

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies
NIOD Archives, 251a LO-LKP LO-B04
Persecution and Deportation in Western Europe
– Rescue and Survival of Jews in Occupied Western Europe – A Reappraisal
Translation: E07 Diary entries of Arnold Douwes

Tuesday evening, 19 October '431 [the “1” is a typo in the original.]

Last night two ladies, each with two children, were supposed to come. One of these ladies would be Hennie. At the appointed time, 8:15 p.m., nothing happened, though a call was received that they would come at half past 10:00 p.m. Sister Scholten, Frits, and I have been waiting in vain. Message came in, that the bus was broken.

Frits went home at 11:00 p.m.

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At 12:00 midnight I sent Sister Scholten to bed.

At 2:15 a.m. the bus finally arrived, towed by a tow truck. Hennie exited with two boys. They had had a pleasant time in the broken bus, there had been "good" Dutch people on the bus. They had been making waggish jokes about Hitler and other such things; Mussert and his aunt were also ridiculed [Anton Mussert, co-founder and leader of the Dutch National Socialist Movement (NSB), had married his aunt (his mother's sister) and later had an affair with the granddaughter of another aunt/sister-in-law].

But what was distressing: the other lady with one boy had not arrived in Zwolle, though they had definitely boarded in Amsterdam.

I hustled Broemink out of bed and delivered the two boys there. We had agreed that the ladies would stay at De Jong, but the boys had already long since gone to bed and Hennie did not them to be woken. I then brought her into the safe house [“vluchthut”] and went for a stroll myself. I had already tried once the windows at Stegeman's and managed to clamber inside, so I got Hennie again from the safe house and let her sleep on the couch. I myself went into the safe house.

The sleeping did not last long, for she had to be on the tram at a quarter to seven again.

Tonight at 7:00 p.m., Mars, the garage owner, brought the boys to Nieuwlande in his car; he did this *pro deo*.

At 9:00 p.m. I was back here.

I have delivered the boys to Otten, where the house is now totally full.

In the paper was a piece written by Van Geelkerken, about the NSB people who are now armed and will resist.

Wednesday morning, 3 November '43

Much has happened during all this time, and I have no notes at all, so I will forget half of it. The general impression I have kept from the last 2 weeks is one of flying back and forth on my bicycle, rushing to Hoozeveer to pick-up people from the station, of being nervous about all sorts of things [literally: having all sorts of coins in the stomach], of a desperate search for hiding places for boys, girls, babies, adults, women and men. Each time there again arrived new people.

Moreover, there was an avalanche of telephone calls, telegrams, discussions about vouchers, identity papers [PB = persoonsbewijzen/identity papers], luggage, etc. From constant complaining from people with whom I had temporarily placed persons in hiding but who thought that my notions of "temporary" were too flexible

And for a change and because of the case of the Tommie [slang term for a British soldier], who had to have a place. He had landed in Pesse, and was a true Brit. [I] have so enjoyably talked with him.

[I] told him about the general situation here in this country. He was very naive when it came to the "moffen" [Germans], [he] regarded them as decent people whom he happened to be at war with. I tried to disabuse him of his errancy. He ended up in a small room at a good farmer. I told him the usual jokes about Hitler, etc.

He was very curious about the fate of his partner. There had been the two of them. His comrade had jumped first. He had to push him through the hatch, because he was snagged. He himself jumped right after that. Initially, he did not know what country he was in – their instruments were busted. Having safely landed on the ground, he went out on reconnaissance, and found first an old wooden clog; he then knew he was in the Netherlands or perhaps Belgium. Then he found a piece of a newspaper from Holland.

Currently, he is in a safe place, and it is being worked out how to further evacuate him.

The locations-search for the various Jewish people in hiding was most complicated [literal idiom: it had many feet in the ground]. First, always "temporary["] places. It is difficult for people to refuse if you say that the "customer" will have to sleep outside if they do not provide him shelter. Of course, the result is sometimes a quarrel, but on the whole it is rather quiet.

I said to Amsterdam that there should be more direction.

There is a boy who has an ulcer; there also came one who was deathly sick. From one Jewess I received a pair of boots that fit me perfectly, and I can use this rare item. I also received two blankets, which will be most helpful to me in the haystack, where it can be horridly cold.

In Amsterdamscheveld [a hamlet in the Dutch municipality of Emmen] I have been to a Catholic orphanage, where I sat and talked for a while with the Mother Superior so as to move her to take in Jewish children, but she did not do it. I tried to work on their feelings, pointed out their Christian duty, but nothing helped.

I also went to the Dean, who had a spacious Presbytery and could well have taken a dozen persons into hiding. But he claimed to have no room.

On Sunday there was an inspection in front of the doors of the Reformed Church in Nieuwlande, [and] a warning was sent directly into the church (a little girl went inside through the door of the vestry). The minister told from the pulpit what was going on and asked the people to remain quiet in the church until after the service, and those without valid identity papers [PB = persoonsbewijs, identity card/paper] had to remain in the church. And so it happened, those who remained behind were taken under the floor via a hatch.

I warned the Reformed Church, which immediately emptied out entirely. I saw, among others, an old man in his eighties leave the scene [idiom: de biezen nam = took the bulrushes, i.e., made himself scarce] as quickly as possible.

In the forests of Nieuwlande several shelters, or rather caves, were made. They are usually well camouflaged, and can afford sleeping accommodation for several people in hiding.

The weather remains exceptionally beautiful, already through the whole autumn, it comes in handy for us.

Last night I severely bawled out a farmer and his wife in Hollandscheveld [a village in the municipality of Hogeveen]. I had convinced them, after talking for a long time, to take a child into the house, and thus had brought there a girl of 9 years old. Two days later I came with her luggage, and in the meantime they had kicked her out again. Master [a teacher?] Wigman has taken pity on her, though he already has a full house.

I simply brought her to another, a place I had intended for a newcomer from Amsterdam.

You can experience anything in this business.

Such cooperation is not experienced from the Dutch People as a whole. Those who truly

undermine the plans of the enemy are the exceptions. The majority are too selfish and too cowardly. The typical phenomenon now occurs that those who commit the most active resistance, those who undertake the most, those who help the most people in hiding, are to be found mainly among the extreme right and the extreme left parts of the population, thus among the A.R.[perhaps: A.R.P – Anti-Revolutionaire Partij/Anti-Revolutionary Party] and the Communists.

The people in these areas who take in those who are hiding, and who help in another way, are almost all Reformed.

"Herman" is one of the people in hiding; he is the house of Dekker and has dug himself a shelter in the woods. He has his guitar with him, which he can play very nicely. He is also a first class drawer and cartoonist. He drew a caricature of Hitler for me.

I had to reprimand Herman because he had written a dangerous letter to Amsterdam. He has promised to better his life [i.e., not do something like that again]. The plan is that even more shelters will be dug, including one for 30 people. Herman would like to assist.

Recently, I was able to buy for a good price [idiom: "tapped on the head"] a revolver and a blackjack and gave them to the KP.

One evening I met from the last train a mother and her daughter and a 15-year-old boy. The boy I brought to Pesse, the mother and daughter to Nieuwlande.

First, I brought everyone to baker Blanken, where I was always welcome. We were always greeted with coffee and biscuits.

The last action of Trouw was very good.

Nico helps me now. Not the Nico from Victor and Nico, but another one. He was hiding in Nieuwlande. For a long time I did not trust him, nor did V.d. Zwaag. His whereabouts were examined very carefully, letters addressed to him were opened. A few times he had offered to me to help, which I did not appreciate in the beginning.

Now we do everything together.

translated by Jeremy Schreiber