

possible'. And the Nazi propaganda didn't stop there: it went on to remind Muslims that 232 million of their number lived 'under English, American, French, and Russian foreign rule'. Needless to say, it didn't mention that the Germans harboured the same colonial ambitions. On the contrary: it claimed that only Germany had true respect for Islam. 'If Germany is defeated, the last hope for you Muslims ever to become free also fades'" (67). On the other hand, this book is crucial in discussions about antisemitism and Islamophobia because it lays out the way in which Berliners, and especially Nazis, perceived Arabs as Orientals. Steinke describes how "Most Nazis still had in mind the passage from *Mein Kampf* in which all Arabs were characterized as inferior, and their anti-colonial campaign against the French and British as a 'coalition of cripples'" (27).

The book does a marvelous job of further identifying that Muslims were indeed part of an intellectual and religious tradition in Berlin that reveals the deep influence of Arab and Islamic intellectuals within German and Jewish culture. As Steinke writes, "Spinoza . . . came from a Dutch Jewish community—descendants of those Jews who had seen their happiest days under the rule of Islam in Spain, until they were driven out of the country. Spanish Moorish Muslims had willingly shared their intellectual heritage and advanced philosophical and scientific culture with their Jewish brothers" (24). Steinke offers many fresh ways to look at how Muslims attempted to cover internal Antisemitism and simultaneously maintain dignity about the message of rescue in their faith and culture. The story demonstrates that Muslims were indeed part of the propaganda machine of the Nazis: some avoided it, some believed it, and some risked their lives to rescue Jews. The research in this book at times can be a bit sketchy when it comes to Dr. Helmy's own beliefs and practices, as we see moments throughout that are speculative considering that the research and documentation of these stories are rare. Dr. Helmy seems to assimilate in a way that seems impossible during the Nazi era, but the speculation relies on the early 1930s, especially 1934, when we read: "Perhaps Helmy even tried to go with the political flow in the early days, at least for a short time. A testimonial of 1934 indicates that his bosses at the hospital found him less objectionable than the numerous upstarts from the SA and SS. They saw in him a flexible opportunist. 'Although a foreigner, Dr. Helmy's conduct demonstrated a consistently pro-German attitude,' they wrote. Indeed, 'as far as he could, he engaged sympathetically with all national endeavors'" (32). There is a lot more research to do on the story of Dr. Helmy in the Berlin archives, and about the role of Muslims during 1933–1945 in Berlin. Ronen Steinke compels the reader to do more research on a complex and rich topic.

doi:10.1017/S0008938923000900

## Individuals and Small Groups in Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust: A Case Study of a Young Couple and their Friends

**By Ben Braber. London: Anthem Press, 2022. Pp. xii + 149. Hardcover \$125.00. ISBN: 978-1839983580.**

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In this short but richly detailed book, Ben Braber centers the wartime experiences of one young Dutch-Jewish couple—namely, Arnold ("Nol") Bueno de Mesquita and Tertia ("Ter")

Kolthoff—as a means to examine Jewish resistance to the Holocaust in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands. This book appears to be an English-language version or adaptation of his 2015 study, *Waren mijn ogen een bron van tranen. Een joods echtpaar in het verzet, 1940–1945*, published in Dutch by Walburg Pers, an imprint of Amsterdam University Press, although neither Braber nor the publisher makes clear the relationship between the two books. Braber builds upon his previous work on the subject, such as *This Cannot Happen Here: Integration and Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, 1940–1945* (2013) as well as previous studies examining motivations driving various forms of Jewish resistance. More specifically, as he explains in the introduction, the new book responds to the question recently posed by Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz in her introduction to the edited volume *All Our Brothers and Sisters: Jews Saving Jews during the Holocaust* (co-edited by Tydor Baumel-Schwartz and Alan M. Schneider, 2021). Braber describes this question as follows: “Did Jews who saved other Jews during the Holocaust embody specific characteristics and personalities or share certain identities and worldviews?” (6) Braber’s analysis points to some shared characteristics, such as “obstinacy” and a desire to help others, and, in this respect, his findings echo those of Samuel and Pearl Oliner in their formative study, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (1992). At the same time, as Braber aptly demonstrates, Jewish resisters confronted additional logistical and psychological obstacles, especially once it became clear that they were powerless to stop the seemingly never-ending deportations from the Netherlands.

In his examination of these Jewish individuals and their various clandestine activities, Braber relies in large part upon the numerous oral history interviews he conducted in the 1980s with Bueno de Mesquito, Kolthoff, and their surviving friends and former resistance colleagues. By corroborating information and experiences relayed in these interviews with other ego-documents such as memoirs, documentation held in archival collections, and published secondary sources, Braber has produced a deeply-researched and insightful account of Jewish-led resistance, undertaken with the explicit intention of saving Jewish lives. He describes his work as a case study, rather than a “comprehensive report on all forms of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands or a register of everybody who was involved in that activity” (6). Yet, I would argue, Braber has produced more of a detailed network analysis than might be expected from a simple case study: with each chapter, Bueno de Mesquito and Kolthoff recede into the background, where they will serve as supporting figures in a much larger cast of characters and organizations. This is not to minimize their involvement or contributions, far from it—rather, it is a testament to the scope and impact of Jewish resistance in the occupied Netherlands. This couple constituted but two nodes in a highly developed yet flexible and responsive national network.

Of particular importance in Braber’s account are those recent German-Jewish émigrés who sought refuge from Hitler’s anti-Jewish policies after 1933 but nonetheless found themselves under Nazi occupation once again. Drawing upon their experiences in other settings and working for causes such as the German Communist Party and the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, these émigrés wasted little time throwing themselves into similar work in the Netherlands. Before the arrival of the German occupiers in May 1940, they helped provide material aid and other forms of assistance to Jewish émigrés and other refugees from Nazi Germany; after this point in time, they transitioned to numerous types of clandestine work, ranging from armed defense to forgery and courier work. If, as Braber maintains, Jewish resistance in the Netherlands was “symbolic, polemic, defensive, and offensive in character” (128), then German-Jewish refugees played a vital role in making it so.

Unfortunately, stylistic and other errors abound in this book. The Dutch names of organizations and areas are often translated into literal English, thus introducing unnecessary confusion for those readers familiar with the Dutch names. Sentence fragments abound, as do typographical errors, and both footnotes and the bibliography contain incomplete, inconsistent citations. The index does not include the names of the scholars discussed in

the text itself, which is especially problematic since the introductory chapter aims to provide a brief historiography of Jewish resistance in the Netherlands. Naturally, the author is not solely responsible for all these issues, but these low production values detract from what is otherwise an engaging, important history.

doi:10.1017/S0008938923000985

## **The Hunger Winter: Fighting Famine in the Occupied Netherlands, 1944–1945**

**By Ingrid de Zwarte. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 315. Hardcover \$99.99. ISBN: 978-1108836807.**

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The Dutch Hunger Winter at the end of World War II is one of the best-documented accounts of wartime famine and food shortages in the twentieth century. Despite being well-covered in both scholarly and popular literature, there is still a lot to learn about the Hunger Winter, as Ingrid de Zwarte's superb book demonstrates. De Zwarte uses the latest Dutch and international findings to place the Hunger Winter squarely within current medical, social, and economic understandings of famine. Her findings suggest that the Dutch Hunger Winter qualified as an early-stage famine, when "food shortages result in measurable detrimental effects, but supplies are not yet fully depleted" (8–9). De Zwarte argues convincingly that the crisis was not due to the total absence of food supplies in the country. Rather, she argues that the main issue was one of transportation: getting food from the agricultural areas in the north and east to the western parts of the Netherlands. As a result, her book includes significant, nuanced discussions on the geography and chronology of hunger. De Zwarte also considers those who were most vulnerable to food shortages, especially children, and how society and local Dutch communities helped them. In the process, De Zwarte debunks long-held myths about the Hunger Winter, showing the role that Dutch and Allied governments played in both prolonging and reducing hunger, which she argues was not the sole result of the German occupation.

The Hunger Winter is traditionally considered to include the autumn of 1944 and end with Dutch liberation on May 5, 1945, yet De Zwarte extends her study through the summer of 1945. By doing so, she is able to debunk one of the long-standing myths surrounding the Hunger Winter—that the Dutch people survived thanks to Allied airdrops of food. De Zwarte argues that although the Allies negotiated extensively during the German occupation to relieve hunger, Allied food supplies had only a minor impact on reducing hunger. There was tension between military and humanitarian needs and limits placed on shipping from all sides. While the famous airdrops were politically important to the Allies, they resulted in relatively minor alleviation of the food insecurity endured by the Dutch population. Indeed, it was not until *after* liberation that food from outside the Netherlands was consistently transported into the affected regions. Through the immediate months after the war, in the summer of 1945, the Allies were able to quickly transport massive amounts of food into the Netherlands, ensuring that "famine conditions ended not long after liberation" (163).