War II.

Firstly, there is the fact that over the coming years we will lose the remaining eyewitnesses from the years of war and occupation. For a long time, their personal stories were the vehicles for the stories about the Second World War, providing a major source of inspiration and knowledge for new generations. It will not be long before the stories available to us will be limited to a selection of film and sound recordings.

Of course, other (material) sources relating to this period will still be available – which brings us to the second development. This development is very relevant in terms of

our approach to the Second World War, both now and especially in the future. Although much valuable material has been preserved, materials from the 1940s and 50s are particularly fragile and can easily be lost if they are not properly handled. Moreover, these materials are scattered far and wide and are often in the hands of numerous small private institutions and associations with limited financial means. There is a distinct possibility that these materials will ultimately drop out of sight or that they will not be properly preserved. Consequently, there is an increasing need to take steps to preserve the materials and to list and register the locations where they are stored.

The opportunities offered by the ‘digital age’ also significantly affect the way in which we handle the legacy of the Second World War. Digital storage formats offer ways to preserve material, to provide contextual information and to make the material accessible to the public at large. The materials (and therefore information) can also be linked using digital methods, e.g. photos can be added to stories, which can then be linked to documents, archives, diaries, etc.

The IT possibilities of the 21st century can bring the stories of the Second World War closer to the general public. Making good use of these possibilities will provide information about the Second World War and ensure that the period is remembered in a manner that is both modern and responsible. Future generations must be able to view the heritage of the Second World War in a language, context and format that is relevant to their experiences and the media they use.

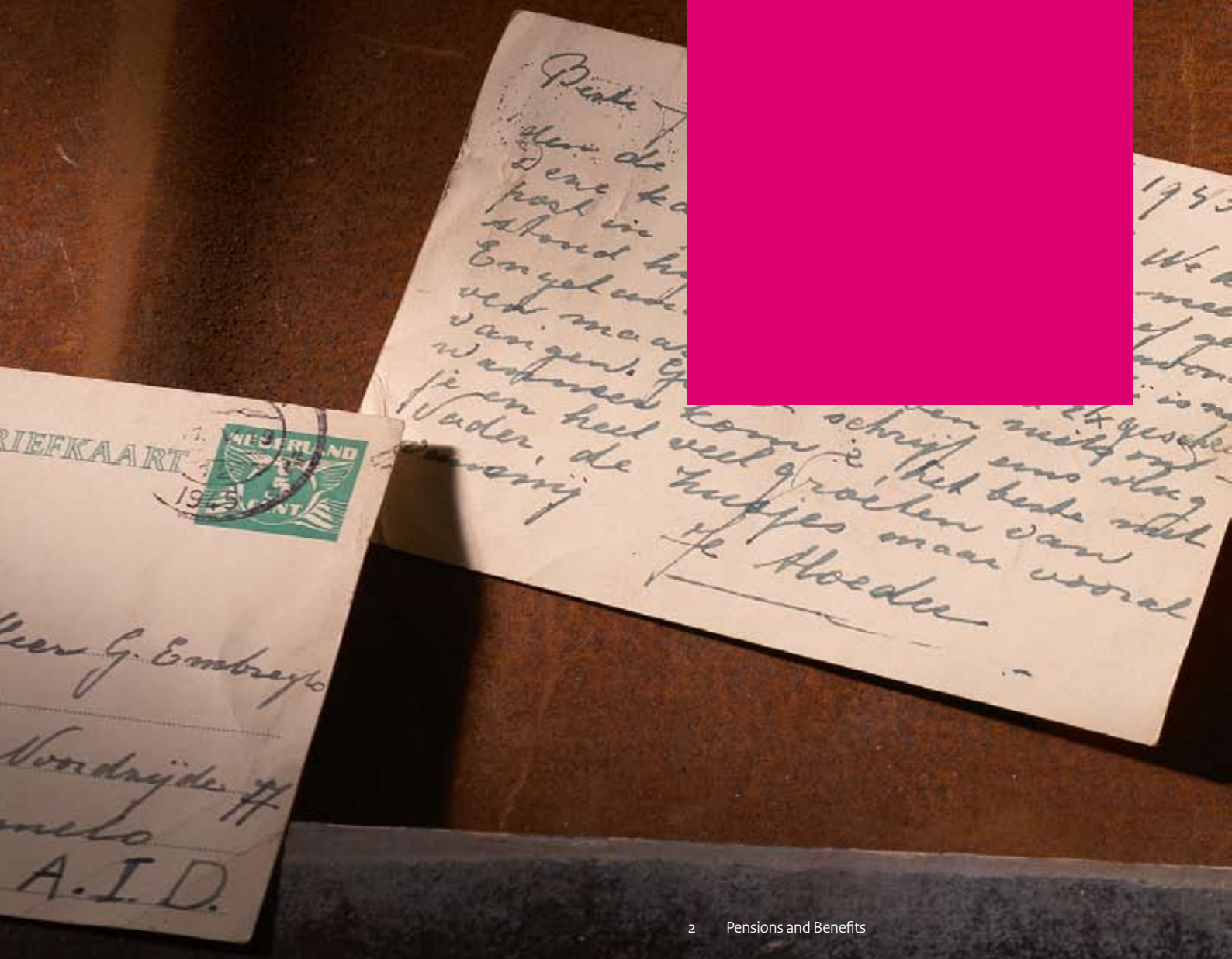
1.3

Aim of the brochure

This brochure provides an overview of all the activities currently taking place in the Netherlands in the context of WWII and its aftermath. It all started with the question of how Dutch society could take care of people dealing with consequences from the events that took place during WWII. That was followed by the issue of how to ensure that the events would never be forgotten and to pass on their significance to new generations in lasting ways. New developments kept emerging and new aspects were added in response to research findings, giving rise to a focus on restitution and looted art. We now face the question of how the story can be told even after the generation that experienced it first-hand is no longer with us.

The brochure offers a general overview of what is happening in the Netherlands. Time and again, it has proven vitally important to learn from other countries and understand each other’s best practices. Cooperation between countries is also becoming increasingly important - and cooperation starts with information and knowledge.

2 Pensions and benefits



In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for providing assistance to the victims of the Second World War. Out of respect for and solidarity with those who suffered during those years, the Dutch government introduced special legislation after the war to assist Holocaust survivors and all who were forced to endure the ordeal of the German and Japanese occupations and who suffered physical injury or psychological damage as a result. The government provides benefits, pensions and a range of facilities and services in the hope of helping these people achieve the standard of living they might have expected to enjoy in normal circumstances.

The Netherlands also has a comprehensive infrastructure of organisations, regulations, provisions and services in the fields of welfare and public health. Several private agencies specialise in assisting war victims, in particular by providing services such as psychotherapy and social work, and by helping them further their interests as a group. The government plays a role in all these activities by subsidising and facilitating initiatives and by liaising with agencies working in these fields.

2.1

Pensions and benefits

The schemes for war victims and their families were set up to help people who sustained physical injury or psychological damage in the war. They provide special pensions or other payments so that victims can have a quality of life similar to that which they enjoyed before the war, within reasonable limits. Generally speaking, they have to have had Dutch nationality during the war. People who now live elsewhere and have taken a different nationality are not excluded from the schemes for that reason alone; this aspect is explained further below.

The schemes also provide coverage for medical expenses and psychotherapy, and some victims can also obtain compensation to help cover the costs of things like domestic help.

The special pension works along the same lines as a military pension. The amount a person receives depends on the degree of disability they have suffered. Eligible parties are treated as if they were in government service during the war.

The other benefit schemes are based on the concept of special solidarity: Dutch society's obligation to help those in need. The amount paid depends on previous income and family circumstances.

People born after the war who have suffered because of the harm done to their parents or other relatives can claim assistance for the costs of psychological counselling under a special temporary scheme.

In assessing whether people are eligible for benefits, it is assumed that their disability was caused by the war unless it is clear that other circumstances were responsible. This principle is not applied in all cases when establishing whether a person qualifies for a special pension.

The eligibility criteria for the special pensions and benefit

schemes allow for a certain degree of flexibility so that they can be applied to people who do not strictly fall within the categories described in the legislation. To exclude them from the schemes would be too harsh, given what they went through in the war. To ensure the schemes are reasonable and fair, they too can qualify for a pension or for benefits. The flexibility in the benefits scheme for civilian war victims applies only to those who do not strictly meet the criteria for nationality and place of residence.

Anyone who behaved dishonourably during the war, acting against the national interests – siding with the occupying forces, for example, or betraying a fellow countryman – is not eligible for a special pension or any other benefit.

The complicated system of legislation, regulations, exemptions and extra provisions meant that a body was needed to oversee the entire process and provide recommendations. The Pensions and Benefits Council was set up to do just that.

The Council assesses applications, deciding whether someone is eligible and for what amount. It also advises potential eligible parties as to which scheme they should apply for. For example, a person might have been both a seaman and a prisoner in an Indonesian prison camp, and have suffered injury in connection with both. The Council helps people to apply for the scheme in which they have the best chance of success.

At the moment, approximately 36,000 individuals receive a financial supplement based on the Dutch Acts for War Victims. This figure has declined over time; the Pension and Benefit Board (PUR) consequently has less work and is downsizing its operations. This development will continue. In 2011, all the work that the PUR carries out will be administered by the Social Insurance Bank (Sociale Verzekeringsbank: SVB). The work at the SVB will be carried out by former employees of the PUR at a special department that administers pensions and benefits based on the Acts for War Victims.

2.2

Benefits for victims of persecution

These benefits are available to people who were persecuted during World War II because of their race, religion, beliefs or sexual preference, and to the relatives of victims of persecution who died. Jews and gypsies were two of the groups that suffered persecution in the Netherlands. In the Dutch East Indies people were persecuted for their Dutch nationality or origins; such people living in the Dutch East Indies were regarded as being pro-European, and were persecuted for that reason.

To qualify for benefits, these people must also suffer from some illness or disability that prevents them from earning an income independently. Applicants do not have to live in the Netherlands or hold Dutch nationality when they apply.

To be able to receive benefits or other assistance under this scheme, applicants must be acknowledged as victims of persecution. This basically means meeting the conditions set out in the relevant legislation (the Victims of Persecution 1940 – 1945 Benefits Act). However, an application for acknowledgement as a victim of persecution does not have to be submitted at the same time as an application for benefits. Some victims of war persecution ask to be acknowledged as such without applying for benefits, either for emotional reasons or for practical reasons, anticipating possible future developments. After all, they might later develop an illness or disability as a result of their experience in the war and would no longer need to apply for acknowledgement at that time. This prior acknowledgement could be crucial, as it might be more difficult by that time to prove their status in relation to the war.

Not everyone belonging to one of the groups listed above will automatically qualify for benefits. Benefits of this type are intended for people who:

- Were deprived of their liberty in permanently guarded camps, prisons or other places;
- Had themselves sterilised to avoid transport or deportation to such camps;
- Went into hiding to avoid transport or deportation to such camps.

People who escaped the Arbeitseinsatz and were imprisoned as a result can also claim benefits. This legislation does not, however, apply to people who went into hiding for this reason. These people are covered by the benefits scheme for civilian war victims.

The benefits scheme for the victims of persecution also covers the families (widows, widowers and children who were minors during the war) of those who died as a result of

persecution or imprisonment. The families of people who were receiving benefits under this scheme when they died are also eligible.

Applicants must satisfy a number of conditions with regard to place of residence and nationality. Apart from people who held Dutch nationality during the war, another three categories are eligible. They are people who:

- Either lived continuously on Dutch territory during the war, with the aim of becoming Dutch nationals;
- Or lived in the Dutch East Indies and settled in the Netherlands before 1 April 1964;
- Or did not hold Dutch nationality during the war, and did not live on Dutch territory, but settled in the Netherlands before 15 August 1955 and became Dutch nationals.

People who believe they are eligible for assistance under this scheme but who do not strictly meet all the criteria may nevertheless apply. Some flexibility has been introduced so that the rules can be applied reasonably and fairly. For example, people who were not imprisoned but were severely assaulted, people who witnessed assault or murder, and people whose parents did not return from imprisonment may also qualify. Some leeway is also possible in cases where applicants do not fulfil the requirements for place of residence and nationality.

2.3

Special pension for people involved in the resistance against the Germans

A number of categories of people are eligible for a pension under this scheme. All will have become disabled or have suffered psychological damage as a result of participating in the resistance against the German occupation force. They might have been the victims of e.g. assault or imprisonment. This scheme is not intended for members of the armed forces injured when the Germans invaded. People who were disabled as a result of participating in acts of resistance against the occupying Japanese forces in the Dutch East Indies are covered by a separate scheme (see below).

Claimants must also have had the Dutch nationality during the war, although they do not have to be Dutch nationals or live in the Netherlands when they actually apply for a pension.

The following groups are eligible for this special pension:

- People who took part in the resistance, either actively (e.g. by sabotaging enemy actions) or passively, or by

- helping others to go into hiding or flee;
- People who were members of the Forces of the Interior: as the Allies approached in 1944, resistance groups stepped up their activities. In September 1944 the Dutch government established a coordinating entity known as the Forces of the Interior, which included all recognised resistance movements;
- People who were members of the resistance in other occupied European countries;
- Hostages;
- Victims of reprisals for pre-war anti-Nazi activities;
- Victims of other reprisals;
- Victims of actions by the occupying forces in response to resistance by others;
- People who attempted to escape to England to pass on reports to Queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch government, known as Engelandvaarders, who made or attempted to make a personal contribution to the war effort.

The families of these people can also qualify for a special pension if their relative died during resistance activities and would have been eligible for a special pension, or was receiving a special pension at the time of death. Children born after the war are not eligible, although they can claim financial assistance for psychotherapy if they are suffering as a result of the resistance activities that their parents or relatives were involved in (see 'Temporary financial assistance for psychotherapy').

The scheme can be applied flexibly to people who do not strictly belong to one of the defined categories, but whose involvement in the resistance has left them in such circumstances that excluding them from the scheme would be too harsh.

2.4

Special pensions for people involved in the resistance in the Dutch East Indies

People suffering from disability resulting from their resistance to Japanese oppression in the former Dutch East Indies qualify for a pension under this scheme. To be eligible, they must have been involved in non-military resistance activities after the capitulation in March 1942, with the aim of undermining the military or ideological aims of the occupying forces. This does not include incidental or small-scale activities or actions carried out for personal gain.

The scheme only applies to people who hold Dutch nationality. However, it is flexible and allows for exceptions

to be made in the case of certain people who do not strictly meet the criteria.

Pensions are available to two other groups of people:

- Members of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army who attempted, in groups, to thwart the Japanese occupying forces after capitulation;
- People who carried out acts of sabotage in a non-military capacity in the period between the first Japanese offensive against the Philippines (8 December 1941) and the capitulation of the Dutch East Indies (8 March 1942), including such acts against oil installations, strategic targets, and supplies, and who were assaulted or imprisoned as a result.

The families of Dutch nationals killed in these circumstances can apply for a pension under this scheme. They will also be eligible if their relative died while receiving a pension, or if the relative would have been eligible for a pension at the time of their death.

2.5

Special pension for seamen

Dutch seamen on board ocean-going vessels during the war who have become unfit for work as a result can claim a special pension.

Besides holding Dutch nationality, they must also meet a number of other criteria:

- They must have been ordered to continue sailing or have become a victim of the war at sea before this order was issued;
- Merchant seamen have to have been at sea in the period between 1 September 1939 (the day Germany invaded Poland) and 2 March 1946;
- Seamen on fishing vessels have to have been at sea in the period between 1 September 1939 and 15 December 1945;
- Their vessel has to have been a merchant or fishing vessel from the Netherlands or the former overseas territories; sailors on naval vessels and on coastal vessels that sailed from ports in areas occupied by the Germans or Japanese are not covered by this scheme.

The families of seamen who died during this period or at a later date, while receiving a special pension, or who would have been eligible for a special pension, may also claim pension benefits.

The rules may be applied flexibly, for instance to people who did not hold Dutch nationality but served on Dutch ships for almost their entire career and worked for the Dutch cause during the war.

2.6

Benefits for civilian war victims

Some Dutch people now suffer permanent disability as a result of physical injury or psychological damage incurred during the Second World War. Some were shot, suffered reprisals at the hands of the enemy, were physically assaulted, made to do forced labour, imprisoned, forced into hiding, or witnessed reprisals or assaults against other people. Generally speaking, they will qualify for benefits if their condition has led to a loss of income.

This scheme also covers victims of the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies and the Indonesian revolution (from 15 August 1945 to 27 December 1949), during which Dutch people's lives were in great danger, as well as people who were injured after the war by unexploded bombs, unless they were injured as a result of their own negligence.

Members of the armed forces may only claim a pension under this scheme if they do not qualify for a scheme intended specifically for the armed forces.

The families of civilians who died as a result of the war, or who were receiving benefits under this scheme at the time of their death, are also eligible.

2.7

General war injuries scheme for Indonesia

This scheme covers Dutch people who were civilians in the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia) during and after the war and who sustained physical injury or psychological damage during the Japanese occupation or the riots that followed liberation. War injuries also include illness or invalidity caused by internment, forced labour or captivity. This scheme differs from the previous two in that it covers a longer period – from 7 December 1941 to 13 January 1954. However, anyone who served in the Royal Netherlands Indies Army as a conscript or reserve must have done so before 15 August 1945.

The general war injuries scheme for Indonesia also covers the families of people who died as a result of the fighting in the Dutch East Indies or Indonesia, or were already receiving benefits when they died.

2.8

Schemes for military war victims

Members of the Dutch armed forces who became disabled during and as a result of military service are eligible for a military pension, as are their families.

A number of these schemes also recognise the importance of war veterans. In recent years, the Ministry of Defence has introduced a number of financial schemes, such as a one-off payment in place of a pension for conscripts who served for five years or longer and a scheme to compensate prisoners of war for lost pay between 1943 and 1945.

Members of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army do not qualify for this scheme. They are covered by schemes mentioned above, such as benefits for victims of persecution and the general war injuries scheme for Indonesia.

2.9

Temporary financial assistance for psychotherapy

People born after the Second World War who have psychological problems because their parents or other carers were war victims or victims of persecution can claim financial assistance for psychotherapy. Such assistance is subject to a number of conditions:

- The costs of treatment must not be covered by another medical expenses scheme;
- The applicant must live in the Netherlands;
- The psychological problems must in all likelihood be related to the impact that the experiences of the parents or other carers during the war had on the applicant's upbringing. Assistance is available for up to ninety sessions; if treatment needs to continue after that point, the recipient may apply again.

2.10

Representation, counselling and care services

Over the years, a number of organisations have been set up to provide help, care and advice for war victims.

The Jewish Social Work Foundation, established in 1948, has over the years also become active in several areas not solely

concerning Second World War victims, including general social work and group social work, child protection, care for the elderly, home help, volunteer work and community development. It draws up reports for Jewish, Roma and Sinti victims claiming benefits, and helps people with their applications.

The 1940-1945 Foundation was launched in 1944 for members of the resistance. The organisation helps all categories of war victims to come to terms with what happened to them during the war, assists with applications and appeals and draws up reports for people claiming benefits. The 1940-1945 Foundation also issues official confirmation of involvement in the resistance for people applying for a special pension.

The Pelita Foundation was set up to help victims of the war with Japan and the Indonesian revolution (Bersiap Period). Initially, it helped people with financial and social problems they experienced after their return to the Netherlands. Its current activities focus on general social work and on drawing up reports for civilian victims and victims of persecution in the former Dutch East Indies claiming special benefits.

Cogis was established in 2005, arising from a Dutch centre of expertise on the support of victims of the Second World War. Cogis fosters initiatives to enhance the skills, knowledge and well-being of mental health professionals and social workers supporting these war victims. It has broadened the scope of its expertise to include the effects of aggression and violence prevalent in modern society.

2.11

Special psychotherapy

There are two special institutions that provide psychotherapy for war victims: the Sinai Centre and Centre '45. Some independent psychotherapists also have special knowledge of and experience in this field.

The Sinai Centre is a psychiatric hospital offering in-patient general psychiatric and psychogeriatric care, day care and an outpatient clinic. It also has a department that cares for mentally handicapped people. The Sinai Centre is specialised in psychological trauma. The groups of people it helps include Jewish people, ex-resistance workers and victims of the war in the former Dutch East Indies.

Centre '45 was set up in Oegstgeest in 1973 to provide medical and psychological treatment for ex-resistance workers and victims of the Second World War. In principle, anyone applying for treatment at the centre must be officially acknowledged as a victim. In certain cases, their

partners and adult children may also be eligible for treatment. The centre mainly provides psychotherapy. It also offers various kinds of individual and group therapy for other groups of victims.

2.12

Independent psychotherapists

Some psychotherapists have extra knowledge of and experience with treating war victims. A number of them are highly specialised. Fellow psychotherapists will often benefit from their advice, for example during difficult phases in a patient's treatment. Some patients will have to be referred on to one of these specialists. More information on schemes for war victims is available at <http://www.pur.nl/engels/laws/laws.htm>

3 Restitution

The settlement of Dutch WW II
insurance assets

3.1

Robbery and restitution in the Netherlands

Robbery

During the Second World War, the Nazi occupying power in the Netherlands legally managed to get their hands of the possessions and the insured values of the Jewish population by means of a series of decrees. The First Liro Decree (148/1941) of 8 August 1941 left insurance policies untouched, as this decree primarily targeted bank assets, cash money and stocks and shares.

The Second Liro Decree (VO 58/1942) entered into force on 21 May 1942, requiring Jews to register all life insurance policies, annuities, pensions and property insurance policies with 'robber bank' Lippmann Rosenthal & Co (Liro) on Sarphatistraat in Amsterdam, a bank set up for the specific purpose of looting from Jews. They also had to surrender their policies. The insurance companies were obliged to register the insurance policies of Jewish clients and pay out expired policies and current annuities to Liro instead of to the insured parties themselves. Additionally, no legal transactions (e.g. surrender, loans based on security, change of beneficiary) were permitted to be carried out with regard to any Jewish insurance policy without permission from Liro. Insurance companies were also obliged to present their policyholders with a form on which they had to state whether they were Jewish or not, according to the definition of the occupying forces.

Decree VO 54/1943 entered into force on 11 June 1943. It stated that the life insurance policies that had been registered in conformance with the Second Liro Decree had to be terminated as of 20 June 1943. If the policy conditions of the insurance provided for surrender, the insurance company had to pay the surrender value to Liro. If the insurance contract did not provide for surrender, as in the case of annuities and pensions, then the insurance company had to pay three-quarters of the calculated premium reserve to Liro. Industrial insurance policies (life insurance policies with a low insured value of up to NLG 500) that were not reported by the policyholders were exempt from surrender.

In 1941 there were 140,000 Jews living in the Netherlands in a total population of 8.9 million.

Restitution

Post-World War II restitution regulations enacted in the Netherlands resulted in systematic restitution to Jewish policyholders. This systematic and careful process resulted in the identification of policies and their beneficiaries and heirs, and continued through the 1950s. By 1960, approximately 98% of the value of all the German-looted policies originally held by Holocaust victims was restored,

either by paying the insured value to beneficiaries or by continuing the policy in the hands of the rightful owners. Two percent of the value could not be paid out because no claimants came forward nor could be found. Under the Dutch Civil Code, unclaimed goods and property from an estate without known heirs go to the state. In 1954, the life insurance companies and the Dutch government entered into an agreement which allowed the Dutch government to retain the surrender value of these policies. In the event that a claimant came forward, the insurer was required to pay benefits and seek indemnification from the Dutch government. This process continued into the 1960s.

3.2

Events leading to the Agreement of November 1999

In March 1997, the Dutch Association of Insurers (DAI) started an investigation among their members into unpaid Jewish policies from the World War II period. Insurance companies were asked to search their archives for Jewish policies.

In June of that year, the Dutch Government established the Scholten Commission, named after its chair W. Scholten LL M, to investigate World War II financial assets in the Netherlands.

The Jewish community in the Netherlands organised its activities in the Dutch Central Jewish Board (CJO) and started talks with the parties involved, including the DAI. They also established a National Jewish Claims Centre, where all claims were collected and researched. Hundreds of claims or requests for information were sent to the Dutch insurance companies; at that point, such claims were handled by the companies.

In November 1999, after a period of in-depth discussions and research regarding the settlement of Jewish insurance payments, the CJO and the DAI reached an agreement that was part of the nationwide programme on the settlement of Jewish unclaimed assets with financial institutions (insurers, banks, stock exchanges) and the government. Research conducted by independent commissions and consultations the CJO has had with various sectors have resulted in agreements covering all the different areas. The agreement between the CJO and the DAI was the first one to be finalised.

The primary objective of the agreement that the CJO and the Association of Insurers signed in November 1999 is to clarify matters concerning unclaimed insurance monies for the

victims of the persecution of the Jews and their surviving relatives. The agreement is a final settlement. The insurance sector has made a total of € 22.6 million (NLG 50 million) available, an ample sum based on the value of the unclaimed insurance assets that have been established by the Scholten Commission, the CJO and the Association of Insurers. The CJO and the DAI consider the agreement as a “finalising document” by means of which the CJO and the Association of Insurers “do the victims of the Shoah justice.” Of this € 22.6 million, € 9 million was earmarked for individual payments (*Stichting Individuele Verzekeringsaanpakken Sjoa*, the Sjoa Foundation), € 11.3 million for purposes to be determined by the Jewish community itself and € 2.3 million for the research and Internet project entitled Monument to the Jewish Community.

3.3

Division of funds

Independent Sjoa Foundation for Individual Insurance Claims

The CJO and the Dutch Association of Insurers set up the *Stichting Individuele Verzekeringsaanpakken Sjoa* (Sjoa Foundation for Individual Insurance Claims) in order to assess and honour requests for payment of Jewish war policies. The objective of this independent foundation is to determine whether people are entitled to payment. Refer to item 8 for detailed information.

MAROR Foundation

Half of the total amount involved in the agreement (€ 11.3 million) was paid to the MAROR Foundation. This foundation administrated the funds received from private organisations (banks, insurers and stock exchanges) and the government. The total sum received was € 346.7 million. After extensive discussion within the Jewish community, it was decided to divide this sum as follows:

- € 50 million for a Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund for projects outside the Netherlands and Israel;
- Of the remaining sum:
 - 80% for individual payments (these payments have been completed);
 - 20% for communal purposes for a period of 20 years, of which:
 - 74% in the Netherlands;
 - 26% in Israel.

Monument to the Jewish Community

The research project entitled Monument to the Jewish Community was set up as an educational project, with the objective of keeping alive the memory of the Dutch-Jewish community that experienced the Second World War. The

aim is to paint as complete a picture as possible of the Jewish community before and during the Second World War, using the vast amount of information from archives that have been assembled and researched in recent years. Present generations can supplement the information on family, friends and acquaintances via the internet by adding the information they have themselves. The internet address is www.joodsmonument.nl. Through this project, the insurance sector wished to show its respect for all the victims of the persecution of the Jews during World War II.

3.4

Primary objective of the Agreement

The vast majority of the value of the insurance policies confiscated by the Liro bank (approximately 98%) was reimbursed shortly after the war. In most cases, the insured amount was paid to the beneficiary or the surviving relatives. A small proportion of the insurance policies could not, however, be paid out because no beneficiaries had claimed them or could be traced. These were mainly small insurance policies. Around 1955, in accordance with Dutch inheritance law, the surrender values of these policies at that time were transferred to the state, as ‘estates without known heirs’. Approximately € 195,000 (NLG 430,000) of this estate ultimately remained in the possession of the state. It has been established that the insured value of these insurance policies was worth four times the surrender value. Pursuant to the agreement concluded by the Association of Insurers and the CJO in November 1999, insurance companies will pay out this insured value, plus compensation for loss of interest (minus the surrender value that is still in the possession of the state). A number of unclaimed insurance policies that were not included at the time of the surrender to the state are now included in the agreement; these primarily involve industrial insurance policies.

It was no longer possible to reconstruct the unpaid assets based on all the individual policies, since key archives are incomplete or missing altogether. Based on research and consultation of the remaining archives, a reasonably accurate estimation of the value of the unclaimed policies was made. Compensation for loss of interest since 1943 has been added to the amounts insured at that time.

3.5

The Scholten Commission’s report

The most important commission for the insurance sector, the Scholten Commission investigation into World War II financial assets in the Netherlands, presented its final report

in mid-December 1999.

This final report presents the Commission's findings, conclusions and policy recommendations based on scientific investigation into financial assets by financial institutions.

Investigation assignment

At the time of its inauguration on 13 July 1997, the Scholten Commission was given the assignment of 'carrying out an investigation into the current systems in place regarding the restoration of rights in respect of the financial assets of war victims of the Second World War held at banks and insurance companies in the Netherlands. This can include the role of banks and insurance companies as well as, where relevant, the role of the government'.

In the course of its investigation, the mandate of the Commission did not extend to investigation aimed at specific individual cases.

During the more than two years of its investigation, the Commission accordingly focused on the question of which assets, entitlements to insurance and other monies might still be wrongfully in the possession of banks, insurance companies and the state. Restitution was largely carried out in the framework of the restoration of rights. According to the Commission, the restoration was an extremely complex operation, which commanded a great deal of respect, but it took too long and often involved bureaucratic methods.

Insurance companies' restoration of rights

The Commission was unable to discover any serious flaws within the insurance sector: insurance policies were systematically restored after the war. Some gaps were detected on a small scale, primarily with regard to industrial insurance policies (chiefly small insurance policies). These gaps were included in the settlement between the CJO and the DAL. Both organisations supported the recommendations of the Commission and pledged their cooperation in an audit.

3.6

Audit Dutch Supervisory Board/Ernst & Young

The Dutch supervisory committee commissioned Ernst & Young Forensic Services, in cooperation with Ernst & Young Accountants, to determine whether insurance companies were still holding policies that had not been paid out, either directly or indirectly. The aim was to dispel any uncertainty regarding individual cases as much as possible. The investigation also concluded an evaluation of the procedures for processing claims adopted by the insurance

companies involved.

The report was published in December 2002. The main conclusion was that the Dutch insurance sector did everything reasonably within its power to find Jewish insurance policies that were wrongfully not reinstated or paid out. Furthermore, they concluded that the companies that dealt with claims and requests for information followed a careful procedure for such claims that was separate from the way in which standard claims are processed.

3.7

International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC)

ICHEIC was established in 1998 following negotiations among European insurance companies and U.S. insurance regulators, as well as representatives of international Jewish and survivor organisations and the State of Israel. In March/April 2000, the Dutch Association of Insurers joined ICHEIC under the condition that the Dutch situation and the Agreement with the CJO was respected, with the implication that any claim referring to a Dutch insurance company would be handled and paid out by the Sjoa Foundation, according to the multipliers laid down in the Agreement. Another condition was the conduct of an independent audit for the presence of unclaimed policies in the archives of insurers.

In August 2001, ICHEIC and the Sjoa Foundation signed a working agreement on the processing of ICHEIC applications concerning Dutch insurance companies. These applications would be handled and paid by the Sjoa Foundation pursuant to the Agreement between the DAI and the CJO. Information about unpaid policies would be published on the internet by the Sjoa Foundation. The Sjoa Foundation agreed to establish a second review process by an independent objections committee.

ICHEIC ceased accepting new applications on 31 March 2004 and closed in March 2007.

A total of 1,756 ICHEIC applications were received by the Sjoa Foundation, of which 95% were undocumented. The Sjoa Foundation sent 1,609 decision letters to ICHEIC with the following results:

- 1206 - no information found
- 305 - information given about settled policies
- 82 - payments, in total approx. € 900,000
- 14 - not taken into consideration
- 2 - withdrawals

3.8

Sjoa Foundation for Individual Insurance Claims

The Stichting Individuele Verzekeringsaanspraken Sjoa (Sjoa Foundation for Individual Insurance Claims) was set up in November 1999 in order to assess and honour applications for payment of Jewish life insurance policies that had not been paid out after the Second World War.

The original intention was that the Sjoa Foundation would handle applications until 1 January 2010, unless the parties agreed otherwise. In view of the developments in the United States, the DAI has decided that applications will still be handled in the Netherlands after 2009.

The Sjoa Foundation secretariat researches traceable policies and reports the results to the Board of Directors, which then decides whether or not to allocate payouts to rightful claimants. If applicants disagree with the decision of the Board, it is possible to lodge a complaint with the independent objections committee.

In addition, if policy details are unavailable, the Sjoa Foundation sends lists of names to all relevant Dutch life insurance companies associated with the DAI. The DAI then goes through its records, as far as they are still available, and reports any findings to the Sjoa Foundation.

In 2000, the Sjoa Foundation published a list of names of approximately 750 policyholders/insured parties on the internet in relation to unclaimed policies that insurers had found in their records. The Sjoa Foundation and the DAI had requested an exemption to Dutch privacy laws to publish the names of holders of unclaimed policies of Dutch insurers. The Commissioner of the Dutch Data Protection Authority issued a 'letter of comfort' to offer assurances and grant permission for publication of this list. Some 1,370 names were added to the list at the end of 2004 and new names are still added. The list now contains some 2,500 names and can be viewed on the site of the Sjoa Foundation: www.stichting-sjoa.nl.

A consistently high number of applications were submitted between 2000 and 2004, well over 2,000 a year. It was only in 2004/2005 that the number of applications started to drop to an annual average of 1,500. In 2006, the number of new applications dropped considerably to a level of 400-500 per year.

The current situation at the Sjoa Foundation

The Sjoa Foundation has received 16,308 requests for information, either directly or, in its first few years, via the

Dutch and Israeli Claims Centres.

The 16,308 requests for information were submitted by 3,241 people; 1,882 (58%) of the requests came from the Netherlands, 549 (17%) from Israel, 409 (13%) from the United States and 401 (12%) from other countries.

Most of these requests, about 80%, are not documented and offer no information about the insurance policy. About 10% give some information about the policy and 10% are claims in response to the list published on the internet.

As per 1 April 2009, 14,315 requests have been settled (88%) and 1,154 policies were paid to 7,379 rightful claimants to a total amount of € 5,580,407.

Prior to November 1999, the DAI and insurance companies worked in close cooperation with the CJO to investigate some 1,300 requests for information. Of these requests, 44 policies amounting to € 450,000 were paid out.

The Dutch government has made a similar gesture to other WWII victims of persecution (Sinti, Roma and homosexuals) and the victims of persecution in the Dutch East Indies.

Information provided by the Sjoa Foundation for Individual Insurance Claims





4 Looted Art

Dutch implementation of the
Washington Conference
Principles on Nazi-Confiscated
Art

Using the Washington Conference Principles as a stepping-stone, this chapter provides an overview of the actions that the Dutch government has undertaken in the past decade to implement these principles on Nazi-confiscated art.

4.1

Identification

On December 3, 1998, the 44 governments in the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets endorsed the following principles for dealing with Nazi-looted art:

- “Art that had been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted should be identified”
- “Recourses and personnel should be made available to facilitate the identification of all art that had been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted”

Starting in 1997, the Dutch government did a preliminary study on the provenance of the Netherlands Art Property Collection. Known as the NK Collection, it comprised more than 4500 recovered works of art still in the possession of the Dutch government and included many pieces that the original owners had been cheated out of during the war by means of theft, confiscation or forced sale. The task of supervising this investigation and advising the government was given to an advisory committee consisting of eight people, which became known as the Ekkart I Commission, named after its chairman, Professor R.E.O. Ekkart. On the basis of the results of the preliminary study, the Ekkart Committee advised the government to investigate the provenance of all the works in the NK Collection using the archive of the Netherlands Art Property Foundation (SNK) and the files of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), supplemented by other sources as needed. On 20 May 1998, the Dutch State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science reported to the Lower House of Parliament that he agreed with the Ekkart Committee’s recommendations and that he would make the necessary resources available.

On 20 September 1999, the State Secretary established the Origins Unknown Supervisory Committee (the Ekkart Committee). The Ekkart Committee was given a three-pronged remit:

- To continue investigation of the NK Collection.
- To investigate the working methods of the Netherlands Art Property Foundation (SNK), which was responsible for recovery and restitution from 1945 to 1952.
- To make recommendations to the Dutch government - based on the findings of the investigation - regarding the policy to follow in respect of the restitution of works of art from the NK Collection.

4.2

Central register

- “Every effort should be made to publicize art that is found to have been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted in order to locate its pre-War owners or their heirs.”
- “Efforts should be made to establish a central registry of such information.”

The *Origins Unknown Agency* was set up to carry out the provenance investigation into the NK Collection. It began its work on 1 September 1998. The results of the provenance research were subsequently published in six reports. The first interim report was published in October 1999, the last report in September 2004.

The results of the investigation were published in book form and were also made available (in Dutch as well as in English) through a database released on the internet: www.herkomstgezocht.nl (launched in 2001).

The Ekkart Committee was also tasked with investigating the working methods of the Netherlands Art Property Foundation (SNK), which was responsible for recovery and restitution from 1945 to 1952. The Ekkart Committee entrusted the actual investigation into recovery and restitution and into the activities of the SNK to the Origins Unknown Agency. The results of this investigation were recorded in the book entitled *Disputed Property*. The Netherlands Art Property Foundation and the recovery of stolen art post-1945, which was published in the autumn of 2002 (available in Dutch under the title *Betwist Bezit*. De Stichting Nederlands Kunstbezit en de teruggave van roofkunst na 1945). In this 320-page book, the authors painted a clear picture of post-war restitutions policy and of the questions that remained as a result of that policy.

4.3

Advisory Committee

- “Nations are encouraged to develop national processes to implement these principles, particularly as they relate to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for resolving ownership issues.”
- “If the pre-War owners of art that is found to have been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted,

or their heirs, can be identified, steps should be taken expeditiously to achieve a just and fair solution, recognizing this may vary according to the facts and circumstances surrounding a specific case.”

Regarding the Ekkart Committee’s recommendations on the restitutions policy, the government deemed it appropriate to set up an advisory committee to assess individual restitution claims. This was partly prompted by the international policy on this matter, as expressed in the Washington Principles. These principles also advocate such measures as the establishment of national alternative dispute mechanisms for resolving ownership issues. The main reason for setting up an advisory committee was to distance the issue from the authorities. Since the Dutch government is in possession of the State collection, it has a direct stake in the matter; the existence of an advisory committee enhances the independence of the decision-making process.

The Restitutions Committee started its activities on 1 January 2002. The task of the Restitutions Committee is to advise the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, at his request, on decisions to be taken concerning individual applications for the restitution of items of cultural value which the original owners lost from their possession involuntarily due to circumstances directly related to the Nazi regime. The Minister reviews the recommendations of the Restitutions Committee but plays only a marginal role in the process. Only in those cases where the advice offered by the Restitutions Committee has clearly gone outside the policy framework would the Minister have grounds for deviating from the Committee’s advice.

Following the example of similar committees abroad, the Minister may also refer disputes between private individuals to the Committee, provided that the parties involved have made a request to that effect and provided that the dispute concerns an object which the original owner lost from his/her possession involuntarily due to circumstances directly related to the Nazi regime.

On the basis of the policy recommendations made by the Ekkart committee, the Dutch government created a framework for a liberalised and generous restitution policy that the Restitutions Committee uses as its standard. This liberalised policy takes a just and fair approach to issues of title and the burden of proof. For example, the procedure includes relaxed standards of evidence for the original owner.

4.4

Restitutions Committee

- “Commissions or other bodies established to identify art that was confiscated by the Nazis and to assist in addressing ownership issues should have a balanced membership”

The Restitutions Committee consists of leading legal experts, historians and art historians.

4.5

Open access to and free availability of information

- “Relevant records and archives should be open and accessible to researchers, in accordance with the guidelines of the International Council on Archives.”

In the Netherlands, potential claimants can easily gain access to provenance information on the NK Collection via the database on the website of the Origins Unknown Agency. As discussed above, the Origins Unknown Agency was set up specifically to carry out the provenance investigation into the NK Collection. This investigation, which took place under the auspices of the Ekkart Committee, included both the works that are part of the inventory of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage and the pieces that were transferred to the various national museums. The investigation was done on the basis of research at several archives.

The agency is also more than willing to answer questions or provide information on an individual basis.

It is of the utmost importance that the Restitutions Committee has access to all the relevant information in drawing up its recommendations. The Dutch government therefore issued a decree that lifted the restrictions on the public accessibility of records filed in the State Archives by virtue of the 1995 Public Archives Act so as to enable the Committee to gather all the information it needs in the shortest possible time.

4.6

Liberalized restitution policy

- “In establishing that a work of art had been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted, consideration should be given to the unavoidable gaps or ambiguities in the provenance in light of the passage of time and the circumstances of the Holocaust era.”

Relying on the policy recommendations made by the Ekkart Committee, the Dutch government created a framework for a liberalised restitution policy that the Restitutions Committee takes as its standard. This liberalised policy takes a just and fair approach to issues of title and the burden of proof. For example, the procedure includes relaxed standards of evidence for the original owner.

Take, for example, the notion of ‘forced sale’. In principle, all sales of works of art by private Jewish individuals (or other persecuted population groups) in the Netherlands from 10 May 1940 onward are considered to have been forced sales, unless clear evidence was found to the contrary. The same assumption is made in respect of sales by private Jewish individuals in Germany from 1933 onward and in Austria from 1938 onwards. In other words, the heirs of previous Jewish owners are not required to prove that the sale was involuntary; rather, the Dutch government has to provide proof to the contrary.

As to the proof of title, the Dutch government recognises that it will often be difficult to produce conclusive evidence of title and of the truth of the facts stated by the former owners concerning the loss of the property, in part because in many cases the relevant documentary evidence will have been lost in the war. In assessing the evidence, the benefit of the doubt is given to the private person and not the State.

There still remains the issue of how to deal with the situation that certain facts can no longer be ascertained, that certain information has been lost or has not been recovered, or that evidence can no longer be otherwise compiled. In these circumstances, the Restitutions Committee takes the general position that if the problems that have arisen can be attributed at least in part to the lapse of time, the associated risk should be borne by the government, save in cases where exceptional circumstances apply.

4.7

Encouraged to come forward

- “Pre-War owners and their heirs should be encouraged to come forward and make known their claims to art that was confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted.”

In 2003 and 2007, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport endeavoured to draw the attention of potential claimants to the possibilities of applying for restitution by organising exhibitions that displayed state-owned works of unknown provenance.

Since the beginning of 2004, efforts have also been made to select those objects where involuntary loss of ownership was a serious possibility, but no responses had been received from potential claimants. In those cases, an investigation was carried out in an attempt to track down heirs and other family members who could be approached with a request for additional information. In the second half of 2004, letters were sent to dozens of people from all over the world because an investigation into family members had shown that they were related to the potential previous owners. The Dutch government also launched a big advertisement campaign in the international media in 2007.

The launch of the bilingual website of the Origins Unknown Agency, providing access to a database in both Dutch and English with photos and provenance information on NK objects, and the website of the Restitutions Committee also increased the number of responses from possible rightful owners.

4.8

Not able to determine rightful claimants

- “If the pre-War owners of art that is found to have been confiscated by the Nazis, or their heirs, can not be identified, steps should expeditiously be taken to achieve a just and fair solution.”

With regard to the question of how to deal with works of art where, despite extensive investigation, it has proven impossible to determine who the rightful claimants are, the provenance of these works of art is explicitly stated on a plate next to them when put on exhibit in a museum.

The Dutch government also has valued these works and

donated that amount to Jewish cultural causes. The government took similar action with regard to the proceeds from the works of art from the NK Collection that were auctioned off around 1950.

4.9

Dutch policy consistent with international recommendations

The Dutch restitutions policy is consistent with the international recommendations regarding the restitution of cultural objects that were lost during the Second World War, as laid down in such documents as the Washington Conference Principles and the Vilnius Forum Declaration. The Washington Conference Principles and the Vilnius Forum Declaration state that the subject matter of the respective documents is highly complex from a socio-cultural and legal point of view, as evidenced by the fact that both documents acknowledge that any resolution of the issue of World War II assets should take place within the context of differing national legal systems.

In the Dutch legal system, no change in legislation was needed to comply with international recommendations on the restitution of cultural assets that were lost during the war. National private law did not constitute an obstacle for the liberalised restitution policy that the Dutch government adopted on the basis of the recommendations made by the Ekkart Committee, as the more liberal policy takes a moral and ethical position as its point of departure, rather than a legalistic position.

With regard to private owners, the initiative by the **Netherlands Museum Association (NMA)** to conduct a study on the provenance of the collections of the associated museums, most of which are privately owned, is an interesting example of the steps that have been taken in this domain. In 1998-1999, the NMA conducted a study on the provenance of the acquisitions made by the associated museums between 1940 and 1948. In the coming years (2009-2012) the NMA will also conduct a follow-up study on the provenance of the acquisitions made in from 1933-1940 and from 1948 onward. The results of this research will be published in a reference book and on the internet. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science has subsidised the research. In the event of a dispute, the private parties involved can request advice from the Restitutions Committee.



RIEFKAART



Heer G. Embrey

Woensdag 7

A.I.D.

...neda, 31 Mei 1945
... Hoe gaat het. We
... een kaart wafek niets mee
... post in Nijmegen. Donstag
... stond hij voor de deure. Hi
... Embrey met veel de deure. Hi
... ved. me. an. ge. ge. ge. ge.
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5 Remembrance

This chapter provides an overview of ceremonies and memorial days to remember World War II in the Netherlands. It also gives an overview of memorial centres and war museums in the Netherlands.

TTSS

At several locations in the Netherlands, memorial centres have been established which have a special significance in relation to the Second World War. They provide information on the Second World War in general, and on the events that took place at that site, providing a direct link for present-day visitors to the history of the Second World War. The centres in Amersfoort, Vught and Westerbork receive government funding to maintain their facilities for the public at large. The grants may be used for maintenance, acquisitions, conservation and so forth, but a substantial share must be spent on educational activities focusing on the Second World War and the events leading up to it in relation to contemporary human rights violations and instances of discrimination. The centres may also use the funds for educational projects.

5.1

Memorial Days

National Remembrance Days, 4 and 5 May

The Netherlands organises various ceremonies and observes a two-minute silence on the evening of 4 May to remember all who have lost their lives in wars or in peacekeeping missions anywhere in the world since the outbreak of the Second World War, whether as civilians or members of the armed forces. A special remembrance day is organized on 15 August to remember the victims of the Japanese occupation. On 5 May, the Netherlands celebrates its liberation in 1945 from the German occupation. The National 4 and 5 May Committee, which is funded by the government, is responsible for organising national remembrance ceremonies. Recent surveys show that the public wishes to continue to mark both occasions, the commemoration of the dead on 4 May and the liberation of the country the day after. Three quarters of the Dutch population consider these days extremely important. The strongest support comes from the generation that actually lived through the war, but it is heartening to learn that 76% of people aged 13 to 24 are no less in favour. Remembrance Day is considered particularly important.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January) is marked in the Netherlands by a wreath-laying ceremony at the Dutch Auschwitz monument in Amsterdam's Wertheim Park. The ceremony, held on the Sunday nearest to Holocaust Memorial Day, is organised by the Dutch Auschwitz Committee. Each Memorial Day, the 'Auschwitz: never again' lecture is organised by the Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CHGS), the Dutch Auschwitz Committee and the Pension and Benefit Board. This event, a long-standing tradition, is attended by government representatives, and the person giving the lecture receives the Annetje Fels-Kupferschmidt Award as a token of appreciation.

5.2

Memorial centres

Amersfoort Memorial Centre

Camp Amersfoort was not a concentration camp like Dachau but a small, temporary internment camp run by the Sipo security police and the SD security services. Between 1941 and 1945, Camp Amersfoort (known officially as Polizeiliches Durchgangslager Amersfoort or PDA) functioned as a prison housed in pre-existing Dutch military barracks. Neglect, starvation, maltreatment and murder marked the lives of over 35,000 prisoners who were held here for a brief or extended time. Camp Amersfoort was recognised as a place of national significance in 2000; a visitors' centre opened its doors in 2004.

Vught Memorial Centre

A group of huts in the town of Vught in the south of the Netherlands recalls the German-style concentration camp that once stood on that site. Though Vught was not a death camp, its prisoners were isolated, humiliated and terrorised. 31,000 people were interned in the Vught camp between 1943 and 1944, and several hundred lost their lives.

In 1986, the site was declared a national monument at the suggestion of the Vught Monument Foundation. It was officially inaugurated by Queen Beatrix in 1990. The reconstructed huts and the memorial wall inscribed with hundreds of names evoke the Second World War, while the study centre and temporary exhibitions highlight the analogies between the events of the past and trends in the world today.

Westerbork Memorial Centre

Westerbork was a camp specifically for Jews. Situated near Hooghalen in the northeast of the Netherlands, it was established in 1939 to provide shelter for Jews who had fled from Germany and Poland. A total of 93 transport trains left Westerbork station for death camps elsewhere.

The monument was built as a private initiative in 1983, supported by a subsidy from the government. A permanent exhibition highlights the persecution of the Jews.

Westerbork's main responsibility is to provide an education and information service, which it does by organising lectures, conferences, and temporary exhibitions.

Hollandsche Schouwburg Memorial Centre

The Hollandsche Schouwburg (the Dutch Theatre), which was used as a deportation centre for Jews, is situated near the Jewish Historical Museum and works closely with that institution. During the German occupation, only Jewish artists and musicians were allowed to perform there, for Jewish audiences only. From 1942 on, the theatre was used as the assembly point from which between 60,000 and 80,000 Dutch Jews were transported to Westerbork transit camp before being sent on to concentration and death camps. In 1962, the Hollandsche Schouwburg was designated a monument to Jewish victims of the Second World War. One wall is inscribed with the last names of over 100,000 Dutch Jews who never returned from the camps. The exhibition also features photographs and video material on persecution, genocide, and life in hiding. It also expressly includes documentation chronicling everyday life during the war to make it easier for visitors to relate to it personally.

5.3

Other major war and resistance museums

Anne Frank Foundation

The Anne Frank Foundation, a politically independent entity, was established in 1957. The foundation manages the Anne Frank House, a museum in the centre of Amsterdam. The Annex (Het Achterhuis, the separate back section of the building) is where Anne Frank and others lived in hiding from 1942 to 1944. The Foundation's principal aims are to combat anti-Semitism and racism, and to foster tolerance and racial harmony. It develops teaching aids and organises courses, conferences, workshops and temporary exhibitions.

Two books in comic strip format, developed as teaching materials, have proved to be an international success. The English titles are *A Family Secret*, about WWII in the Netherlands, including the Holocaust, and *The Search*, which focuses specifically on the Holocaust. *The Search* was translated into Dutch, Polish, Hungarian, Spanish and English. Additional lesson materials are produced for many countries based on the unique history of each country.

Anne Frank's personal testimony, as expressed in her diary, is the focus of what the museum has to say about the history of the Second World War and the persecution of the Jews.

Parallels are drawn between the past and the present to alert visitors to present-day forms of racism, discrimination and prejudice.

Their exhibitions on Anne Frank travel all over the world. They trace the history of the Holocaust through Anne Frank's life story and other eye-witness accounts. The exhibition encourages visitors to reflect on racism in the world today and make them think about their own response.

Museum of the Dutch Resistance, Amsterdam

In 1985, veterans of the Dutch resistance converted a synagogue in Amsterdam into a museum of the resistance. It offers a wider range of information and organises film shows, lectures and symposiums.

Neither the museum's permanent collection nor its temporary exhibitions are meant to suggest that the entire nation was active in the resistance between 1940 and 1945; this was far from the case. The aim of the display, which is essentially educational, is to make people reflect on what they themselves would do if they were confronted with similar circumstances. All the material – documents, artefacts, videos, street scenes and interiors – is presented in such a way that visitors can either follow in a logical sequence or pick out elements at random. Though all information is available in Dutch and English, much of it is conveyed through audio-visual media in order to appeal to younger visitors.

The museum organises guided tours around the former Jewish quarter, taking in several war memorials. The museum is just down the road from the Jewish Historical Museum.

Jewish Historical Museum

The Jewish Historical Museum collects objects and works of art associated with the religion, culture and history of the Jews in the Netherlands and its former colonies. These items are held by the museum and the Resource Centre.

The Jewish Historical Museum Foundation was set up in 1930 for "the collection and presentation of everything that illustrates Jewish life in general and Dutch Jewish life in particular, in the widest sense, the discussion in meetings of everything related to this, and the useful employment of every means to encourage Jewish art and studies".

The museum was forced to close during the Second World War and much of the collection was confiscated. Only a small percentage was recovered after the war. The museum was reopened in 1955. In 1987, the museum moved to Jonas Daniel Meijerplein. The museum currently houses around 30,000 objects, documents and photos.

Cooperation with schools

Museums and schools work together to offer a range of activities. The following are just a few examples:

■ **Second World War guest lecturer project**

People who lived through the war are invited to schools to talk about their lives. They are accompanied by a member of a museum's educational service, who uses the guest speaker's account as the starting point for a discussion on discrimination, racism and tolerance;

■ **Adopt-a-monument project**

Classes from almost 1,000 schools in the Netherlands have 'adopted' more than 650 monuments relating to the war and the activities of the resistance. The aim is to encourage children to take a special interest in the event 'their' monument commemorates and to appreciate its relevance today.

Schools are encouraged to arrange museum outings for their pupils. An average of 10,000 schoolchildren visit a war museum each year. Before the field trip, the pupils first do preparatory work at school, and they receive additional materials at the end of the visit.

The background of the page features a dark, textured surface, possibly a book cover, with vibrant, abstract patterns in shades of teal, red, and yellow. To the right, a portion of a newspaper clipping is visible, showing a photograph of people's legs and some Dutch text. A large, solid magenta rectangle is positioned on the right side of the page, containing the section header.

6 Education

The scourges of war and persecution have not yet been rooted out; the millions who died in the Second World War were apparently not enough. There are still people who oppress others and people who are forced to flee their homes or live in hiding for fear of being ill-treated, incarcerated or even killed because of their race, religion, sexual preference or beliefs.

The generation of today and tomorrow must know about the past if they are to be alert to similar dangers in the present and in a position to respond appropriately when it is time to take a stand. Knowing what occurred during the war and understanding the circumstances that allowed it to happen makes it easier to be vigilant, to recognise any warning signals in your own time and to know how to act with integrity.

Everyone in the Netherlands, young and old alike, should remain alert and make their views felt through the ballot box. The Dutch government therefore supports projects aimed at telling young people about the Second World War and the events that precipitated it, and to heighten their awareness in a rapidly changing world. A permanent government budget is available to support these activities.

6.1

The last survivors

In 2010, the youngest survivor of the Second World War will be 65 years old. By 2040, only a handful of centenarians will be left who have any first-hand memory of the war – and they are the end of the line. Once they are gone, there will be no-one who actually lived through the war, no eye-witnesses to describe what it was like growing up during the occupation, or being confined in a German or Japanese concentration camp, or what it was like to live in hiding in an attic. There will be no-one who survived a death camp to find himself alone, without friends, without relatives and not even a photograph to remember them by. All that will be left are films, books, letters and other documents to inform us, and emotion.

Though the Second World War is receding ever further into the past, the government considers it important to continue its information campaigns. In fact, the passing of the years is all the more reason to keep the memory of the war alive and to ensure that future generations are told what it was like. In this perspective, increasing cultural diversity among the Dutch population is an important aspect that should be taken into account in the information campaigns to ensure that the war is not forgotten.

6.2

Its significance today

The aim of the government's information campaigns for young people is to examine the Second World War in relation to events in the world today and in the context of efforts to combat racism, discrimination and intolerance in our own time.

Not only is it important to take a critical look at history and learn from the mistakes of the past, but we must also make a constant effort to protect democratic values and the human rights and freedoms that are enshrined in the Constitution. In addition, the government attaches a high priority to ensuring that all citizens – including young people and members of ethnic minorities – are able to participate in Dutch society. The Netherlands has evolved into a multi-cultural society, but there are still certain obstacles that prevent some people from enjoying its benefits to the fullest.

6.3

Information campaigns on the post-Second World War era

Various activities have been developed over the years to tell young people about the Second World War and to make them aware of its effects on their country. In recent years, the government has given special priority to projects with an educational dimension, in which the events of the past are used to foster a critical attitude in the ethnic and cultural diversity of Dutch society today. Government grants enable schools, museums and other institutions to contribute to this process.

Examples of projects subsidised by the government include *The Quest*, a book in comic strip format produced by the Anne Frank Foundation. The book is now being translated into several languages. Other current projects include a trip to Ravensbrück for students from secondary teacher training colleges, projects at primary teacher training colleges, the commissioning of several children's books on neglected subjects, and the *De Bunker* project, a travelling

exhibition about the Second World War, set up in temporary containers in the middle of a city, which asks questions like ‘What would you do if a refugee knocked on your door?’

As most young people can be reached through the education system, in primary and secondary schools, preventive information will be provided at school. Young people who have already left school are not overlooked; funds are made available for projects targeting these groups, which aim to inform the young people and foster in them a critical awareness of the present as well as the past.

Learning about the Holocaust is one of the attainment targets specified for both primary and secondary education. The Second World War and the Holocaust are also covered by the history curriculum canon: a timeline of key figures and events in Dutch history. The history canon is part of the required curriculum in secondary education. The 50 required topics in the history canon include two that are relevant to Holocaust education: ‘Anne Frank, The persecution of Jews’ and ‘Second World War, Occupation and liberation’. Government-sponsored research has identified the following problem: although 99% of the public have heard of the Holocaust, they do not clearly understand its context; 70% think that the Holocaust led to the Second World War. The government is trying to do more to rectify this by subsidising various projects to inform the public.



7 Research

This chapter provides an overview of Dutch organisations involved in researching WWII and the research projects they are working on.



7.1

The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD)

The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) has been in existence for more than sixty years and is the centre for the study of the history of the Netherlands (including the Dutch East Indies) during the Second World War and the dissemination of knowledge on that topic. The Institute was founded shortly after liberation, on 8 May 1945. It is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

The NIOD administers the archives of the German occupation of the Netherlands and the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies, as well as large collections of clandestine newspapers and pamphlets, posters, photographs, books and articles. It provides information to government agencies and private individuals.

The NIOD conducts scholarly research and publishes the results nationally and internationally through lectures, participation in conferences, workshops and publications. Originally, research at the NIOD focused specifically on the social and political effects of the Second World War. The research programme in effect since 1998 broadened the chronological framework from the beginning of World War I until the end of the twentieth century.

A large research project funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport examines the history of pensions and benefits after the war. Another project looks at the comparative history concerning pensions and benefits in European countries. These projects are scheduled for completion in 2010.

7.2

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CHGS)

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies was founded in 2002. It is funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and housed within the confines of the NIOD.

The primary activities of the organisation are university lectures and scholarly research in Holocaust and genocide studies. The Center offers an MA programme at the University of Amsterdam to promote the continuity of teaching and research in this field. Through this interdisciplinary programme, the organisation works

toward an integrated view of the Holocaust and other cases of genocide. In addition, the Center faculty contributes to current developments in the research field.

The programme covers on the ideology of the phenomenon as well as the political, social and economic context of war. The material covered also includes how later generations have interpreted these acts of genocide in their research. Typical 20th century features such as mass mobilisation, the role of bureaucracy and the political function of the media are also factors that contributed to genocide that will be studied in the courses of the MA programme.

The CHGS carries out research in a number of areas. Each member of staff has his or her own specialist field, in addition to comparative research into genocide in general. These include:

- Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands
- The Holocaust in Eastern Europe
- Genocide in Rwanda
- Genocide in Bosnia
- Crimes of communism (Stalinism)
- Transitional justice
- Genocide denial

Apart from the emphasis on teaching and research, the Center aspires to make a larger audience attentive to the subjects of the Holocaust and genocide. Through public lectures and other activities, the Center introduces new views into the present debate on the Holocaust and other cases of genocide. Such attention is of vital importance, not only in the context of remembrance, but also as a warning for the future.

7.3

Other relevant research projects

Several Dutch universities are involved in research on the Second World War. Working in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the University of Amsterdam has developed a research programme on several subjects concerning the history of the remembrance of WWII and the future of the remembrance of this war and its material heritage. The first of these projects is scheduled for completion in 2010.

Every two years, the Anne Frank Foundation conducts a study on the situation with regard to right-wing extremism and discrimination in the Netherlands. This biannual research project is conducted in cooperation with Leiden University and is fully subsidised by the Dutch government.

8

International

The undersigned G.H. Embregts is employed
Interpreter/Timekeeper and is authorized to draw

G. H. Embregts

Commanding, No. 4 Civil Affairs Inland Dep
Captain, R.A.O.C.

Signature G.H. Embregts.

G. H. Embregts

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BREDA

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8.1

International Cooperation between War Museums

War museums in the Netherlands work closely with similar organisations abroad, often on a permanent basis. The government encourages these joint ventures and partnerships not simply because they are intrinsically valuable, but also to extend the scope of Dutch policy on information campaigns. The principal partners for the Netherlands in this respect are Germany, Poland, Belgium and Denmark. The Dutch government is particularly interested in the way the authorities and influential organisations in those countries have developed their information campaigns. It is interested in the methods they use, the targets they have set and the results they have managed to achieve. This is an extremely complex issue and the results are particularly difficult to assess, as they relate to changing people's attitudes and codes of behaviour. It is thought that studies of these issues will prove illuminating in general, but above all, the government would like to form an impression of the strategies and aims of similar projects in those countries and the results they have achieved. The question it comes down to is this: what can be done to change young people's attitudes and to combat racism, discrimination and intolerance? Numerous organisations are involved in the project, including government agencies and private organisations, volunteer organisations and others.

8.2

International policy

The Netherlands has been a member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) since 2000. It chaired the ITF in 2001 and has adopted an active stance based on the idea of collective remembrance, as laid down in the Stockholm Declaration. In addition to liaising with the Czech Republic, the Netherlands has carried out several projects in Ukraine. It has chaired special ITF working groups several times.

In September 2008, the Netherlands signed a memorandum of understanding with Poland, Israel and Slovakia in which all four countries made a commitment to set up an appropriate and dignified centre of remembrance at the site where the Sobibor death camp once stood.

The background image shows a close-up of an antique book cover. The cover is made of dark brown, textured leather with visible wear and tear, particularly along the edges. A small, light-colored paper label is affixed to the left side of the cover. The label has the number '8775' at the top, followed by 'M--', 'NB', and 'rend'. A bright pink rectangular overlay is positioned on the right side of the image, containing the text '9 Judaica Research' in white. The overall lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and imperfections of the book's binding.

9 Judaica Research

8775

M--

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rend

During the last ten years, four institutions with Jewish holdings have done research on their Judaica collections: the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana (Ros), the Ets Haim Library of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Municipal Archives (*Stadsarchief, SAA*) and the Jewish Historical Museum.

The issue of recuperation of looted Jewish cultural heritage was the central theme of the Museums, Libraries and Archives section at the Conference of the European Association of Jewish Studies, which was organised in July 2002 in Amsterdam. Hoogewoud, Vlessing and Cohen contributed with a paper on their respective institutions.

9.1

Libraries

F.J. Hoogewoud, former deputy curator of the Ros, has published about the fate of the Ros collection during and after the war. Part of this collection was hidden by the University of Amsterdam library; the looted part was returned to Amsterdam almost complete in 1946. His recent publications include 'An introduction to H. de la Fontaine Verwey's "The Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana during the German occupation"', in *Studia Rosenthaliana* 2006 (38/39), p. 49-61.

Abraham Rosenberg, librarian at the Ets Haim Library, is finalising his reconstruction of the pre-war collection and has identified the missing objects, in order to eventually search for their present location.

9.2

Archives

Odette Vlessing (senior archivist at the Amsterdam Municipal Archives) recently gave a survey of looted Dutch-Jewish archives that returned to Amsterdam from the 1940s until 2003. In her article 'Dutch-Jewish archives come home from East and West', published in P.K. Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud and E. Ketelaar (eds), *Returned from Russia. Nazi archival plunder in Western Europe and recent restitution issues* (2007), p. 250-255, Vlessing concludes that 'we are still missing some very important items, which had existed and have been used before 1940, such as the oldest minute book of the Amsterdam Jewish Community, starting in 1640, and the oldest regulations, from 1642.'

The Dutch government conducted provenance studies on the archives that were returned from Russia in 2000-2002. In the cases where the original owners could be found, the archival records in question were returned. In 2008, for example, archival records were returned to the Jewish community in Thessaloniki (Greece). The Dutch government also transferred records to the Organisation of Jewish Communities in the Netherlands (NIK). Though A.J. van der Leeuw (RIOD) and later Peter Manasse (IISG) and Gerard Aalders (NIOD) gave overviews of looted

libraries and archives, there are still gaps in the available information that remain unfilled – including the fate of the library of the Nederlands-Israëlietisch Seminarium (Amsterdam) and of the many private collections.

9.3

Jewish Historical Museum collection

In the last ten years, curator Julie-Marthe Cohen has made a reconstruction of the objects that have been returned (approx. 180-200) and that are still missing (approx. 430-450) from the pre-war collection. In addition, the objects returned from the Offenbach Archival Depot in 1946 include objects of unknown origin; the exact number has yet to be determined. Cohen has put the collected information on each separate pre-war object in a list and is in the process of putting the data in a database that will eventually be accessible on the internet. The database still needs refinement and may eventually serve as an example for other institutions.

One important success story was the discovery of a valuable eighteenth-century Torah mantle, displayed on the WW II Provenance Research Online website operated by the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. This mantle was lent to the museum in 1937 by the Ashkenazi community of Leiden. This example shows the importance of specialised databases.

During the last annual conference of the Association of European Jewish Museums in Amsterdam, the Jewish Historical Museum organised a mini-symposium on looted collections, which was followed by a meeting with fellow researchers on the topic. The result was the formation of a working group which will explore the best way to integrate and link Jewish museum databases. The success of this enterprise depends on international funding. In 2004, Cohen published 'A Jewish Museum Gained, Lost and Regained', in J.-M. Cohen, J. Kröger, E. Schrijver, (eds), *Gifts from the Heart. Ceremonial Objects from the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam*, p. 12-30. A detailed reconstruction of the museum collection and its fate during and after the war will appear in an article in 2010.

Information provided by Jewish Historical Museum Amsterdam



10 Heritage of the War

10.1

The Heritage of World War II programme

In the modern age, we are facing new questions about the manner in which we handle the legacy of the Second World War. In 2006, the Dutch government formulated a response to these questions in the form of the Heritage of World War II programme, which is run by the WWII War Victims and Remembrance department of the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. € 21.6 million was earmarked for the programme, which began in 2007 and is due to end in 2009.

The aim of the Heritage of World War II programme is to preserve valuable heritage material from and about the Second World War, to improve the availability of this material and to make it accessible to the general public (i.e. present it in context). The underlying idea is that people will then be able to continue contemplating the WWII period based on the questions from their own time, and that they can pass on the insights they gain to their children.

The Heritage of World War II programme does not aim to inspire additional interest in this period of war history, nor is it intended to close off this chapter in history once and for all. Whether or not a cultural heritage programme for WWII is established, the interest in WWII history and the sometimes emotional grappling with that period of the past will continue for some time. However, the Dutch government does not wish to have any substantive influence on the remembrance of the Second World War through the programme. The purpose of the Heritage of World War II programme is to allow people to search for and discover their own perspectives.

10.2

Three themes: preservation & accessibility, oral history and applications for the general public

The Dutch government considers that it has a duty to support organisations that have parts of the cultural heritage of WWII in their care. The government does not intend to assume responsibility for storage and preservation of these materials, but wants to make a substantial contribution to the owners to ensure they have the resources to take the proper measures to maintain the materials in the best possible condition. The Dutch government also believes that it is very important that audiovisual recordings be made of the stories of people who

witnessed the war first-hand, especially where they can shed light on interesting events.

These policy priorities led to the following three themes in the Heritage of World War II programme:

1. Fostering the preservation and accessibility of WWII material

The Heritage of World War II programme grants subsidies to institutions so that they can conserve and/or digitise WWII materials (documents, archives, photographs, film/audio materials, objects). The activities involved include deacidifying paper, digitising film and photographic materials, ensuring proper registration of museum collections, and making archives digitally accessible. Particularly special and valuable archives are even scanned by hand one at a time and made available online.

Preservation and accessibility also includes the creation of what are called National Digital Key Collections (Nationale Digitale Kerncollecties); four categories have been defined for these key collections:

- Oral History (collection of the eyewitness accounts obtained through B);
- Text (pamphlets, illegal brochures, newspapers, diaries);
- Images (photographs, posters, camp drawings);
- Audiovisual material (film and sound recordings)

The ambition is to produce a digital collection presented at a single location, incorporating all of the unique materials from these categories, which are currently housed in physical locations all over across the Netherlands. See Appendix 1 for an overview of these collections.

2. Recording oral history on film

Heritage of World War II grants subsidies to institutions for the purpose of filming personal eyewitness accounts by Dutch citizens who are able to talk about WWII events from personal experience.

3. The creation of applications for the general public

A document, photograph or object often only acquires meaning once its context (i.e. the story told by the material) is also understood. The Heritage of World War II programme therefore grants subsidies for projects that are aimed at providing a context for heritage materials and at making them available to the general public – particularly through new media.

Working method

A Subsidy Policy Framework has been created, describing the criteria that projects must satisfy. Two evaluation committees, consisting of independent history and heritage experts, issue substantive recommendations for each project application. The programme team then evaluates

the feasibility and technical and financial basis of the applications.

Based on the recommendations issued, the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) will make decisions regarding the applications. The programme team monitors the progress of all projects and directs the execution of large-scale projects.

What is heritage?

Cultural heritage represents authentic remnants from the past. However, not all material from the Second World War can be characterised as cultural heritage. In the quest for what can be classified as cultural heritage, widely disparate definitions emerge. A recurring theme in all those definitions is that materials or stories become part of the cultural heritage when they have significance for the identity of a group. However, this definition is not enough to define what should and should not be part of the programme. A value-defining chart has therefore been developed, offering a number of criteria to judge the value of materials.

War in Asia as well as Europe

The Heritage of World War II programme also devotes special attention to projects that highlight the war in the former Dutch East Indies. Projects include the construction of a separate East Indies Heritage Portal that will make available all of the digital materials that pertain to the war in the former Dutch East Indies.

National and local history

The Heritage of World War II programme is not limited to items or collections that contribute to or reflect a sense of national identity. Significant events or persons that are important for specific regions of our country are also considered relevant.

History before and after WWII

The scope of the programme is not limited to the period from 1940 to 1945 (the occupation of the Netherlands). It has been broadened to include a couple of years before the war and the decades after the war, but it is of course restricted to events that have close ties to the war. The way the Netherlands coped with its own war history after the war is relevant to the questions that are still being raised about this period.

10.3

What instigated the Heritage of World War II programme?

The period in which organisations could request subsidies ran from October 2007 to April 2009. A total of 470 project proposals were submitted during this period. A total of 129 projects have now been granted a subsidy with 160 proposals still awaiting a decision. The subsidies granted thus far have been distributed as follows:

- 28 for oral history
- 53 for the preservation and accessibility of materials
- 29 for applications for the general public (websites, documentaries)
- 19 for Digital Key Collections and other projects involving cooperative efforts between organisations

Beyond these dry figures lies a world of inspiration and commitment as regards all 84 organisations that are carrying out the projects and which, with the support of Heritage of World War II, are being given the opportunity to do more with their WWII materials than had been possible to date. Some of these organisations are eliminating backlogs, particularly as regards registration, conservation and digitisation of collections. Other organisations are 'rediscovering' the valuable collections stored in their depots or archives. These activities are possible because the Heritage of World War II programme explicitly invites institutions to do something with their materials, and to bring them to the attention of the Dutch public. This incentive stimulates creativity and creates new ways (virtual reconstructions and other web applications) of making the heritage of the Second World War accessible in a contemporary fashion.

The programme therefore serves several masters. The results of the programme give researchers and investigative journalists a clearer view of the nature and location of the source materials that are located across the country. Widespread availability of primary sources allows teachers to create their own teaching materials and to include very specific local or regional events, which is often an effective approach to educating young people about the Second World War. Moreover, inquisitive people (both young and old) are able to use the internet to run targeted searches for topics that interest them.

10.4

A partial overview of projects

Category:

Preservation and Accessibility of Heritage Materials

- Conservation of the 'magazine cuttings' on the wall of Anne Frank's room;
- Conservation and digitisation of the videotapes containing interviews with survivors of the Sobibor extermination camp;
- Indexing of the entire Netherlands Red Cross war archive with the aim of facilitating a complete preservation and accessibility operation;
- Provision of online access to various war archives held by the Amsterdam Municipal Archive, including transport lists of Dutch forced labourers;
- Digitisation and indexing of the German Files - 60,000 birth, death and marriage certificates of Dutch citizens in Germany during the war years;
- Provision of digital access to German diplomatic documents regarding German-Jewish refugees in the Netherlands.

Category:

Oral History

- The recording of personal accounts by women who were active members of the National Socialist Movement (NSB) in the Netherlands during the war years and/or who were interned and punished under the provisions of special criminal jurisdiction;
- Recording of accounts by men who were placed on transports from Camp Vught to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in September 1944;
- Recording of accounts by women who chose to join the resistance, their motivation to join and the consequences for them personally later in life.

Category:

Public-oriented Applications

- The development of the website www.wozonline.nl by the National 4 and 5 May Committee, which shows a thematically grouped selection of all Dutch internet sites that offer high-quality information on the Second World War. This site also acts as a central platform containing all digital Heritage of World War II project results;
- The development of the documentary entitled *Anna's Silent Battle*, about a deaf Jewish woman who survived Auschwitz. In addition to telling her extraordinary story herself, Anna's story is also supplemented by others, including Anna's hearing cousin who fought for survival together with her in Auschwitz;
- The development of two new television series about the Second World War for Dutch public television. The series, called *De Oorlog* ('The War') is intended for an

adult audience, while the series *13 in de Oorlog* ('13 in the War') is intended for a younger audience. Both series are principally based on authentic heritage materials (film/sound recordings, photographs, documents), many of which were discovered recently thanks to the programme. Both tell the story of the war and the occupation in the Netherlands, primarily from the perspective of what life was like at that time, relying on extensive use of diary excerpts. The two series will be broadcast between October and January 2009.

10.5

Future prospects

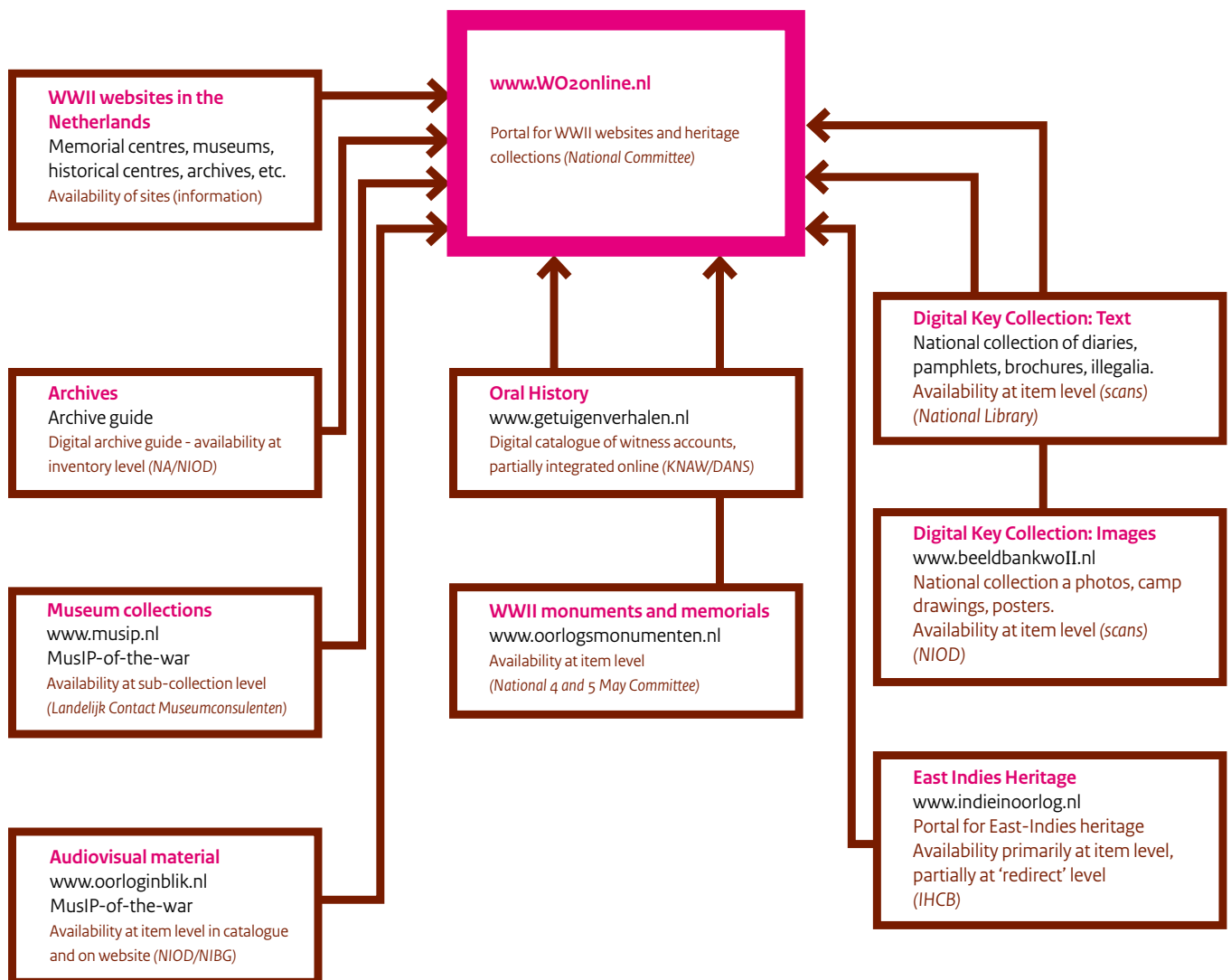
The legal framework in the Netherlands providing for the preservation and protection of historical material that has cultural heritage status is limited to the Archive Act, the Monuments and Historical Buildings Act and the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act.

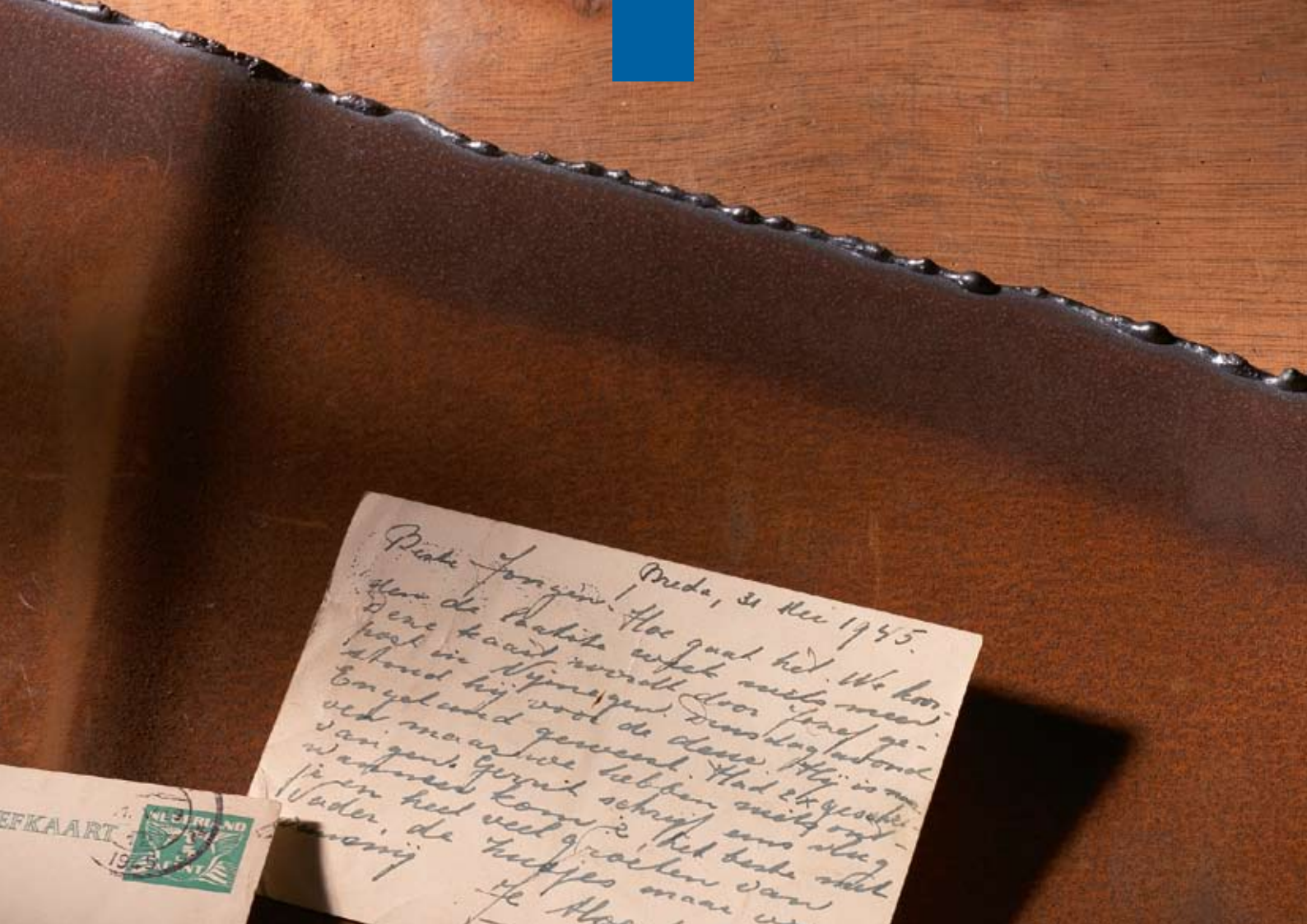
With respect to WWII material, it should be noted that only the government archives are protected by law. Primary government responsibility for the management, maintenance and disclosure of the materials in the government archives lies with the National Archive. All the other cultural heritage materials are private property or the responsibility of provincial or municipal authorities. The WWII monuments are not covered by the Monuments and Historical Buildings Act, and there are no items in archives, museums or audio-visual collections that fall within the scope of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act. This means that the preservation, management and disclosure of this cultural heritage material are not a primary task or responsibility of the national government. That responsibility lies with other organisations; the Heritage of World War II programme will not change these responsibilities.

The efforts made by the Dutch government regarding the heritage of the Second World War therefore constitute a powerful but temporary provision, and mark the completion of a period. Shortly following the liberation, the Dutch government made a promise to all Dutch war victims, a promise of a debt of honour and special solidarity with those who suffered through acts of war. Now that this group is slowly disappearing, maximum efforts are being made through the Heritage of World War II programme to preserve their stories and materials and to make them accessible for the future. In this way, the national government is fulfilling the promise of a debt of honour and special solidarity for one last, very significant time.

However, Heritage of World War II also represents a new

beginning, as the programme has provided a stimulus to many organisations involved in remembrance of the Second World War. Museums, archives and memorial centres have started re-evaluating their collections and are beginning to understand new opportunities in relation to those collections. This process will not cease after 2009; we can undoubtedly expect many exciting results in the years to come. The digital infrastructure created through the programme is another important achievement, one which will remain even after the programme has ended. Major national heritage organisations will manage and maintain the portals, digital key collections and websites and – as far as their means allow – supplement them with new collections and acquisitions. The Heritage of World War II programme will end in 2010, but the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport will still accept responsibility for keeping a watchful eye on the preservation and expansion of this digital infrastructure.





Colophon

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