

Checks and balances within Jewish self-help organisations in the early modern times: The longitudinal effect of proper governance on government-nonprofit relations

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This research is focused on effective governance of welfare provision by analysing patterns of checks and balances, accountability and transparency. We study the case of welfare provision by the Jewish communities in Amsterdam during the 17th-19th centuries. Since each group had to take care of its own poor, the Jewish communities established their own welfare system. The dynamics of the community leadership with the Dutch government can be analysed by using the well documented regulations of Jewish self-help organisations and the Dutch legislation. This social historical case offers a unique longitudinal perspective into nonprofits-government relations.

Proper management, accountability and transparency are vital for the existence of nonprofits. It affects their reputation, legitimacy, and licence to operate, as well as their relationship with government. Longitudinal research on proper management of nonprofits can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex nonprofit-government relations.

The research is done by analysing multiple archival texts in Yiddish, Hebrew and Dutch. Intra community regulations, amendments, protocols, letters and pamphlets are used alongside municipal decisions, letters and legislation. The analysis is done using qualitative methods, by coding the texts into themes and revealing patterns and phenomena.

This historical research enables us to track the internal and external long-term effects of insufficient checks and balances on the Jewish welfare system. The expected findings are that while individual occurrences of irregularities are negligible, systematic inappropriate management results in the collapse of a nonprofit, as it gradually loses its right to operate.

Focusing on means for ensuring proper governance, the research exposes 3 phases in the relationship between the Dutch government and Jewish nonprofits and the effect of [insufficient] checks and balances and exceptions to the rules. The findings are that systematic improper governance severely damaged Jewish welfare organisations. At the climax, both the community itself and the Dutch government had very low trust in the Jewish self-help organisations, and this impaired their legitimacy and their ability to alleviate poverty. When the Dutch Jews were emancipated [became equal citizens], the old, oligarchic, Jewish welfare system collapsed and alternative nonprofit welfare mechanisms slowly developed to support the poor. Due to negative past experiences of the government with improper management of Jewish self help organisations, the government did not rush to support the new self-help initiatives.

The virtue of precious stones, and the virtue of their dealer. Ishack de Matatia Aboab and his book of all precious stones (1690)

José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim

In the collection of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, in Amsterdam, appears a small handwritten book of 49 pages, whose title page bears the long title *Livro que dá Noticias de todas as Pedras preciosas, seu Nascimento; Origem, Calidades, Preços; e Vertudes (Book that gives News of all Precious Stones, their Birth; Origin, Qualities, Prices; and Virtues)*, dating from 1690. From the sequence of the text, it is understood that the first part of the manuscript is addressed to jewelers; and the second one - that of virtues - to doctors.

The work's author is Ishack de Matatia Aboab, who explains at the end of the title page that it is a summary of the original, addressed to his children and anyone who intends to read it. But the calligrapher, that is, the person who wrote the little book, is someone just announced at the bottom of the page as B.O., that is, most likely Benjamin Senior Godines, a “protégé” artist, who collaborated with him on other compilations and even on creating a painting with a scene from the Memento Mori, in which Aboab is the main protagonist. In fact, the letters are the same as the other compilations whose calligrapher is Godines.

Ishack de Matatia Aboab was a businessman and at the same time a moralist, as can be seen from the works he wrote or had written or painted by Benjamin Senior Godines, at his order, thinking above all about the education and destiny of his children who, as was commonplace in a society of orders, should follow their father's example. Now, the example that Ishack de Matatia Aboab intended to convey was that of an efficient and triumphant man in his business, because he combined the talent and knowledge of his business practice with a moral behavior that offered him the image of a cultured, dignified and honest man, it means, the image of "political man". This image was used by the great figures of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam because it was useful in relations both with the Calvinist authorities and even with entities in the Iberian world with which they continued to maintain privileged relations of a political, social and economic nature.

Our goal is to verify how this social, economic, political and moral utility strategy is reflected in a work that deals with one of the most sublime economic matters.

Forming Futures in Facets: Social Mobility of Jewish Diamond Workers' Children, 1870-1940

Joris Kok

The diamond industry and corresponding union were important drivers of social mobility for the Jewish community in Amsterdam. Thousands of Jewish men and women were able to escape poverty by entering this unique Jewish niche. But what was its impact on Jewish diamond workers' children? In this study, I look at the social mobility and integration of Jewish diamond workers' sons and daughters from 1870 up to 1940. To do so, I use a range of sources to document and analyse their life trajectories, including the union's membership administration, civil records, and a database of life courses for over 500 Jewish diamond workers.

In short, two opposing effects pulled diamond workers' offspring in different directions. Initially, the allure of high wages from early ages during prosperous times pulled the children to follow in their parents' footsteps. This occupational following meant a perpetuation of well-paid employment until the onset of a devastating crisis in 1920. Afterwards, the industry transformed into a precarious dead-end, often resulting in downward mobility for long-term unemployed workers forced to make a living elsewhere. Concurrently, the influence of the diamond workers' union, which emphasised education, self-improvement, and culture, pushed more offspring towards higher education and careers in art or white-collar positions. Overall, the multifaceted influence of the industry and union uplifted thousands of working-class Jewish families both directly and indirectly, with impacts often being felt across generations.

Weergevonden: The image of the Jew in a Dutch silent film

Eyal Boers

"Weergevonden" ("Lost and Found") is a 1914 Dutch silent film directed by Louis H. Christpijn. It is not only the first film produced by Hollandia Studios and one of the first Dutch feature films, but also the only Dutch film in the years preceding World War II which deals directly with Jewish issues and as such occupies a significant place in the broader discussion of the representation of Jews in film. The film was made six years before the 1920 German film "Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam" ("The Golem: How He came into the World"), which is widely considered one of the earliest and most influential extant cinematic depictions of European images of Jews.

"Weergevonden" tells the story of Dora, the eldest daughter of a widowed and blind Orthodox Jew, who falls in love with a non-Jewish doctor and is therefore expelled from the house by her father. Because Dora's job is the source of the family's livelihood, her father and younger sister Lea fall into poverty. When they can no longer pay the rent, they are thrown out of their house, and find themselves wandering the Dutch countryside. Once in the big city, the father stumbles into a canal, and Lea, though unable to swim, jumps into the water to save him. As a result of the incident, Lea becomes very ill. A doctor is called to examine her - Dora's husband. After the doctor saves Lea's life, her grateful father accepts him, and the family reunites.

The film raises three themes which many silent films around the world faced at the time of its release: The first theme is the generation gap, the second is the gap between the rich and the poor, and the third theme is assimilation versus cultural-religious conservatism.

In relation to the image of the Jew, the film uses three motifs which will reappear in later cinematic depictions of Jews in Dutch cinema: The first motif is a dramatic transformation the Jew goes through. The second is the presentation of the Jew as a strange outsider, fearful of any change. The third motif is the Jew as a passive victim who is saved by an active and heroic Dutch Christian.

Translation as Insulation. The Life and Work of A.E. Boutelje During World War II

Gaëtan Regniers

In the initial decades of the twentieth century, numerous Jews participated actively as translators within Europe, a phenomenon observable within the Netherlands as well. A crucial inquiry arises concerning the dynamics of their engagement in light of policies implemented in Nazi-Germany and consequently in other European nations, explicitly designed to foment heightened animosity towards Jewish people. Moreover, an examination of the ramifications of the progressively challenging living and working conditions on the mediating role assumed by these translators warrants scholarly investigation. This paper endeavors to elucidate these intricate dynamics through a comprehensive exploration of a selected case study.

Abraham Elias Boutelje (1894-1943), one of the first qualified translators of Slavic and Finno-Ungic languages in The Netherlands, established a significant legacy as a literary translator. Notably, during the German occupation, Boutelje undertook a remarkable endeavor by producing the inaugural direct translation from Russian to Dutch of Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace," a work inherently poignant given the circumstances. This undertaking positioned Boutelje, a Jew with Communist leanings, as the translator working within occupied territory on a text from the language of Nazi Germany's foremost adversary. Drawing insights from extensive correspondence between Boutelje and the publisher, this

study juxtaposes the translation process of this monumental literary work with Boutelje's progressively challenging working conditions. It elucidates how, for Boutelje, the act of translating this quintessential war narrative served as a means of personal insulation from the tumultuous realities of the war, providing a method to distance himself from its direct impact. Paradoxically, the letters inadvertently bear witness to the tightening grip of the Nazis on cultural life in the Netherlands, with Jews emerging as the initial victims of this encroachment.

The imperative to scrutinize the working and living conditions of Jewish translators arises from their distinguished role as exemplary bridge-builders, conducting their translation endeavors primarily driven by a profound sense of commitment. Additionally, in instances involving translations from Russian, these translators frequently represented emigrants seeking assimilation within a new societal framework during an epoch marked by exceptional international tension. An attentive consideration of the contributions made by Jewish translators proves beneficial to both historical and literary-cultural research endeavors.

Shoah and Autofiction

Louise Counet

The years following the end of World War II were marked by great changes. All fields, including literature, were affected. The term autofiction entered the literary debate in the 1960s and 1970s, with a definition attributed to the French writer and literary critic Serge Doubrovsky. According to him, autofiction allows the writer to distance themselves from the subject and use what Doubrovsky describes as analytical writing. What's more, the use of autofiction allows the author to use different narrative perspectives, or focalisations, in Gerard Genette's terms, to express the feelings and emotions of the characters in the story. In the early 2000s, literary researchers examined the link between autofiction and the Shoah. According to Brigitta Simbürger, history and literature have always been in dialogue. The dissertation entitled 'Autofiktives Schreiben in Hertha Ligeti's Roman *Die Sterne verlöschen nicht*' is an in-depth analysis of the novel "Die Sterne verlöschen nicht" based on the theory of autofiction. The author Hertha Ligeti, born on 11 November 1920 in Vienna, was a former Jewish-Communist resistance fighter who went into exile in Belgium following the annexation of Austria in 1938. From 1938 to 1943, she was an active member of the österreichische Freiheitsfront, which cooperated with the Belgian Resistance. In 1943 she was arrested and interned in the Saint-Gilles prison. She was later transferred to the Kazerne Dossin and finally deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on 15 January 1944. Her novel deals with the lives of various characters, Austrians, Communists and Jews, who flee Austria - following its annexation in 1938 - to take refuge in Brussels and recounts their exile in Belgium, their deportation to Auschwitz and the liberation of the camps. Although this is a novel, as mentioned in the paratext, certain facts correspond to reality, including the names of certain characters, the names of places and the events described.

The faith of the Jews at the Green Border

Ludo Verbist

The faith of the Jews at the Green Border is an ongoing research project focused on the faith of the Jewish people who tried to flee their country for persecution by the Nazis. They fled from Poland, Austria and Germany in the hope to build a new life in Belgium or abroad. The green border was a

natural border, so a perfect place to cross the border unnoticed. You could easily disappear into the dense pine forests.

This presentation is an overview of the dangers associated with trying to cross the German/Belgian border illegally. It also shows the inventiveness of the fleeing Jews – and their helpers – in their attempts to cross the border. Terms as *Judenhelfer*, *Judensmuggler*, *Judentreiber* and *Judenjäger*, will be clarified. The project as well as the presentation focus on three time frames: 1933-1935/1935-1938/1938-1940. An interesting item is the corruption of both the Nazis and customs officers in this. A testimony of Mister Leo Bau confirms the above thesis of corruption. (*Das durfte keiner wissen*) Children helped Jews to cross the border. A well-known example is the procession from Aachen to Moresnet.

Jewish resistance in Antwerp (1940-1944)

Janiv Stamberger and Dorien Styven

For a long time, the widespread notion prevailed that the Jewish community in Belgium did not resist racial persecution and deportation. It was only in the 1980s, with the publication of historian Maxime Steinberg's seminal work *L'Etoile et le Fusil*, that the first steps were taken to correct this image. Despite reaching these first milestones in researching Jewish resistance in Belgium, no comprehensive study detailing the subject exists to this day.

Janiv Stamberger and Dorien Styven combined data from dozens of sources such as name indexes of post-war recognition files, membership lists and index cards of resistance networks, private archival collections and literature to calculate an approximation of how many Jewish resistance fighters were active in Belgium during the war and to address some basic questions that could not be answered until now: How does their number compare to non-Jewish resistance fighters? In which resistance networks were Jewish partisans active, and what types of resistance were they involved in? What was the distribution between men and women, between different age groups, and place of origin? And most importantly: what do the answers to these questions teach us about the Jewish resistance in Belgium?

Apart from sketching a general image of Jewish resistance in Belgium, the authors question how Jewish resistance developed in the port city of Antwerp. 'Antwerp specificity' - the more severe Jewish racial persecution in the city compared to other Belgian localities - as a historiographical concept has already been extensively described in studies such as *Vreemdelingen in een Wereldstad* by Lieven Saerens. Yet less attention has been paid to how this affected the development of different types of Jewish resistance. To what extent were Antwerp Jews under- or overrepresented in the Belgian resistance landscape? And what impact did the large outflow of Jews from Antwerp who went into hiding elsewhere in Belgium have on the resistance? Using both statistical data and several case studies – the Jewish Defence Committee, the Armed Partisans and the *Mädelarbeit* - Jewish resistance in the Scheldestad is (re)examined.

“There in that place of filthy memories”: Anglo-Canadian Reactions to the ‘Discovery’ of Auffangslager Breendonk

Richard Menkis, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)

In late September, 1944, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation aired a radio report from its war correspondent Matthew Halton, on the newly-liberated Breendonk. Halton was arguably the most knowledgeable anglophone Canadian reporter of European affairs generally, and of Nazi Germany specifically. Already in 1933, while he was a print journalist, he wrote a thirty-part series on the dangers of Nazi Germany for the *Toronto Daily*. While other observers ignored Nazi antisemitism, or saw it as a passing phenomenon, Halton was especially prescient about its trajectory and dangers. He was also in Germany during the Winter and Summer “Nazi Olympics” of 1936, and conveyed what was beneath the thin veneer of respectability that the Nazis were trying to project to the nations of the world.

We are thus studying the reactions of a seasoned and intelligent reporter, albeit one who had to conform to the censorship of wartime journalism. And what did he report? He struggled to describe the SS Prison Camp: the physical evidence of Nazi brutality; the haunting, defiant graffiti by prisoners scratched into its stone walls; and the reactions of a Canadian soldier. In this presentation, I will analyze the depiction of Breendonk as both similar to, and distinct from, the later intense Allied responses to Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald. I focus on three issues. First, I will show that Breendonk was used as a location to motivate soldiers and civilians who might wonder: “Why are we fighting?” Second, I will explore how Halton dealt with the issue of representing atrocities. And finally, while Breendonk has remained a potent symbol in Belgian memory, it has completely faded from Canadian memory, as has indeed the role of the Canadians in Belgium. The presentation discusses the reasons for this forgetting.

Mapping Contested Spaces in Post-War Jewish Amsterdam

Sietske van der Veen

Before World War Two, about ten per cent of the population of Amsterdam was Jewish. Of these 80,000 Jewish Amsterdammers, only a small proportion survived the Shoah. After the liberation of the Netherlands in May 1945, the ‘presence of the absence’ was palpable in the neighbourhoods where many Jews had lived, particularly in the former Jewish district, in the eastern part of the city centre. Yet in their first efforts to rebuild their own lives as well as Jewish communal life, those who returned from hiding, and later, from the camps, were often confronted with the indifference or even rudeness of administrative authorities and of their non-Jewish neighbours and fellow citizens. The restoration of Jews’ legal rights was a long and painful process, resulting in disputes about personal and communal property, and often loss, a second time over. Moreover, the post-war narrative of national recovery, which did not leave room for the victimisation of individual groups, also impacted the ways in which Jews were able to rebuild their lives within the urban landscape.

To investigate which definitions and meanings Jews and non-Jews attributed to Jewish places and spaces in the early post-war period, locations in the old Jewish quarter of Amsterdam and the adjacent Plantage and ‘Jewish canals’ neighbourhoods are analysed which became so-called ‘contested spaces’. Here, Jews and non-Jews, including individuals as well as the municipality, came into conflict over different interests. This paper focuses in particular on lesser known controversies regarding the preservation, demolition, and repurposing of Jewish homes, businesses, and communal

buildings. The first fifteen years after the war were significant, as much would change from the 1960s onwards, when different consecutive memory cultures emerged, and finally urban renewal radically transformed the face of Amsterdam's former Jewish district. The mapping of post-war contested Jewish spaces in Amsterdam and the debates surrounding them is a first step in laying the methodological groundwork for a research project on the Jewish and non-Jewish perceptions and conservation of (current and former) Jewish sites and quarters in European cities since 1945.

Ties, knots, community: Jews in the Dutch East Indies and the Holocaust (1933-1945)

Geraldien von Frijtag

As opposed to the Dutch 'West Indies' – the Dutch islands in the Caribbean and Suriname – the Dutch East Indies were historically not the home of a large Jewish community. In a census organized in 1932, the number of Jews living in the Asian archipelago was estimated at 2,000. Arguably, the small size of the community could be identified as one of the main reasons for the scarcity of scholarly literature on Jews/the Jewish community of the Dutch East Indies. Most studies are historical overviews. At the same time, there is an abundance of memoirs, diaries, and interviews of Jewish residents of the Dutch colony that have been published after decolonization. Yet scholars using this source-material focus mainly on life and experiences of Europeans (Jews and non-Jews) in Japanese internment camps.

The research presented in this paper uses the same rich source-material of eyewitness reports, yet for the purpose of systematically analyzing the life of Jews in the Dutch colony and reactions within the Jewish community of the Dutch East Indies to the Holocaust - the news from Nazi-ruled Europe, but also the arrival of Jewish refugees and passers-by in the colony. The paper aims to highlight the ambivalence of Jewish identity in Dutch colonial society. Following the footsteps of Salomon van Creveld, a leading Zionist in the colony, it will show how Jewish, Holocaust and colonial history were entangled – even at the micro-level of the individual.

Arriving in a colony in flux: Jewish WWII refugees in Suriname

Rosa de Jong

On Christmas Eve 1942, over a hundred, predominantly Jewish, refugees arrived in the Dutch colony of Suriname. Their (coming) arrival sparked heated debates, conflicts, and worries in the receiving society: among the colonial administrators, the century-old Jewish community, and non-Jewish Surinamese. Drawing from the archive of the Surinamese Neve Shalom synagogue, newspapers, untapped private archives, and interviews, this paper unravels the complex and multi-layered reactions in colonial Suriname to the Jewish refugees.

The refugees arrived in a rapidly changing Suriname. The outbreak of the war, the exile of the Dutch government, and the arrival of American soldiers stimulated political thinking about decolonization. The colonial economy was boosted by the bauxite export and many Surinamers moved from rural areas to Paramaribo. This paper argues that it is vital to comprehend this local context to understand the reactions towards the refugees.

As most of these European refugees joined the Ashkenazi community, this was a central place for conflict and reconciliation between the newcomers and the 'old local' Jews. At the micro level of this paper are two religious disputes that reveal many underlying tensions. Both conflicts took place in 1943 and surrounded two important Jewish holidays: Purim celebrations and the refugees' first High Holidays in Suriname. Combined the disputes portray how both sides adapted after clashing on these religious matters and found a working *modus vivendi* after the first year after arrival.

Furthermore, this paper delves into the attitudes towards the refugees outside the Jewish communities. For instance, the reactions of the colonial administration and religious leaders before and after the arrival of the refugees. It also taps into the broader attitude towards the refugees in Paramaribo through newspapers and interviews. It portrays the fear among non-Jewish Surinamers that these and other refugees would take over 'their' jobs and that they would cause food prices to increase even further. The paper demonstrates new lines of research opened up as a result of the colonial turn in Holocaust studies by combining this local colonial context with the Second World War refugees.