

# Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

## Correlating Objectives with Florida State Standards

### LESSON: The Holocaust in the Netherlands Grades 11-12/Corresponds to Panel #1

	<b>Objectives and Activities</b>	<b>Florida State Standards</b>
for Grades 11-12	<p><b>Summary:</b> The account of the Jews in Holland is studied in two lessons. One is a review of the history of the Jews in that country until World War I. The second lesson includes the history of during the Holocaust.</p>	<p><b>SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES</b> <b>STRAND: World History</b> <b>Standard 1: SS.912.W.1</b> – Utilize historical inquiry skills and analytical processes. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.1.1</b> – Use timelines to establish cause and effect relationships of historical events. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.1.4</b> – Explain how historians use historical inquiry and other sciences to understand the past. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.1.6</b> – Evaluate the role of history in shaping identity and character <b>Standard 7: SS.912.W.7</b> – Recognize significant causes, events, figures and consequences of the Great War period and the impact on world-wide balance of power. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.7.4</b>– Describe the causes and effects of the German economic crisis of the 1920s and the global depression of the 1930s, and analyze how governments responded to the great depression. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.7.6</b> – Analyze the restriction of individual rights and the use of mass terror against populations in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and occupied territories. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.7.7</b> – Trace the causes and key events related to World War II. <b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.7.8</b> – Explain the causes, events and effects of the Holocaust, 1933-1945, including its roots in the</p>
<i>This lesson is approximately one hour in length for each of <u>two</u> lessons</i>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>This lesson is part of an entire series on Holland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will be able to identify the rich heritage of the Jews of Holland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.</li> <li>2. Students will be able to articulate how the “Final Solution” was implemented in Holland?</li> <li>3. Students will demonstrate research skills by discovering the history of the Jews in Holland in the seventeenth century</li> <li>4. Students will be able to answer a series of questions regarding Jewish social strata in Holland.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What types of Jews lived in Holland? What brought them to Holland?</li> <li>b. What were the conditions for the Jews in Holland</li> <li>c. Who were the leaders?</li> <li>d. What did the Jews contribute to their host country?</li> <li>e. What were the steps used by the Nazis to implement the “Final Solution” in Holland?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
	<p><b>Suggested Procedures:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Divide students into five groups. Each group will study one topic, using books and websites on recommended list.</li> <li>B. Each group will present its topic in any creative way and will prepare a handout that summarizes the information presented.</li> </ol> <p>The topics are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Holland as a Refuge for Jews over the course of centuries: the Marranos of Spain and Portugal, German Jews (“Thirty Year War” between Protestants and Catholics). Inner tensions between Sephardic Jews and Ashkenazic Jews</li> <li>2. The history of the Spanish Portuguese Synagogue.</li> <li>3. A synopsis of the fascinating biography of Manasseh ben Israel that focuses on his accomplishments.</li> <li>4. Religious Conflict: Uriel Acosta and Baruch Spinoza, heretics.</li> <li>5. Jews contribute to the prosperity and culture of Holland. Jews were involved in the colonial trade, in the diamond industry, in lens grinding and in printing.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>This continuation should begin the second lesson:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. After group presentations, teacher offers a narrative introduction of the nature of the Nazi invasion into the Netherlands and its aftermath as it relates to Jews. Teacher distributes time line of Nazi occupation</li> </ol>	

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

	<p>and treatment of Jews (see attached) -  <a href="http://www2.humboldt.edu/rescuers/book/Strobos/Conditions.Holland.html">http://www2.humboldt.edu/rescuers/book/Strobos/Conditions.Holland.html</a></p> <p>D. Students read article: <b>A Founding Myth for the Netherlands: The Second World War and the Victimization of Dutch Jews</b>  <i>This article explores the development of the founding myth and examines its consequences for Dutch society. Specifically, this article focuses on Jewish victimization, both in the way it is remembered and constructed in the national myth and the way Jewish victimization has been perpetuated by the myth and its legacy.</i></p> <p>E. Teacher leads a discussion into the principles expounded in what the article reveals happened to the Jews of Holland and how the Dutch society dealt with it in the aftermath.</p> <p><b>Assessment -</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give each student several post-it notes and ask them to frame a sentence as to perceptions of the Holocaust 72 years later based on their readings and discussions.</li> <li>2. Use these post-its and the results to frame a discussion about our perceptions of the Holocaust.</li> </ol> <p><b>BOOKS AND MATERIALS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>A History of the Jews</i> by Solomon Grayzel, pages 490-497. Groups 1-5</li> <li>2. <i>Triumph of Survival</i> by Berel Wein, pages 28-30. Group 2</li> <li>3. <i>Lights of Exile</i> by Rabbi Zechariah Fendel, pages 57-71. Group 1</li> <li>4. <i>The Marrano Prince</i> by Avner Gold, pages 253-281. Group 1,5.</li> <li>5. <a href="https://www.britannica.com/biography/Manasseh-ben-Israel">https://www.britannica.com/biography/Manasseh-ben-Israel</a>, group 3</li> <li>6. <i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i>; Jews in the Netherlands: 17<sup>th</sup> century-Golden Age. Group 5</li> <li>7. Photos of Portuguese synagogue. Group 2</li> </ol> <p><a href="http://www.portugesesyagoge.nl">www.portugesesyagoge.nl</a> English. Group 2  <a href="http://www.oxfordchabad.org">www.oxfordchabad.org</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. <i>History of the Jewish communities of the Netherlands</i> by Rabbi Binyomin Jacobs. Group 1, 5.</li> <li>9. <i>The Netherlands in the Holocaust</i>  <a href="https://www.geni.com/projects/Holocaust-in-the-Netherlands/18628">https://www.geni.com/projects/Holocaust-in-the-Netherlands/18628</a></li> </ol>	<p>long tradition of anti-Semitism, 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas about race and nation and Nazi dehumanization of the Jews and other victims.</p> <p><b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.7.9 –</b> Identify the war time strategy and post war plans of the allied leaders.</p> <p><b>Benchmark: SS.912.W.7.11 –</b> Describe the effects of World War II.</p> <p><b>SUBJECT: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b></p> <p><b>STRAND: LAFS.1112.RI - Reading Standards for Informational Texts</b></p> <p><b>Cluster 1: LAFS.1112.RI.1 –</b> Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text...</p> <p><b>Benchmark: LAFS.1112.RI.1.2 –</b> Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text...</p> <p><b>Cluster 3: LAFS.1112.RI.1.3 –</b> Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.</p> <p><b>STRAND: LAFS.1112.RH - Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 612</b></p> <p><b>Cluster 3: LAFS.1112.RH.3 – integration of knowledge and ideas</b></p> <p><b>Benchmark: LAFS.1112.RH.3.7-</b> Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p>
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# Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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## The Holocaust in The Netherlands

Source: <https://www.geni.com/projects/Holocaust-in-the-Netherlands/18628>

In 1939, there were some 140,000 Dutch Jews living in the Netherlands, among them some 25,000 German-Jewish refugees who had fled Germany in the 1930s. The Nazi occupation force put the number of (racially) Dutch Jews in 1941 at some 154,000. In the Nazi census, some 121,000 persons declared they were members of the (Ashkenazi) Dutch-Israelite community; 4,300 persons declared they were members of the (Sephardic) Portuguese-Israelite community.

The census in 1941 gives an indication of the geographical spread of Dutch Jews at the beginning of World War II (province; number of Jews – this number is not based on the racial standards of the Nazis, but by what the persons declared themselves to be in the population census):

- Groningen – 4,682
- Friesland – 851
- Drenthe – 2,498
- Overijssel – 4,345
- Gelderland – 6,663
- Utrecht – 4,147
- North Holland – 87,026 (including 79,410 in Amsterdam)
- South Holland – 25,617
- Zeeland – 174
- North Brabant – 2,320
- Limburg – 1,394
- **Total =139,717**

## Survivors

In 1945, only about 35,000 of them were still alive. The exact number of "full Jews" who survived the Holocaust is estimated to be 34,379 (of whom 8,500 were part of a mixed marriage and thus spared deportation and possible death in the Nazi concentration camps.)

**The following chronology of events shows how the German occupation government imposed its will upon the Jewish population of Holland.**

**May 14, 1940:** Holland surrenders to Germany. Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart appointed Reichkommissar, the highest governing authority.

**October 1940:** Every government official must sign an affidavit that neither he, his wife, fiancée, parents, or grandparents are Jewish.

Jews are not to be promoted or appointed to government jobs.

All businesses owned or operated partly or fully by Jews, or in which Jews have a financial interest, must register with German authorities.

**November 1940:** Jews in the Dutch Civil Service are dismissed.

**December 1940:** Persons of German "blood" are not allowed to work in Jewish households.

**January 1940:** All Jews residing in Holland must register with German authorities. Failure to do so is punishable by 5 years in prison or confiscation of property, or both.

The Jewish Council, Joodsche Raad, is established, consisting of 20 members, including rabbis, lawyers and middle class business men.

**February 1941:** The Amsterdam ghetto is established following a series of incidents arising from an attack on the old Jewish quarter by groups of Dutch Nazi sympathizers. Several subsequent counterattacks by Jewish and Dutch youths set off severe reprisals by the Germans. A resultant general strike lasting several days is ruthlessly suppressed. This is the last large scale public demonstration of civilian protest in Holland to Nazi policies.

**March 1941:** Germans begin to "Aryanize" Jewish property.

The Jewish Council is given authority over all Jewish organizations.

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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Jews can no longer travel without a special permit from The Jewish Council, can not participate in the stock exchange, can not hold cultural posts, or enter public parks.

**April 1941:** German identification cards issued to the Dutch population.

**July 1941:** Jews who registered have their I.D. cards stamped with a large "J."

**August 1941:** Jewish children are barred from public and vocational schools.

All Jewish assets, including bank deposits, cash, and securities, are blocked in order to be confiscated. A maximum of 250 guilders per month is made available to a Jewish owner of such assets, for his own use.

**January 1942:** Forced labor camps for Jews are established.

**May 1942:** Jews must wear a yellow star with the word "Jew" printed on it.

Jews must observe a curfew between 8 P.M. and 6 A.M.

Jews are allowed to shop only between 3 P.M. and 5 P.M.

Public transportation is forbidden for Jews.

Telephones are forbidden to Jews.

Jews are forbidden to enter the homes of non-Jews.

German government is authorized to confiscate all Jewish property except for wedding rings and gold teeth.

**July 1942:** Deportations of Jews out of Holland begin.

Two concentration camps are established in Holland, Westerbork and Vught, from which Jews are shipped to other camps, primarily *Auschwitz*.

**September 1943:** In the last major round-up, 5,000 Jews, including the Jewish Council leaders, are sent to Westerbork.

**May 1945:** Holland is liberated by the Canadian Army.

### A Founding Myth for the Netherlands: The Second World War and the Victimization of Dutch Jews

by Matthijs Kronemeijer, Darren Teshima

<http://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/293-a-founding-myth-for-the-netherlands-the-second-world-war-and-the-victimization-of-dutch-jews/print>

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a tendency in Dutch society to look back to the war and characterize the Netherlands' role in the war in a positive and even heroic light. Individual stories of resistance against the Nazi regime and efforts to hide Dutch Jews have been documented and celebrated. As a whole, the Dutch nation has been viewed as a heroic country that attempted to save its Jewish citizens in the face of the Nazi occupation. As Frank Bovenkerk has noted, "Long after the end of the Second World War and the German occupation, the Dutch were still congratulating themselves on their heroic stance regarding the persecution of their Jewish countrymen." (Bovenkerk, 1999)

This positive image of the Netherlands' role in the Second World War and its opposition to the evil of the Nazi persecution of the Jews has become a founding myth for the Dutch nation. According to this myth, Dutch society was united in its resistance to anti-Jewish actions and collectively opposed the German occupying forces. This memory of national unity and coming to the aid of Dutch Jews has become a defining story for Dutch national identity. Internationally, the Dutch experience of the war has been symbolized by the universally recognized symbol of Anne Frank, the young girl who represents youthful innocence and suffering.

**According to the founding myth, the entire Dutch society, and not Dutch Jews alone, were victimized by the Nazi regime.** Since the end of the Second World War, Dutch society has been viewed largely as a collective body with a singular national history, in which collective resistance to and suffering of the Holocaust is central. Jewish victimization has been denied a distinct place in this founding myth. This article explores the development of the founding myth and examines its consequences for Dutch society. Specifically, this article focuses on Jewish victimization, both in the way it is remembered and constructed in the national myth and the way Jewish victimization has been perpetuated by the myth and its legacy.

Before exploring the different aspects of the founding myth and the historical context into which it was born and continues to operate, it is necessary to elaborate on what is meant by the term "founding myth." The memory of the Second World War

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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serves as a unifying memory that creates a sense of solidarity and national identity. As a myth, a national memory of past events takes on a life of its own, separate and distinct from the historical context in which the events took place. It is used to justify present social conditions and is a topic that affects public consciousness on various levels. The founding myth about the Second World War in the Netherlands states that all of Dutch society was united against the evil of the Nazi regime and Dutch society as a whole suffered from this evil. Its aim to create national unity in the aftermath of the war has been of central importance, even at the expense of historical accuracy.

The founding myth of the Second World War in the Netherlands did not develop immediately after the end of the war. In the aftermath of the war, the Netherlands, like the other European countries, faced the difficult task of rebuilding a society destroyed by the war. In addition to focusing its resources and attention toward rebuilding society according to the strict ideological and religious divides that characterized the Dutch “pillarized” society, the Netherlands also had to deal with two colonial wars in Indonesia immediately following the end of the war. Attention, therefore, was not placed on remembering or memorializing the war and the experiences of the Dutch Jews. Although there was some attention given to literary and historical works from survivors of the concentration camps, as well as the prosecution of certain criminals for war crimes, there was a general tendency in society not to focus close attention on the experience of the war.

Just as the Dutch society attempted to move beyond the destruction of the war, Holocaust survivors attempted to rebuild their lives. **For many individuals and the nation as a whole, the best way to move forward was to suppress their terrible memories and focus on living each day.** As one psychotrauma expert has noted, “The victim and his immediate social environment have a common interest in suppressing the threatening memories of the war and the more recent feelings of despair and confusion. In this way a ‘conspiracy of silence’ develops.” (Begemann, 1985, quoted in De Haan, 1998) Frieda Menco, a survivor of Auschwitz, describes how the experience of the Holocaust was not discussed in her family even though her husband was also a survivor of Auschwitz. In her family, it was not a subject that was spoken about; rather, there was a “deafening silence.” (Menco, 1997) Bill Minco, a resistance fighter, who is Jewish and survivor of Auschwitz stated in an interview that after the war, Jews and others were too busy just trying to get their lives back together to focus on what they had been through, a reality was all too near to them. He also suggested that at the official level the “conspiracy of silence” was maintained because many of the same Dutch officials who were in office before the war came back to their positions and did not want to look to the past for fear that what they might find would damage their public image. Therefore, at both the individual and collective level, the experience of the Holocaust was not immediately focused upon and its significance in the larger story of Dutch national identity was not immediately constructed in the first fifteen years after the end of the war.

The “conspiracy of silence” after the end of the war did not, however, entirely exclude the formation of views that would later become central to the founding myth. Chief among these views was the belief that many Dutch citizens risked their lives in the resistance movement against the Nazi regime. There were many stories of heroism during the war and these examples helped shape what Dienke Hondius has termed “the resistance norm.” (Hondius, 2000) Hondius argues that this resistance norm was formed immediately after the end of the war and that it had the effect of creating a standard for evaluating conduct during the war in terms of “goodness” “wrongness.” Although some Dutch individuals were singled out as wrongdoers, these people were immediately condemned by society and viewed as exceptions to the general standard of resistance that placed the Netherlands as a nation on the right side of the war, fighting for the good of all its citizens. Acts of individual heroism and resistance were not only celebrated, but also taken to be emblematic of the Dutch nation as a whole. The creation of this notion of collective resistance has become a cornerstone of the founding myth.

The acceptance of the notion that Dutch society as a whole was on the right side of the war and that solidarity with the Jews was the norm, rather than the exception, only compounded the silence surrounding the Jews’ experiences. Not only did Dutch Jews return home to a nation attempting to rebuild itself, they also returned home to an unwelcoming and unsympathetic Dutch society. Although some Jews may not have been ready to express their suffering in a public forum, others were ready and indeed needed such public recognition and support.

However, the Dutch society that was supposedly so helpful to its Jewish countrymen in the face of the Nazi persecution now expected Jews to help themselves and not bother public discussion with their troubles. Hondius argues that Jews were expected to be grateful for the help they received during the war from the Dutch and were not supposed to be too vocal in any attempt to receive special treatment as victims. Hondius points out one article from the resistance magazine, “De Patriot,” in July 1945, in which this attitude toward the proper role of the Jews in post-war Dutch society is expressed. The article states, “Now is the time for Jews to remind themselves all the time that they have to be thankful. And they have to show their

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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gratitude first of all by making up what has to be made up to those who have become victims on behalf of Jews. They may thank God that they came out alive. It is also possible to lose sympathy.... They are certainly not the only ones who had a bad time and who suffered.”(Hondius, 2000)

This sentiment is certainly not what one would expect from the supposedly heroic and good Dutch society and it speaks to the way in which Jews were considered during the period after the war. Jews are not the focus in this view; rather the non-Jewish Dutch are of primary focus and should be celebrated. Far from being understood as a specific group of victims with unique experiences, Jews are seen as objects of non-Jews, whose survival has been contingent upon Dutch goodness. Hondius argues that this sentiment is a step in a chain reaction of attitudes toward Jews, which moves from the Dutch belief that non-Jews sacrificed and took risks in order to save the Jews during the Holocaust to patronizing attitudes toward Jews in the aftermath of the war. In Hondius’s view, the belief that Jews owed their existence to the heroism of their non-Jewish Dutchmen and that these Dutch knew what was best for the Jews led finally to a denial of Jewish identity and community within post-war Dutch society (Hondius, 2000)

The 1960s marked a turning point in attitudes toward the study of and focus on the Holocaust. During this time, the fate of the Jews became a subject of focus for scholars and a growing subject of interest for the general public. The Holocaust became viewed as a unique experience that required specific scholarly attention. More than simply becoming a subject of academic interest, it became an almost metaphysical or sacred entity, existing outside any historical framework. Interest in the Holocaust as a historical event for study and scrutiny was fostered by a number of factors. First, in 1961, the trial of Adolf Eichmann sparked public interest. Also, the societal factors that had earlier created this barrier of silence began to diminish. As a nation, the Netherlands was moving along with rebuilding itself and coming to terms with the loss of Indonesia. Greater numbers of survivors also began to give their testimonies about their experiences to an increasingly interested public audience.

Central to the development of the founding myth was the way in which the public audience perceived the work done by historians and other scholars concerning the fate of the Dutch Jews. Two of the most prominent Dutch-Jewish historians of the time were Jacques Presser (1899-1970) and Loe de Jong (1914-). Professor Von der Dunk has sketched a dichotomy between these two historians regarding the myth of World War II. In his view, the myth was exemplified by the work of De Jong. According to Von der Dunk, De Jong’s argument suggests that the Dutch had all been “good” during the war. In this view, the resistance movement consisted of people from various pillars working together, so people from different Christian churches or ideological backgrounds met and came to know each other there for the first time in Dutch history.

This situation meant that the war was not only an event that showed the courage of the Dutch to defend their values and their country, but also the death blow to the pillarized society. In this view, the Jews were seen as full members of the society, not as a separate group. However, according to Von der Dunk, on one important point, Presser contested De Jong’s interpretation. Presser’s enormously popular book, *Ondergang* (1965), proved to the Dutch people that the Dutch had let the Jews down. At this point there seems to be a clear difference of opinion between Presser and De Jong.

The popularity of *Ondergang* can be partially explained by the fact that it was largely based on literary documents that were well selected to make an impact on the reader, with a modest but very readable commentary by the author. This fit well with the whole series of literary and artistic documents that appeared after the war, of which Anne Frank’s diary is the leading example. Secondly, Presser’s work deals with a very emotional and moving history, but nevertheless offers a way for the reader to maintain his faith in humanity. Although his idea of history was a deeply pessimistic “*Sinnggebung des Sinnlosen*” [giving meaning to that which has none], his pervasive sense of the absurdity of the persecution and extermination coupled with his description’s accuracy often pushes him to include those stories that show a basic resource of human dignity in the victims. This is most clearly illustrated in his account of the camps in Poland and Germany. The final impression the work gives is therefore not necessarily that of an accusation, although in many other parts (e.g. on Weinreb) accusation was definitely present.

The view by Von der Dunk illustrates the development of the thinking of the Dutch people about the war. In order to evaluate this view, however, it is necessary to give a closer look to the works and individual characters of the historians themselves and assess their role in the shaping of the myth. Presser and De Jong were good friends and colleagues, and Presser’s book appeared under the supervision of the Netherlands State institute for War Documentation, led by De Jong. Therefore, the

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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notion that these two historians' views could have so distinctly opposed each other, as proposed by Von der Dunk, would seem to warrant closer inspection.

Von der Dunk describes Presser's motivation in strong words in his book *Voorbij de verboden drempel: de Shoah in ons geschiedbeeld* [Beyond the Forbidden Threshold: the Shoah in our image of history]. He wrote, "Presser's aim was the description of a murder in the form of a flaming accusation and he saw himself in this as the chronicler, in an Old Testament sense, who wishes to pass on his witness as an unquenchable warning and lesson for posterity." (Von der Dunk, 1995) This interpretation of Presser, however, may be misleading, as it overemphasises Presser's commitment to his Jewish heritage. Presser never wanted to assert his Jewish identity explicitly, as is demonstrated in the contrast between the title of his book and his use of the formula to commemorate the Nazi victims. His title *Ondergang* is a direct translation of the word Shoah, but in the book he refrained from using an easily available Hebrew formula and used the Latin "requiescat" instead, a formula that most Dutch readers would understand at once. Lastly, he did not at all expect his book to make such an impact as it did. Therefore, in order to make sense of Von der Dunk's statement, a distinction should be made between Presser's personal intentions and the book's reception in general society. Von der Dunk's characterization of Presser and his book appears to be clouded by the ways in which the book was publicly received and its author was portrayed, rather than the book's significance as a historical work.

A look at De Jong's criticism of Presser's first version can further clarify the relation between the historians' intentions and the actual response to the work. According to Conny Kristel, De Jong's criticism of Presser's proposal focused on four important points. First, the lack of an introduction on the period 1933-1940; second, a lack of attention for the fact that the persecution was started by Germans; third, that there was not enough attention to the international character of the Holocaust; and finally, that Presser had not sufficiently depicted the suffering of the Dutch Jews in the German camps. (Kristel 1998) This last point is curious given Von der Dunk's impression that Presser had such a strong sense of mission. Looking back at De Jong's criticisms of *Ondergang* in the light of Von der Dunk's judgment, it now seems possible to formulate the following hypothesis.

Presser disagreed with De Jong's understanding that the war and, by consequence, the Holocaust as the outcome of a German (or Fascist) struggle against the rest of Europe. Presser saw the Holocaust much more like a humane tragedy that was likely to seriously challenge any faith in humanity, and that he had to describe as well as he could. In view of his personal involvement, his wife had been murdered in Sobibor, it is understandable that he had difficulties to fully describe the death camps. Therefore, it is plausible to trace a basic dichotomy in Dutch memory of the Holocaust back to the works of Presser and Loe de Jong, as Von der Dunk indicated. De Jong's international perspective and also his broad view of the resistance gave the Dutch a way to think of themselves as the "good guys" against the "bad guys," the Germans. On the other hand, Presser stimulated the view that was to gain importance from that time onwards, of the Holocaust as a humane disaster. Also he raised the issue of Dutch complicity in discrimination and persecution. The development of the founding myth in the Netherlands is apparent in this construction of history and it demonstrates the way in which the public audience engaged with the histories presented by the historians.

Although both scholarly and public interest in the Holocaust as a unique historical event introduced to public discourse facts about the Dutch involvement in the war that were less than favorable to the image of a collective resistance-oriented nation, the founding myth continued to develop and influence Dutch society. In addition to maintaining the image of a good, valiant, and anti-German nation, the founding myth grew in importance in terms of its significance as a national memory. In the Netherlands, the 1960s also saw the demise of the pillar system that had until that time been the basis for social relations between and among the different religious groups in Dutch society. With the collapse of the pillar system, it was both possible and necessary for a founding myth focused upon the unity of Dutch society.

In an interview, Peter van Rooden stated that the remembrance of the Second World War is the first Dutch national memory. This is not to say that there had not been previous events in Dutch history which were not looked at by each pillar of society. However, the meaning and significance that each pillar placed on these historical events, of which the war of independence against Spain was certainly the most prominent example, differed. While Protestants were likely to focus more on the religious zeal of the united Dutch provinces, Catholics would pay more attention to those Catholic clergy who were murdered by the revolutionary fanatics. In contrast, with the end of pillarization, the Dutch war experience could be constructed as a national memory, an event that had a singular significance for the entire Dutch society. In this way Dutch society connected its previously-separated parts and established the basis for a national identity.

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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The establishment of the founding myth and thus a sense of Dutch national identity also created a justification for the policies of equal treatment that were instituted in society with regard to Jewish war survivors. Before the end of pillarization, the existence of the pillars required and justified the existence of such egalitarianism. With the downfall of the pillar system, the founding myth became the justification for the continuation of such policies. In the rough fifteen year period after the end of the war, with the pillar system still very much in place, the egalitarian policies were coupled with advocacy for self-help remedies to solidify the wall of silence surrounding discourse about the war experience. As one scholar points out, in the years following the end of the war, the political goal of a welfare state was pursued by a policy of equal treatment and a system of rights accessible to all citizens (De Haan, 1998).

Ido de Haan states that given this commitment to equal treatment, “there was hardly any leeway for remembering the persecution of the Jews.... The persecution as part of the arbitrariness of the past, and one of the main factors to legitimize the new system of social rights was that it did not distinguish between groups of citizens.” (De Haan, 1998) The end of the pillar system did not bring about a change in the treatment of Jews as a distinct group of war victims. Instead, the desire to construct the Second World War as a national memory and thereby unify Dutch society only worked to further support the notions that Dutch society during the war was united in the fight against Nazism and that all Dutch citizens, including but not limited to Dutch Jews, were victims of the war. Therefore, the founding myth justified the same type of equal treatment policy that had been required during pillarization and had the same effect of denying the unique suffering of the Dutch Jewish community.

The end of pillarization and the construction of the Second World War as a national memory mark the second phase in the development of the founding myth. Whereas the first phase focused upon the glorification of the united Dutch resistance against Nazism, this second phase focused upon another aspect of unity: namely collective suffering. According to this part of the myth, all Dutch citizens, Jews and non-Jews, were victims of the national trauma that was the Holocaust. This part of the myth was constructed in an attempt to avoid creating divisions within society at any level and thereby move beyond the history of pillarization. Even after the wall of silence surrounding the fate of the Dutch Jews came down, the construction of the Holocaust as a national trauma, or psychiatric experience, allowed for the possibility that all Dutch citizens could be united in their claims of victimization.

Ido de Haan states that “while the vocabulary of psychiatry initially functioned as a medium for the public recognition of the persecution, it gradually became a medium to deprive Jewish victims of the attributes of victimhood. As a result of the dominance of the psychiatric vocabulary, the persecution became a national trauma anyone could suffer from.” (De Haan, 1998)

By constructing the Holocaust as a national trauma, the founding myth worked to deny the differences between victims and their victimization. The language of national trauma only reinforced the myth that all members of Dutch society were victims of the Nazi occupation and therefore could not have played a role in the persecution of the Jews. Not only is this notion historically inaccurate, which alone is an offense to the memory of the Holocaust and to the memory of those who suffered and died because of it, it also relativizes the suffering of Jews and the Jewish community. As a community, Dutch Jewry suffered an incomparable loss to the loss of the rest of Dutch society. Seventy-five percent of the Dutch Jewish population was murdered during the war (Bovenkerk, 1999).

The most offensive consequence of this myth of collective suffering is that it obscures, or denies the fact that Dutch society was not innocent in its role in the persecution of the Jews. Although the myth speaks about heroism and resistance, in truth, only a small percentage of the Dutch population actually participated in the resistance movement while the majority of the population stood by and did nothing. By claiming that the persecution of the Jews was a national trauma suffered by all of Dutch society, the myth allows for the possibility that Dutch perpetrators and bystanders can be labeled as “victims” along with Dutch Jews. De Haan correctly points out that the “very same Dutch society that is said to have suffered so much from the persecution of the Jews was also the context for its effective execution.”(De Haan, 1998) In this way, the founding myth dishonors the memory of Jewish suffering and also denies the historical reality of Dutch participation in causing this suffering.

Since the 1980s, there has been a trend to confront the historical inaccuracies of the founding myth. David Barnouw of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation stated in an interview that Dutch society is now in a period of feeling guilty



## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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about its role in the persecution of the Jews as historical facts break through the façade of the founding myth. The process of demystification, however, has been slow and impact of the founding myth is still evident in Dutch society. Bill Minco stated that it is still somewhat uncomfortable in Dutch society to speak about and come to terms with the fact that some of the Dutch helped carry out the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands. “The Dutch did not hide the Jews,” Minco said, “but they are now hiding the past.” (Minco Interview, 2000)

The trend of demystification has led to an acknowledgement of the uniqueness of the Jewish experience as victims of the Holocaust, as the recent settlement of reparation payments demonstrates. However, this recognition of Jewish victimization has the possible negative effect of once again victimizing Jews. If Jews are seen primarily as victims, there is the danger that they will not be seen as individuals, but rather reduced to a generalized conception of victimhood. Feelings of guilt about the past may lead some non-Jewish Dutch to want to acknowledge the victimization of Jews at the hands of Dutch society, but it may also lead some people to once again construct the social role for Jews instead of respecting their individuality and agency. In this way, Dutch society may again patronize Jews, as it did in the decades following the war. Bill Minco stated that he has often felt this patronizing view of others that sees him particularly as a victim. For him, this characterization is a form of “positive anti-Semitism.” The legacy of the founding myth, therefore, may be that in an attempt to demystify the past and come to terms with the Dutch role in the persecution of the Jews, Dutch society has actually managed to revictimize Jews, by characterizing them solely as victims.

The importance of anti-Semitism is such that a closer investigation of this new phenomenon, so-called positive anti-Semitism, would warrant further investigation. In order to do so it is necessary to consider the varieties of meaning the word ‘victimization’ can have. In one sense, victimization can refer to the fact that a person is a victim, usually of a crime, an accident, or a natural disaster. In any case, it applies to a form of human suffering that is arbitrary; it may strike any person, without respect to personal character and position.

This matter-of-fact sense obviously applies to the Dutch Jews: they were victims of Nazi persecution and extermination. But it can also be applied to Dutch society as a whole. This application of the term actually happened in the decade and a half after the War. Dutch society correctly viewed itself as victims of Nazi terror. In this same period, however, the Dutch behaved badly to those Jews who returned from hiding and from the German camps, despite the fact that these people had been hit much worse during the war than the general population.

There is an interesting paradox here. There are two groups of ‘victims’, but no solidarity between them. Their respective claims of victimhood seem to mutually exclude, or at least compete with each other.

Victimization can also mean the process by which an individual or a group is viewed as victims by other people. The group in question can either claim this as a sort of status, or the members of this group can be forced into the role of victims regardless if they want this status or not. Both senses of the term victimization can be seen in Dutch national history. To apply this term may help to further clarify the behavior of the Dutch toward their Jewish fellow citizens.

In the first period, from the end of the war till the 1960s onwards, the Dutch used their own, national image as a victimized nation as an excuse not to give their Jews the additional support they needed to rebuild their lives. Then, from 1965 onwards, the Jewish claim to extra help was recognized, but the Dutch didn’t go so far as to listen to what the Jews actually wanted or needed. Instead, they decided to patronize the Jews and force them into the role of victims. Thus Jews had no chance to prove the extent of collaboration with the Nazi’s in Dutch society, or to protest against the treatment they had received after the war. This position would have challenged the founding myth of united Dutch “goodness” during the war, a myth that was needed to give the country a sense of unity.

It was not until the 1980s before the surviving Jews got so far as to make themselves heard again. The result is well known: a huge debate, official apologies, significant reparation payments after prolonged negotiations in which the World Jewish Congress played an influential role. The outcome of the process is certainly positive, justice demands no less. Still it might well be that the process had the negative effect to lead to a new pattern of victimization of the Jews in Dutch society, comparable to the positive anti-Semitism that Mr. Bill Minco described.

## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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Even among Dutch people who sympathize with the Jewish cause, the process of negotiation has been shown to lead to misunderstandings about the strength and organization of the Jewish community in the Netherlands. Some people have gotten the impression that there is a strong, determined and well-articulated Jewish community in the Netherlands. As Bill Minco stated, there are only a few representatives of some organizations with strong voices, but they are not representing all the Dutch Jews. It was they who argued the cause for reparations. The most reasonable explanation for this phenomenon would be that it stems from fear. Fear for the enormity of the crimes, fear for the possible extent of the reparation claims and their practical legacy, and fear that a strong group with help from outside would use their victim status as a claim to be the moral standard of 'our' Dutch society. This is the sort of fear that fosters anti-Semitic feelings, without anything positive about it at all.

The experience of the Second World War left Dutch society searching for a national identity from which a new period in their history could begin. This identity was built upon the heroic stories of resistance in the Netherlands to the Nazi regime and the belief that Dutch society had stood by and protected its Jewish citizens. While individual acts of heroism and resistance certainly existed, the formation of a national myth focused upon these acts and extending this heroism to describe the entire Dutch nation obfuscated the truth of the war experience. By attempting to create a story of national unity and solidarity, the national myth has ignored the crucial differences between Jews and non-Jews in their experiences of the war. While the attempt to demystify the past is a crucial step for Dutch society in moving forward while not forgetting the past, it is also vital that Jewish survivors are not simply labeled as victims. These people must be respected as individuals and must not be identified solely as victims. To do so would be to expose them to the same process of identity construction that has formed the myth, where Jewish identity was constructed and therefore Jewish suffering was denied.

But in spite of the threat of a new pattern of victimization, the courage and testimony of the few survivors can still be a source of hope. They have shown that life can be stronger than the pain that so many people, people like us felt, but that we cannot feel in their place. If we accept "the Other" - Jews, survivors, victims - as they are, we need not view them as victims, as Bill Minco stated. This task is a difficult but necessary step in dealing with the legacy of the Second World War.

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## Holocaust Memorial Lesson Plan Project

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