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СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

А. А. Сеницын, И. Р. Тантлевский ЭТНОС—ЭТОС—ЛОГОС: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ПО КУЛЬТУРЕ ДИАСПОР, ТРАНСКУЛЬТУРАЦИИ, АККУЛЬТУРАЦИИ И НАЦИОНАЛЬНОМУ САМОСОЗНАНИЮ (Вместо предисловия)	6
ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ПО ИСТОРИИ ЭТНОКУЛЬТУР И ДИАСПОР: ЕВРЕИ, ГРЕКИ, АРМЯНЕ	
J. R. Russell (<i>Harvard University; California State University, USA; The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel</i>) THE LYRE OF KING DAVID AND THE GREEKS	12
Т. Нотариус (<i>Еврейский университет в Иерусалиме, Израиль; Университет Фри-Стейт, Блумфонтейн, ЮАР</i>) АРПАХШАД, СЫН ШЕМА, В КОНТЕКСТЕ ЗАПАДНО-СЕМИТСКОГО ПРИСУТСТВИЯ В ЮЖНОЙ МЕСОПОТАМИИ: ХАЛДЕИ, АРАМЕИ, АРАБЫ	34
А. А. Sinitsyn (<i>Saint Petersburg State University; The Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities, Russia</i>) “KNOW THYSELF” THROUGH THE DIALOGUE WITH THE OTHERS: FORMATION OF THE ANCIENT CULTURAL DICHOTOMY “HELLENES—BARBARIANS”	48
М. Л. Kisilier (<i>Saint Petersburg State University; Institute for Linguistic Studies Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia</i>) FOLKLORE, LITERATURE AND IDENTITY, OR ONCE MORE ABOUT AZOV GREEKS	83
Ф. А. Елоева (<i>Saint Petersburg State University, Russia; University of Vilnius, Lithuania</i>) SOME REFLEXES OF A FISH CULT IN PONTIC TRADITION	98
А. О. Месропян (<i>Институт языка имени Р. Ачаряна НАН РА, Республика Армения</i>) АСПЕКТЫ РАЗВИТИЯ АРМЯНСКИХ ДИАЛЕКТОВ В ДИАСПОРЕ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ СТРАН	108
З. Копельман (<i>Еврейский университет в Иерусалиме, Израиль</i>) ЖАБОТИНСКИЙ: ОТ РОМАНТИКИ ЧТЕНИЯ К ПОСТУПКУ	117

A. Voone (*The Hague, Netherlands*)
THE DEPORTATION OF GERMAN JEWS FROM THE NETHERLANDS
TO GERMANY BY THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT IN THE PERIOD
1945–1950 142

И. С. Бренер (*Институт комплексного анализа региональных проблем
Дальневосточного отделения РАН, Россия*),

В. Н. Журавлев (*РО «Российское военно-историческое общество»
в ЕАО, Россия*)
АМБИДЖАН—БИРОБИДЖАН: ИСТОРИЯ ФОТОАЛЬБОМА,
ПОСВЯЩЕННОГО 20-ЛЕТИЮ НАЧАЛА ПЕРЕСЕЛЕНИЯ ЕВРЕЕВ
В БИРОБИДЖАНСКИЙ РАЙОН ДАЛЬНЕВОСТОЧНОГО КРАЯ 152

ИЗ ИСТОРИИ ЕВРЕЙСКОЙ МЫСЛИ

У. Гершович (*Еврейский университет в Иерусалиме, Израиль;
Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Россия*)
К ВОПРОСУ О ФАКТОРАХ РАЗВИТИЯ И ТИПОЛОГИИ
СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ ЕВРЕЙСКОЙ ФИЛОСОФИИ 185

Yu. V. Shaposhnikova (*Saint Petersburg State University, Russia*)
ISAAC BEN SOLOMON ISRAELI AND HIS ROLE IN THE FORMATION
OF THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH 207

**THE DEPORTATION OF GERMAN JEWS
FROM THE NETHERLANDS TO GERMANY
BY THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT
IN THE PERIOD 1945–1950**

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The story of Anne Frank is well known, but what happened to the German Jews in the Netherlands after the Holocaust is less known. German Jews who fled to the Netherlands were confronted with triple persecution, prior to the Second World War in Germany, during the war in the Netherlands and after the war by the Dutch government. The post-war deportations lasted far longer than the deportations during the war. At the end of the Second World War the Dutch government decided to no longer make a distinction between Jews and non-Jews, but to qualify every resident with the German nationality as an enemy of the Netherlands. German Jews who returned from concentration camps were arrested upon arrival at the Dutch border and imprisoned in internment camps among former SS soldiers. German Jews in the Netherlands had to apply for a no-enemy declaration individually, in order not to be expropriated and deported to Germany. In October 1944 the Dutch government with the “decision enemy property” started to expropriate German Jews in the Netherlands. This expropriation continued until July 1951. From October 1945 onwards, German residents were deported to Germany. German Jewish refugees were among the first to be arrested by the Dutch police, imprisoned in internment camps and deported to Germany. From 11 September 1946 onwards this postwar ethnic cleansing was named Operation Black Tulip. Many German Jews from the Netherlands migrated to Israel and other countries, since they could no longer consider Germany or the Netherlands as their home. The diaspora can be regarded as the outcome of the incompetence of the ruling power in a society to protect different (ethnic/religious) groups against each other and against the ruling power.

Keywords: Holocaust aftermath, German and Jewish diaspora, Dutch government policy, expropriation, internment camps, deportation to Germany

ДЕПОРТАЦИЯ ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВОМ НИДЕРЛАНДОВ НЕМЕЦКИХ ЕВРЕЕВ В ГЕРМАНИЮ В 1945–1950 ГГ.

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История Анны Франк известна хорошо, но то, что произошло с немецкими евреями в Нидерландах после Холокоста, менее известно. Немецкие евреи, бежавшие в Нидерланды, столкнулись с тройным преследованием голландского правительства до Второй мировой войны в Германии, во время войны в Нидерландах и после войны. Послевоенные депортации длились гораздо дольше, чем депортации во время войны. В конце Второй мировой войны голландское правительство решило больше не проводить различия между евреями и неевреями, но квалифицировать каждого жителя германского происхождения как врага Нидерландов. Немецкие евреи, вернувшиеся из концентрационных лагерей, были арестованы по прибытии на голландскую границу и заключены в лагеря для интернированных вместе с бывшими солдатами СС. Немецкий еврей в Нидерландах должен был индивидуально подавать заявку на декларацию, чтобы не быть экспроприированным и депортированным в Германию. В октябре 1944 г. голландское правительство по «постановлению о вражеской собственности» начало экспроприировать немецких евреев в Нидерландах. Эта экспроприация продолжалась до июля 1951 г. С октября 1945 г. немецкие граждане были депортированы в Германию. Немецкие еврейские беженцы были одними из первых арестованы голландской полицией, заключены в лагеря интернирования и депортированы в Германию. С 11 сентября 1946 г. эта послевоенная этническая чистка получила название «Черный тюльпан». Многие немецкие евреи из Нидерландов мигрировали в Израиль и другие страны, поскольку они больше не могли рассматривать Германию или Нидерланды как свой дом. Диаспору можно рассматривать как результат некомпетентности правящей власти в обществе для защиты различных (этнических/религиозных) групп друг от друга и против правящей власти.

Ключевые слова: последствия Холокоста, германская и еврейская диаспоры, политика правительства Нидерландов, экспроприация, лагерь интернирования, депортация в Германию

INTRODUCTION

According to the thought of philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), people agree with the ruling power in a society in exchange for protection against each other by that ruling power. In this respect, the diaspora can be regarded as the outcome of the shortcoming of the ruling power in a society to protect different (ethnic/religious) groups against each other and against the ruling power. Not having the nationality of the host country is related to not having certain rights, such as the right to vote. Refugees (still) do not have the right to vote in their host country. Because refugees do not belong to the electorate, they for politicians tend to be subordinate to their voters. Refugees are nowadays better protected against hostile political policies regarding them by international law. In the first half of the twentieth century refugees had to rely entirely on political decisions and sudden policy changes of their host country. The UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was signed in Geneva on July 28, 1951¹. Until July 26, 1951 German Jewish Holocaust survivors in the Netherlands were still treated as enemies of the Netherlands by the Dutch government. Immigration policy in the Netherlands was for decades more based on economical than on humanitarian considerations. The ruling power in Dutch society was in addition to the government, for example, the catholic church. In the post-war years, the cardinal of the catholic church in catholic newspapers openly criticized the hostile policy of the Dutch government vis-à-vis foreigners. The political leadership was accused of brutal behavior. This led to a heavy clash between the Dutch government and the catholic church in the post-war years from time to time.

This article focuses on the refugee policy of the Dutch government as a ruling power in the years prior to and after the Second World War.

DUTCH GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARDS GERMAN JEWS BETWEEN 1933 AND 1951

In the first half of the twentieth century the Immigration Law from 1849 was applicable in the Netherlands. All foreigners with a valid passport and sufficient means of subsistence were admitted to the Netherlands. Foreigners without a valid passport/finances were admitted to the Netherlands if they looked trustworthy and if there were opportunities for them to find work in the Netherlands. Foreigners without resources could be expelled from the Netherlands (on an individual basis).

In 1933 the Netherlands did not have specific policy concerning German Jewish refugees. In that year, thousands of Jewish and hundreds of political

¹ However, the expropriation and deportation of German Jews from the Netherlands to Germany in the post-war years was in 1951 by the International Refugee Organization declared outside of its mandate (as appears from archive research).

refugees came from Germany to the Netherlands, mainly the wealthy and intellectuals.

Until the end of May 1934, a valid passport and sufficient financial resources remained the admission criteria. In the spring of 1934 stricter entry requirements for German refugees were applied. On May 7, 1938, the Minister of Justice sent a circular to all officials charged with the implementation of the refugee policy. A refugee had to be regarded as an unwanted stranger, who had to be refused at the border or, if already present in the Netherlands, had to be expelled. Exceptions should only be made in case of a demonstrable life threat. The Minister of Justice stated that this circular had to be regarded as a dam against flooding, the Netherlands were at risk to be flooded by refugees for the Nazi regime². The refugee policy was divided over different ministries. For each ministry the problems of refugees remained a matter that was subordinate to other objectives, such as the protection of the Dutch economic interests.

In November 1938 over 50 000 German Jews fled to the Netherlands, tens of thousands were refused, the border was closed on December 15, 1938³. From 9 October 1939 onwards the Dutch government started to concentrate the German refugees in camp Westerbork (before refugees were given shelter in about 25 homes). Refugees of the ship *St. Louis* were sent to camp Westerbork after their arrival in the Netherlands. From police records, camp reports, letters and diary fragments from the period 1938 until 1940, it appears in what situation Jewish refugees found themselves in the Netherlands⁴.

On May 10, 1940 there was the German invasion in the Netherlands. German residents were regarded as enemies. Tens of thousands of adult German men were imprisoned in the Netherlands, among them were German Jewish refugees. It was forbidden for Germans (including refugees) in the Netherlands to leave their homes. The Dutch queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch government fled to England on May 13, 1940. The Netherlands surrendered on May 14, 1940 to the Germans (the city of Rotterdam was bombed this day).

After the war, German Jews who had survived the war in hiding or concentration and extermination camps were treated as enemies and perpetrators, instead of as victims. They were imprisoned in camps in the Netherlands between German soldiers, they were forced to work in these camps and they were treated poorly⁵.

In October 1944 the Decision Enemy Property was carried out by the Dutch government. This Dutch law was created in order to expropriate assets found and owned by Germans in the Netherlands⁶. The Dutch government put administrators in charge of managing the assets of Germans (until July 1951),

² Merriënboer van 1989, 38–41.

³ Zee van der 2011, 41.

⁴ Berghuis 1990.

⁵ Lipschits 2001, 70–71.

⁶ Staatsblad E 133: Besluit vijandelijk vermogen. October 20, 1944.

over 20 000 employees handled over 150 000 cases. Germans had to request a no-enemy declaration individually in order to receive their property back. A no-enemy declaration was however no guarantee for restitution of expropriated property.

German Jews had to apply for a no-enemy declaration individually. Although the Dutch government was well aware of the problems this caused for them, this policy was continued for years⁷.

Among the German Jews who applied for a no-enemy declaration was for example Otto Frank, who was labeled as an enemy and expropriated by the Dutch government upon his return in the Netherlands. He received his no-enemy declaration in 1947, the year Anne Frank's diary was published. His property was returned to him shortly after the publication of the diary⁸.

With the Foreigners circular of October 1, 1945, the Dutch government instructed the Dutch local police chiefs to remove persons with the German nationality from the Netherlands. Regarded as persons with the German nationality were those who on May 4, 1945 had the German nationality, or were without nationality, but previously had the German or Austrian nationality and the offspring born from them, who were not Dutch nationals⁹.

A temporary residence permit to persons of Germany nationality could be given to those whose continued residence in the Netherlands was considered necessary in Dutch interest. As well to German nationals who were already on May 10, 1940 in the Netherlands with the approval of the Dutch government and who had behaved before and during the war as a sincere friend of the Dutch people. And to those Germans who had during the war participated in the Dutch domestic resistance in such a way, that as a form of recognition they could be granted a temporary stay in the Netherlands. German nationals were thus only judged on basis of their attitude and behavior towards the Netherlands and the Dutch population during the war. The attitude and behavior towards the Jews in the Netherlands during the war were completely absent in the Dutch government policy.

The chiefs of local police advised the immigration service which Germans according to them could stay in the Netherlands and which should leave, the immigration service had to take their advice into account. On December 10, 1945 the local police chiefs received the regulations for the policy implementation, such as questionnaires they had to fill in for each German from 16 years of age and older. German nationals did not receive legal aid, their legal position was therefore weak, they could not defend themselves in any way against the local police chiefs and against this government policy in general.

⁷ Aalders 2001, 340–341.

⁸ Nationaal Archief, NBI file No 77827 (concerning Otto Frank).

⁹ Departement van Justitie. Vreemdelingencirculaire A. October 1, 1945.

On September 11, 1946 the Dutch government launched Operation Black Tulip¹⁰. German nationals were imprisoned in camps along the border between the Netherlands and Germany. The largest internment camps in the Netherlands were camp Mariënbosch and camp Avegoor. The camp commander of camp Mariënbosch was Jacques Schol, he was a camp commander of (transit) camp Westerbork (from July 16, 1940 until January 1943). The post-war deportations were organized in the same manner as the deportations during the war. Several times per week large groups of Germans (including ill and elderly persons) were deported by trucks to the British zone and by train to the American and French zone in Germany (deportation to the Russian zone appeared to be problematic). In a newspaper article these deportations were described as “the export of unwanted Germans”¹¹. Camp Avegoor had been a forced labor camp for Jewish men during the war. The main building of camp Mariënbosch recently has become student housing and camp Avegoor is nowadays a hotel, nothing reminds of the post-war deportations that took place there for years. At the site of camp Mariënbosch the (German) students can currently only find signs with information about wildlife protection there.

The deportees included German Jews who had survived the war in hiding or concentration camps, and political (and economic) refugees who had fled to the Netherlands during the interwar period. As well Germans who had left Germany at the time of the German empire and who had lived in the Netherlands for many decades, but still had the German nationality. Many German citizens had not applied for the Dutch nationality because for example they did not consider it to be necessary, they did not want it, it was impossible for them or because it was too expensive for them.

German Jewish refugees belong to both the German and the Jewish diaspora. Prior and during the war they were persecuted in their homeland and host land because they were Jewish, after the war because they had the German nationality prior to the liberation of the Netherlands.

German Jews had lost their German citizenship through the Eleventh Decree to the Law on the Citizenship of the Reich enacted on November 25, 1941. According to this law, Jews living outside Germany on or after November 27, 1941 were deprived of their German citizenship and their property in Germany. After the war, German Jews were treated hostile deliberately for many years by the Dutch government. Their personal circumstances were ignored. They were expropriated again, imprisoned in camps and deported to Germany against their will. Consequently German Jews could no longer consider their homeland or host land as their home.

In October 1946 (one month after the start of Operation Black Tulip) a separate cemetery for Germans was established by the Dutch Defense min-

¹⁰ Sintemaartensdijk, Nijland 2009.

¹¹ Sag’ beim Abschied leise Servus. *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*. July 8, 1947.

istry in Ysselsteyn municipality in the Netherlands¹². Since October 15, 1946 over 31 500 Germans were buried here, thousands of them still have not been identified. On this cemetery as well Germans were buried who died in the years after the liberation. The cemetery for Germans in the Netherlands is the largest war cemetery in the Netherlands and it is the largest war cemetery for Germans worldwide. To many this cemetery is unknown however, the Dutch government policy for decades has been to deliberately attract no attention at all to this cemetery. On November 1, 1976 the maintenance for this cemetery was transferred to the German Federal Government.

The memorandum was formulated in 1946, it indicates who should be commemorated in the Netherlands during the annual national commemoration on the 4th of May in the Netherlands:

During the National Commemoration we commemorate the Dutch victims of war. All — civilians and military — who in the Kingdom of the Netherlands or wherever in the World passed away or were murdered since the start of the Second World War and after the Second World War in war situations and during peace operations.

The text of the memorandum was adjusted several times. In 1961 the war situations and peace operations after the Second World War were added. Only since 2011 the word “murdered” was added to the text, this was requested by the Jewish community in the Netherlands, to refer to the deliberate destruction of Jews, Sinti and Roma during the Shoah. The focus on the suffering of the Netherlands and the Dutch population during the war is still reflected in the memorandum, in this text no specific attention is paid to the suffering of Jews.

With the Foreigners circular of August 25, 1947, new guidelines were provided to the police and the immigration service. For a temporary residence permit were eligible Germans whose stay in the Netherlands was considered necessary in Dutch interest. As well those who were already in the Netherlands on May 10, 1940 with the approval of the Dutch government and who had not turned against the Dutch people during the war and had not provided services to the occupier and its propaganda. And those who had settled in the Netherlands during the enemy occupation and had fully supported the Dutch resistance. After the introduction of this new circular, still thousands of German nationals (including German Jews) were deported to Germany, as appears from the deportation lists.

Because the Dutch government deported an unknown amount of German Jews after the war, the estimation of (German Jewish) Holocaust survivors from the Netherlands could be incorrect. The issuing of death certificates for missing German Jews by the Dutch government only started after the post-

¹² Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.: Leaflet about the cemetery in Ysselsteyn.

war deportations came to an end. Not all German Jews mentioned on Dutch war monuments actually died during the war, several of them survived the war. One can find them on for example post-war lists of survivors who returned to the Netherlands after the war¹³.

Narratives from German Jews can be found in old newspaper articles. Germans were transported from Dutch detention camps by armed guards and by truck to for example the refugee camp in Lüstringen. A Jewish woman in that camp told the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* that she was detained sixteen months behind barbed wire because she refused to divorce her German husband. All her relatives had been deported to Poland by the Gestapo and gassed there. A singer told her husband was a famous organist in the Netherlands. He lived in Ravensbrück since 1943, and since the liberation of the Netherlands he lived in a camp. Upon his return in 1945, he died shortly thereafter as a result of maltreatment. His wife was not allowed to attend the funeral by the camp commander, she remained imprisoned in the camp¹⁴.

Nearly half of the Jews from the Netherlands who emigrated to Israel in the post-war years were German Jews. This was also caused by the hostile Dutch policy towards German Jews, they were forced to leave the Netherlands. Passengers of the *St. Louis* who had survived concentration camps emigrated to Israel. With their Israeli passport they had to apply for a visa to travel to the Netherlands. The Dutch government examined their reliability before giving them permission to visit the Netherlands¹⁵.

By the end of July 1951, the Dutch government liquidated the expropriated property of German nationals who had not received a no-enemy declaration until then. The total value of the post-war expropriated property has remained unclear until now.

Personal files that were compiled by the Dutch government on German residents are mainly archived in the Central Archive Special Justice (CABR). The CABR consists of hundreds of thousands of files and is about four kilometers in length. This archive is restricted accessible until January 1, 2025. It was transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Dutch National Archive on November 6, 2000. Since September 1, 2012 it is prohibited (for example for relatives, researchers and journalists) to make copies or take pictures of these files. Requests for access to the CABR increase in recent years, currently there are about four hundred requests per month.

Files contain personal correspondence and sometimes pictures of the persons concerned. Accusations from third parties as well as positive statements from third parties (such as relatives, friends, acquaintances, neighbors) can be found in the files. As well the files contain information about the expropriated

¹³ This is one of the findings of my own archive research.

¹⁴ Als "Schwarze Tulpen" abgeschoben. *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. June 29, 1948.

¹⁵ This information is based on my own archive research.

property (such as real estate, bank deposits, valuable household goods). These are the files of the NBI (the Dutch Management Institute), this government institute managed the expropriated property and charged management fees for this, to be paid by the expropriated person.

According to the Dutch National Archive there is insufficient staff to anonymize the data in the personal files. The archive is currently not well organized. Proper organization of the archive would take years, therefore the decision is made by the national archivist not to organize the archive properly. Furthermore the physical state of certain documents is vulnerable, therefore it is impossible to make copies of them according to the current national archivist. And with about 400 requests for information per month it can be expected that (too) many requests for reproductions will be made.

According to the Dutch legislation (law protection of personal data) the privacy of the persons concerned should be protected. The deceased don't have privacy. Applicants requesting access to files must demonstrate that the person has passed away when this person is born less than hundred years ago. If the person is still alive, the applicant must have permission from that person in order to receive access to the file. Copies of files are only provided for legal proceedings or because of (conflicting) international law. According to the Dutch Archive Law (1995) there may be restrictions on disclosure for a certain period of time because of respect for privacy. This argument is often used. There may be also be restrictions on disclosure because of the interest of the state or its allies. This argument is rarely referred to, although upon closer insight it is very plausible that this also applies concerning the human rights violations in the post-war period.

RECAPITULATION

German Jewish Holocaust survivors were qualified as enemies instead of victims by the Dutch government for years. German Jews who fled to the Netherlands were confronted with triple persecution, prior to the Second World War in Germany, during the war in the Netherlands and after the war by the Dutch government. German Jews had to provide evidence that they had behaved as sincere friends of the Dutch population and the Netherlands during the war. The post-war treatment of German Jews by the Dutch government can be summarized as bureaucratic, inhospitable, hostile and humiliating. The post-war deportations lasted far longer than the deportations during the war, these deportations have contributed significantly to the expansion of the German Jewish diaspora. Human rights violations in the Netherlands in the post-war years are still a taboo subject; they are silenced in history lessons, museums, at camp sites and the national war commemoration.

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