



‘The Battle for Restitution and Compensation’

A CASE STUDY ABOUT THE RESTITUTION CLAIMS OF SIX JEWISH COMPANIES IN AMSTERDAM AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

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Abstract

After the Second World War, Dutch authorities received the first demands for restitution and compensation from Dutch Jews for property losses. This thesis, based mainly on previously unexamined archives, is centred on a case study of six Jewish entrepreneurs in Amsterdam who had to battle with a bureaucratic government, guilt-evading confiscators, and their own trauma to gain compensation.

It presents new factors that determined the likelihood of successful restitution. Firstly, the characteristics of the confiscators who owned the properties during the war often determined the restitution process. If the administrator (*Verwalter*) in control of the property was German or an obvious Dutch collaborator, the issue could be settled relatively quickly. If the administrator had sold the property during the war, however, this could create various problems for the Jewish families in search of justice. Secondly, the size of the Jewish company made a difference. Larger companies had more assets and thus better access to skilled legal services, which often ensured a speedier outcome.

I want to acknowledge Jeffrey Daniels, Mandy Gavrielle Losk, the sisters Luijk and my loving family for all their ideas, critical comments and support.

Dedicated to the memory of all those who perished. I will try to keep the past alive.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Question

The speed of creating memories and sharing memories cannot be measured in days, but in hours or even minutes.¹

The quote above would befit an advertisement for a new gadget; however, far from a new marketing slogan, it constitutes the conclusion of research conducted by David Nieborg. Today's world is vastly different to that of even a few decades ago. Physical reality has in many ways been usurped by emergent digital realities, which become more and more a part of everyday life. The Dutch Memorial Committee asked Nieborg to draw up a plan on how to engage future generations in commemorations of historical events, in order to keep certain memories alive. His conclusion was clear. In order to secure participation from society in future memorials, online platforms constitute an essential tool.

Earlier Critique

This was not the first time that the Dutch Memorial Committee had advocated the necessity of online commemoration. In 2013, they commissioned a related research project related to the memory of the Second World War.² Therein, a plan combining war monuments and the digital world was presented. The project resulted in the construction of new online platforms to honor and remember historical events. This digitization guarantees 'accessibility to online commemoration on different social

¹ D.B. Nieborg, *#Herdenken #Vieren en #Herinneren in het digitale tijdperk* (Amsterdam 2015) 44.

² *Nationaal Vrijheidsonderzoek 2013 Het Nationale 4 en 5 Mei Comité*.

<http://www.4en5mei.nl/onderzoek/toegepast_onderzoek/nationaal_vrijheidsonderzoek> Link: [National Freedom Research](#) (Last consulted on 27 February 2017).

platforms'.³ The results of the study were met with positive and negative reactions. On the one hand, it was argued that online platforms enable new generations to access the monuments online, thus making history more accessible for everyone.⁴ On the other hand, comments were made that these kinds of representations could lead to a flat, linear and chronological interpretation of historical events. In other words, the websites would be an inadequate portrayal of specific aspects of the war period and its victims.⁵ In the past, musea always had to pick a certain narrative to help people to commemorate.⁶ Nowadays online environments provide public spaces where multiple personal remembrances can be added.⁷ Nevertheless, Nieborg states that the possibilities are not completely utilized. Therefore, he concludes his report with the recommendation that future online platforms should have a broader scope and include more actors and time periods.⁸

Recent Projects

Several projects have since followed the most recent attempt of the Dutch Memorial Committee to provide guidelines for creating online platforms. The first of these projects was the 'Jewish monuments' project. The foundations of this project date back to 2006 when an online project was launched. However, in response to the earlier mentioned critiques, the initiators added thematic articles, in which they

³ *Eindrapport: van ambitie naar gezamenlijke meerjarige uitvoeringsplan* Commissie versterking infrastructuur herinnering WOII (Amsterdam 2015) 11. <file:///Users/hwallage/Downloads/blg-788099.pdf>
Link: [Supervisory report](#) (Last consulted on 6 March 2017).

⁴ K. Veale, 'FCJ-014 Online Memorialisation: The Web As A Collective Memorial Landscape For Remembering The Dead', *The Fibreculture Journal* 3 (2004) 1-18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ A. Goldberg, 'The "Jewish narrative" in the Yad Vashem global Holocaust museum', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:2 (2012) 187-213.

⁷ L. M. C. Faro, 'The Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands: a meaningful, ritual place for commemoration', *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21:1-2 (2015) 165-184, 180.

⁸ Nieborg, #Herdenken, 6.

introduced new actors to the website.⁹ These thematic articles elaborate upon the life of diamond workers, Jewish doctors and market traders. However, the website still only focusses on the Jewish victims during the Second World War and does not give any information on the pre- or post-war period.

My involvement in a new project

A new platform will be established in 2018 named 'Jewish houses'.¹⁰ The purpose of this endeavor is to map the Jewish houses in pre-war Amsterdam and create an online platform where people can experience a two-dimensional virtual tour through Jewish Amsterdam before the Second World War. In response to the earlier criticism that there is currently a poor representation of history digitally, I was asked by the project's founders to improve their platform. I am doing so by adding a new actor. In my thesis, I will provide six case studies about Jewish entrepreneurs in Amsterdam before, during and after the Second World War. The stories of these six entrepreneurs will be shown on the website of Joodse Huizen.

Reducing Criticism

Jewish entrepreneurs in pre-war Amsterdam are an interesting research topic since the city was a thriving center for Jewish businesses before the Second World War. Kosher food shops, sales clerks, clothes markets, cleaning shops and diamond industries were scattered throughout the city.¹¹ Of the 70,000 Jews who lived in Amsterdam in the first decades of the twentieth century, 49,823 were employed.¹² Those who did not work were mostly homemakers or children who were not

⁹ Joodse Monumenten, 'Thema Artikelen' <<https://www.joodsmonument.nl/nl/page/548827/thema-artikelen>> [Thema artikelen](#) (Consulted on 23 February 2017).

¹⁰ Joodse Huizen, 'Open Joodse Huizen' <<http://www.joodsehuizen.nl/het-ontstaan/>> [Open Joodse Huizen](#) (Consulted on 15 February 2017).

¹¹ P. Tammes, 'Hack, Pack, Sack: Occupational Structure, Status and Mobility of Jews in Amsterdam, 1851-1941', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 43:1 (2012) 1-26.

¹² M. Croes and P. Tammes, "Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan": Een onderzoek naar de overlevingskansen van joden in de Nederlandse gemeenten, 1940-1945 (Amsterdam 2006).

involved in the labor market.¹³ By adding the story of entrepreneurs to the online platform of Jewish houses, I hope to establish a more complete picture of the difficulties the Jewish communities faced during as well as before and after the war, specifically in regards to business-related matters.

A second critique is that because websites do not make use of the possibility to ‘amend and add content in subsequent periods of memorialization’.¹⁴ In other words, while physical monuments focus on one specific period or one group, online platforms give us the possibility to add and commemorate extended and continuous periods. For example, a gravestone is a physical commemorative object that honors someone who died on a specific date. Contrastingly, online platforms enable digital researchers to add the life story of the person and the reason of death in a simple overview. On the new website of Jewish houses, I will attempt to add a new dimension of time to the subject of Jewish houses. In contrast to the current situation, where the war period is the primary point of attention of the website, I will focus on the post-war era and the question of restitution. The purpose of doing so is to demonstrate that, for Amsterdam’s Jewish population, the perils of war did not end in 1945.

My thesis

Although there are many components to address regarding post war Jewish entrepreneurship in Amsterdam, I will focus primarily on the process of restitution for Jewish shop owners whose properties were confiscated during the war. The process of restitution is one of the few components that is well documented after the war, therefore making it a suitable research project. For this thesis, I will investigate the process of restitution by discussing six Jewish companies in Amsterdam. I chose the companies based on the following criteria: the businesses needed to have Jewish ownership before the war, they needed to have been confiscated by Nazi

¹³ Croes and Tammes, “*Giflaten wij niet voortbestaan*”, 455-456.

¹⁴ Veale, ‘FCJ-014: Online Memorisation’, *The Fibreculture Journal*, 8.

collaborators and, after the war, somebody needed to claim restitution for their businesses. Finally, the information about the size of the store had to be available. In the section 'Material and Method', I elaborate further on the six case studies.

Restitution can be used in various contexts; therefore, I will explain restitution as Veraart defines it in his book: *Disenfranchisement and Restitution*. He states that the process of restitution occurs when 'goods are restituted to the person who lost their possessions because of discriminatory measures.'¹⁵ Additionally he states that restitution can be in the form of goods or compensation in liquid assets.

My thesis consists of two components. The first component provides a narrative description of the Jewish entrepreneurs during and after the war period. I focus on the following questions:

- 1) how successful were Jewish entrepreneurs from Amsterdam on the eve of the Second World War?
- 2) what happened to Jewish businesses during and after the Second World War?

The answers to the questions and the narrative form of this part of my thesis will be used for the website. The second component will be less relevant for the website of Jewish houses, but is academically relevant and has societal relevance. After researching and comparing the course of events and outcomes of every case study, I have found a set of factors, which explain why every individual restitution application had a different outcome. For my thesis, I have researched small, medium and large sized businesses. Researching companies of different sizes enabled me to test my working hypothesis that for large sized businesses, with a large market value prior to the war, the process of restitution was more swift than for medium and smaller sized businesses since the Dutch government viewed bigger companies as

¹⁵ Veraart, *Ontrechting en rechtsherstel in Nederland en Frankrijk in de jaren van de bezetting en wederopbouw* (Deventer 2005) 10.

more useful than smaller ones because those could – arguably – be more valuable for rebuilding the post-war economy. This leads to my main question: given their disrupted business during the war, was there a difference in compensation and restitution from the Dutch government between small, medium and bigger businesses? In this respect did the Commission of Restitution make any clear distinction when evaluating applications for restoration?

Valorization

The findings from my case study and their subsequent placement on the online platform has clear societal relevance. I will reveal and publish an unjustly forgotten component of post-war restitution and compensation on the digital platform, so this part of history can never be overlooked again and receive the attention it deserves. While the existing online websites fall short, in the sense that they do not provide information about the post-war period, my research offers a remedy for this deficiency.¹⁶ First, shedding light and allocating space to the period of restitution on online websites will make people aware of the fact that for Dutch Jewish society, the war did not end after the liberation. Secondly, it is important to preserve the memory of what occurred by educating future generations about how Dutch Jewish survivors were treated when trying to recover their possessions. Additionally, it is crucial to elaborate upon how Dutch society solved various consequential damages of the war. The formal and bureaucratic way the Dutch government tried to manage (and circumvent) sensitive issues led to bitter indignation among the vanishing Jewish population.

Thirdly, my thesis shows that it is unwise to simply view the commemoration of Jewish history as an entity, as existing online platforms have done. I will

¹⁶ The digital Jewish monument describes the story of the Jewish individual in the war. While the site is mostly launched to remember the victims, it would be a great addition to tell more about the period of compensation and restitution after the war. As a consequence, it becomes clear which victims and descendants never had any form of compensation. For more information about the website: <https://www.joodsmonument.nl/>

demonstrate that every Jew's experience was unique and should receive proper, and this means individual, recognition.

As today's historians have access to the technology for creating online memorials, it is crucial that we take the opportunity to memorialize each independent Jewish experience where possible.

1.2 Historiography

There are currently numerous books about restitution after the Second World War.¹⁷ However, research about the topic of Jewish property started relatively recently. Research on post war restitution only began properly after 1995, when financial regulators, politicians, and lawyers were involved in fierce debates during the World Jewish Congress. These debates led to renewed restitution negotiations and to new articles that investigated the post-war restitution negotiations. However, the new process of restitution received so much publicity that it led to the creation of a new myth that the main restitution negotiations were those of recent years.¹⁸ Yet, the highly publicized renewed negotiations still total no more than about 5% of what had been obtained in the first post-war round that continued until the mid-1950s.¹⁹ That is why research on the first round of restitution remains valuable.

There are multiple reasons that explain the lack of media attention and scarce historical research during and after the first round of restitution. Firstly, Dutch bankers, insurance companies and stockbrokers benefited from the stolen Jewish

¹⁷ We must take into account that I only talk about restitution and compensation for stolen goods in this paragraph. Wiedergutmachung and compensation for killed descendants and other forms of restitution will be disregarded here.

¹⁸ R. Zweig, 'Restitution: Why did It Take 50 Years or did It?', in: M. Gerstenfeld, *Europe's Crumbling Myths: The Post-Holocaust Origins of Today's Anti-Semitism* (Jerusalem, 2003) 11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

assets after the Second World War. In other words, companies who profited from Jewish assets avoided discussing the restitution of Jewish property because they profited from their ownership of these businesses or properties. They argued that restitution of these assets could lead to an economic downfall for the Netherlands.²⁰

Secondly, war victims did not talk about their experiences or when they did, no one listened.²¹ It took Holocaust survivors fifty years before they could openly talk about their past and reach a receptive audience. A reason for this silence was a lack of understanding between Jews and non-Jews and the fact that non-Jews did not want to hear Holocaust survivors' stories.²² These are a few reasons why all the literature that addresses the first and second period of restitution appeared after 1995. I will discuss these when I analyze the international literature during the period 1950-1995.

In the up following paragraphs, I will distinguish applicable literature on the topic of restitution into three different sections. The first two sections discuss the literature about the restitution process on a macro level. This literature focuses on the 1) international restitution process and 2) the Dutch restitution process. In the third section, I describe the literature that addresses the process of restitution on a micro level. In other words, I will set forth the literature that examines restitution that took place in cities and villages.

The following analysis of international and national historiography does not claim to be neither complete nor conclusive, but rather aims to provide a general overview.

²⁰ E. Bouw, *Rechtspraak in tijden van crisis: Over bedreiging en kansen voor rechtspraak, economie en rechtstaat* (Amsterdam 2011) 8.

²¹ 'Het grote zwijgen', *Trouw*, 17-01-2009.

²² 'Sala's gift: My Mother's Holocaust Story', *The New York Times*, 12-11-2006.

International restitution: from 1945 to 1995 (Macro level)

In this section, I will give some comparisons and differences in the restitution process of the following countries: Germany, Austria, Italy, France and Belgium. I picked these countries for two reasons. First, the situation in these countries was relatively similar to that in the Netherlands, in contrast to what occurred in communist Eastern European regimes after the war.²³ Secondly, all these countries developed during the after-war period into democracies.²⁴ Therefore, the policies of the after-war governments and the processes of restitution are easier to compare with each other.

1) International Restitution, 1945-1960

There was no research published in any of the five countries during the 1950s. That does not mean that there was no restitution process. It was in Germany where compensation took place most prominently for stolen assets of Jews during the Second World War. The results of studies after 1995 show that Germany paid three billion USD to Israel.²⁵ Israel was in an economic crisis and needed the money according to Zweig and therefore accepted a figure considerably lower than the 6 billion that Israel estimated was due.²⁶ The problem is that there was no research done on how the three billion was divided between the victims of the Holocaust. This problem appears also in studies carried out on Austria and France. For example, Paul Obberhammer studies the restitution process in Austria after the Second World War. He only mentions the total amount of restitution for Jewish survivors per asset

²³ W. Plumpe and André Steiner, 'Dimensionen wirtschaftlicher Integrationsprozesse in West- und Osteuropa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg', *Economic History Yearbook*, 49.2 (2016) 21-38.

²⁴ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2012: Democracy at at standstill', *The Economist* 5 (2013) 1-45.

²⁵ R. W. Zweig, *German Reparations and the Jewish World: A History of the Claims Conference* (London 2001).

²⁶ 'Ben-Gurion's word', *Ynetnews*, 11-12-2007.

type in Austria.²⁷ Thus, the difference between what Jews received from restitution ranges from 50 to 225 Austrian Schillings.²⁸ There is no mention of individual payouts to survivors per category of stolen possessions.

Most of the international literature investigates the factors that led to the lack of restitution in the 1950s. In the next paragraph, I will summarize the main results of this work.

1) The lack of restitution was caused by prevalent anti-Semitism in West European society. Jews were still seen as inferior after the Second World War. Therefore, restitution was not seen as being necessary.²⁹ 2) Non-Jewish inhabitants and governments claimed that everybody suffered during the war at the hands of the Nazis. Jews were not in a position to complain. If Jews had something to retribute, they could submit restitution and reparations claims to the West German government instead.³⁰ 3) Post war rules governing restitution were inadequate and incomplete. Legislation was not drawn up for individual cases of restitution. The consequence was that governments acted in a bureaucratic and inflexible way.³¹ In my thesis, I will use the historiography to compare whether these factors played a role in the slow pace of restitution in the Netherlands. I take into account that most of the international literature is focusing on the restitution process of the 1950s. As I mentioned before, the literature applies the research of restitution to the complete

²⁷ P. Obberhammer, 'Restitution of Jewish Property in Austria', *Marx-Planck-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* (2000) 731-769.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 755-756.

²⁹ G. Tulea and E. Krausz, *Starting the Twenty-First Century: Sociological Reflections & Challenge* (Somerset 2002) 212; V. vanden Daelen, *Laten we hun lied verder zingen. De heropbouw van de joodse gemeenschap in Antwerpen na de Tweede Wereldoorlog (1944-1960)* (Amsterdam 2008) 45.

³⁰ L. Auslander, 'Coming Home', *Centre for Judaic Studies*, 25; G. Tulea and E. Krausz, *Starting the Twenty-First Century: Sociological Reflections & Challenge* (Somerset 2002) 202.

³¹ Tulea and Krausz, *Starting the Twenty-First Century*, 212; E. Rosand, 'Confronting the Nazi Past at the End of the 20th Century: The Austrian Model', *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 20 (2001) 202-211.

Jewish community. However, presumably, the amount of restitution was not distributed evenly across the Jewish population as some prominent families received more than others. Therefore, it is more relevant to investigate documented individual restitution cases, as I do by examining the restitution process involving six different Jewish companies based in Amsterdam. This proves the value of my research once again.

2) International restitution between 1960 and 1995

After the war, Jews did not talk about their experience because of a lack of understanding in society. Societies and individuals wanted to forget the tragedies of the past.³² A shift occurred when Adolf Eichmann was put on trial in 1961 in Israel. That a Nazi was convicted meant for Jewish survivors that they could recognize themselves as victims. During the trial, personal testimonies of Jews were read on a stage. Jews saw themselves as the bearers of history.³³ However, despite the recognition that survivor testimony gained during the Eichmann trial, public interest in survivors' experience in West Europe remained low.³⁴ In subsequent decades, public interest grew because of the release of movies such as *The Pawnbroker*, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* and the miniseries *Holocaust*.³⁵ The fact that Jews could talk more openly about the Holocaust and the raise of interest by non-Jews made it easier to start a debate about restitution and compensation.

3) International restitution after 1995

Scholars only started paying attention to post war restitution after 1995. It was

³² J. Wiedenhorn, 'Case study: "Above All, We Need The Witness": The Oral History of Holocaust Survivors', in: A. D. Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford, 2012) 245-254.

³³ *Ibid.*, 247.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

a reaction to the debates between financial regulators, politicians, and lawyers during the World Jewish Congress. These debates led to renewed restitution negotiations and to new scholarship that investigated post-war restitution. However, as I mentioned earlier, the new process of restitution received so much publicity that it led to a creation of a new myth that the main restitution negotiations were those of recent years. In my opinion, international research that tries to explain the lack of restitution before 1995 and the total amount of restitution provided overlooks the human dimension by ignoring personal stories of postwar restitution. That is why my research will add a new perspective by studying the individual process of restitution from 1945 to the mid-1950s.

Historiography about the restitution process in the Netherlands

Most of the national literature focuses on the role the Dutch government played in the first restitution process. As earlier mentioned, the debate began after 1995 when a hypothesis was made that the post-war Dutch government made many mistakes during the first restitution process from 1945 to the mid-1950s. Historians and other social researchers realized their opportunity to investigate how the Dutch government responded to restitution demands. Additionally, they wanted to examine what underlying factors caused the government to make decisions that were not necessarily ethical. I can use this literature for some important aspects of this study. Examining the literature about the role of the government will advance my understanding of the responses, decisions and actions of the Dutch government in the case of Jewish restitution requests. However, my research also differs from others in several important aspects. I will focus on Jews rather than the state as the main actor while investigating the restitution process. In contrast to most studies, the research presented here focuses on a specific geographical location, namely Amsterdam. Presumably, the restitution process differed in various locations, and therefore my research will help to be geographically specific. The advantage of

concentrating on Amsterdam is that it was the major cultural and economic center of the Netherlands, especially for Dutch Jews, and therefore there was greater government involvement. The documentation of this involvement supports a more profound conclusion about the greater government decision-making process regarding restitution. Unlike how I discussed the international literature, I will now dissect the Dutch literature into finer parts. By doing so, I will distinguish the Dutch literature per actor. The first part of the historiographical debate focuses on the government and society.

After the beginning of the second restitution attempt – in 1997 in the Dutch case – and the consequent media attention, the Dutch government established national and private commissions to research what happened to the properties of Jews who perished during the Second World War under the Scholten Commission.³⁶ Wouter Jan Veraart led this commission. He based his conclusion from the point of view of legal philosophy. He stated that the government tried to expedite the restitution process in the most efficient way.³⁷ According to the post-war government, restitution was not necessary when there was no claimant. Later, more commissions were established. For example, a supervisory commission researched financial institutions during the Second World War in the Netherlands (1998). A second committee named the Bondig Committee wrote a special dossier in collaboration with the Central Jewish Organization about the restitution of insurance funds (1999) and confiscated stocks (1999).³⁸

³⁶ W. Veraart, *Ontrechting en rechtsherstel in Nederland en Frankrijk in de jaren van de bezetting en wederopbouw* (Deventer 2005) 195.

³⁷ *Eindrapport van de begeleidingscommissie onderzoek financiële tegoeden WO-II in Nederland* Commissie Scholten (Leiden 1999). Link: [Supervisory Report](#)

³⁸ *Eindrapport van de Commissie van Onderzoek LIRO-archieven en archievensgids* Projectgroep tegoeden WOII (Den Haag 1998); *Eindrapport van de begeleidingscommissie onderzoek financiële tegoeden WO-II in Nederland* Commissie Scholten (Leiden 1999); *Laatste rapport van de contactgroep over de fondsen WOII* Commissie van Kemenade, de Contactgroep (1999).

The results from the research conducted by the government and private organizations inspired researchers to study the first restitution process. Individuals such as Regina Grüter started writing critical articles about the role of the post-war government.³⁹ She obtained background information from earlier research by the government and private organizations. Grüter was one of the researchers who participated in the commission that researched financial institutions such as insurance companies. She found so many injustices as a commission member that she decided that she wanted to carry out her own research on the topic.

Grüter wrote first about government mistakes in the case of restitution for the stolen money from Jewish life insurance policies during the war. Secondly, she investigated what happened to the money that was in possession of the bank Lippmann Rosenthal & Co. (later Liro). Liro earned during the war 26 million Dutch guilders from Jewish policies. Throughout the war, the bank claimed the money and therefore received payouts from murdered Jews' accounts. After the war, the Dutch Board of Restitution (see chapter 1 for more information) ordered the insurance companies, including Liro, to pay Jews redemption payments. However, nobody solved two problems. First, the insurance companies already paid a huge amount of money to Lippmann Rosenthal & Co. as payouts for life insurance. The problem was that nobody knew how much money was paid. Secondly, many Jews died during the war, so there was a lot of unclaimed money that the bank possessed and a lot of Jewish art on the wall of museums that went unreturned.

Manfred Gerstenfeld also considered how the government oversaw the restitution process. She investigated the factors that explain why the second restitution process started after 1997.⁴⁰ It appears that the government of the Netherlands did not intend to repay all the money that was withheld illegally and

³⁹ See, for example, R. Grüter, 'De roof van Joodse oorlogspolissen in historisch perspectief', *Het Verzekerings-Archief* 78:1 (2001) 24-32.

⁴⁰ M. Gerstenfeld, *Judging The Netherlands: The Renewed Holocaust Restitution Process, 1997-2000* (Jerusalem 2011).

immorally from the Jews. Without any pressure from society directly after the Second World War, 'The government made it possible to prevent significant international exposure of the maltreatment of many surviving Dutch Jews by the postwar authorities'.⁴¹ After fierce debates began in 1995 over the restitution process, the Dutch government was afraid of new media attention. Therefore, a renewed restitution process was initiated in 1997.

Martin Dean focused on the government's actions in the restitution process. He concluded that the delaying of Jewish restitution on immovable property occurred for two reasons. First, the government did not know who possessed the Jewish assets. Jewish assets were spread between many individuals. Sometimes these individuals sold the assets to another person. Therefore, it was not clear who was in possession of the assets and so the government was not able to find them and return the possessions to their formal Jewish owner.⁴²

Elly Touwen-Bouwsma also focused on the government in her work.⁴³ She underlined the mistake made by the Dutch government by delegating the decision-making about restitution to an external commission, the Commission of Restitution, in 1945. This delegation created various administrative problems. The commission was not clear about who was eligible to attain restitution and who was not. Without any guidelines, it was impossible to filter the actual victims from the frauds. Therefore, in some cases Jews who were the actual victims did not get any restitution, while others who were not eligible, did receive restitution.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Gerstenfeld, *Judging The Netherlands*, 183.

⁴² Dean, M., C. Goschler and P. Ther, *Robbery and Restitution: The Conflict over Jewish Property in Europe* (New York 2007) 60-65.

⁴³ E. Touwen-Bouwsma, *Op zoek naar grenzen. Toepassing en uitvoering van de wetten voor oorlogsslachtoffers* (Amsterdam 2010).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 329-336.

Local Dutch historiography of restitution

Investigations on a micro level are more relevant to my research approach, specifically the research that investigates restitution processes within a city and on an individual basis. First, large corporations that discovered in the mid-1990s that they possessed confiscated Jewish money during the Second World War started their own investigations. These large corporations investigated their role in the restitution process directly after the Second World War. I will use this literature because it will give me more insight about individual restitution cases.

ABN-AMRO is a Dutch bank with headquarters in Amsterdam. This bank started researching its role during the Second World War and more importantly, after the war. In 2005, they gave Milja van Tielhof all the resources necessary for her to investigate the role of all the bank's affiliates during restitution. Her conclusion is clear. She states that well-known Jews or those who had acquaintances during that time who worked at ABN-AMRO Bank had far more chance of receiving restitution than others who did not.⁴⁵ Apparently, institutions' preferred treatment of former employees also applied to other actors that were involved in the restitution process. My research will show whether Jews associated with companies that were more influential received suitable restitution sooner than Jews from less influential and smaller companies.

Finally, I want to discuss research that investigated the restitution process using regions and cities as case studies. I will only discuss the literature that discusses the process in Amsterdam. This will give me an insight into the municipal Jewish community's decisions and attitudes of restitution.

⁴⁵ M. van Tielhof, *Banken in bezettingstijd. De voorgangers van ABN-AMRO tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog en de periode van Rechtsherstel* (Amsterdam 2003).

Eric Slot, writing for the magazine *Historisch Nieuwsblad*,⁴⁶ focused on the furtive Jewish houses in Amsterdam. He states that it was not the German government who became rich from these properties, but individual Amsterdam residents. They profited because they bought Jewish houses after their owners were deported. After the war, the properties passed through many hands in a short period. Therefore, it was hard for Jews to prove if the most recent owners bought the properties 'in good faith.' The accuser always had to prove their property was not rightfully the possession of the most recent owners before it was returned. Many people who profited from these houses told the judge from the Commission of Restitution that they did not know that these houses were previously Jewish properties. It is easy to imagine that it is almost impossible for Jews to dispute such claims without any tangible proof. However, the confiscator of a company had to sign a German oath to eliminate any Jewish employees working in the business.⁴⁷ These German oaths were proof of their bad intentions.

Serge ter Braake and Maarten-Jan Vos also investigated post-war restitution in Amsterdam.⁴⁸ They focus on the restitution of houses. They also broadened their research in order to investigate all the Jewish immovable valuables taken during the Second World War. These Jewish immovable valuables included real estate, farmland and shop buildings.

This investigation looks similar to mine, but there are key differences. Their book describes the government's tangled administrative process of restitution. They try to answer whether there were different policies for different Jewish possessions. Therefore, while the subject is the same, they focus on the actual administrative processes while I focus on Jews as the main actors in the restitution process.

⁴⁶ E. Slot, 'Crimineel vastgoedcircuit verdiende grof geld aan Jodenvervolging', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 9 (2008).

⁴⁷ Stadsarchief Amsterdam (further SAA), Modemagazijnen Gebroeders Gerzon N.V (further MGG), inv. No. 539 fo. 111.

⁴⁸ They dedicate one chapter of the following book to Amsterdam: S. Ter Braake and M.J. Vos, *Rechtsherstel na de Tweede Wereldoorlog van geroofde Joods onroerend goed* (Amsterdam 2013) chapter 3.

To summarize, after the beginning of the international debate about Jewish restitution of stolen assets that began in 1995, academic research on restitution also started. The international and Dutch literature can be distinguished according to which actors they focused upon. First, some research projects concentrated on the role of the government, private organizations and Dutch society in the case of the restitution process. They try to explain how policy and attitudes enabled the restitution process. A second type uses Jews as the main actors. However, these studies do not look at individual cases, but assume that every restitution process was the same. In my opinion, this is inadequate, because the Commission of Restitution dealt with every case individually.

In my research, I want to investigate these individual cases in the form of businesses in Amsterdam that demanded some form of restitution. Additionally, I will investigate if the Commission of Restitution made any difference in the amount of restitution for each store. Subjectivity and economic necessity could have favored important and popular businesses. I will show that every process is different and that problems appear in the different restitution procedures. Secondly, most of the existing research adopts a national or international perspective. My research investigates the restitution process from a city standpoint, making it more in-depth and personal as a result. Finally, my thesis examines six cases involving Jewish businesses that resulted in some sort of success in attaining restitution. I will show how Jews experienced the restitution process in Amsterdam after the war and determine what factors led to their eventual receipt of compensation.

1.3 Theory

*They will all go out of business, everything is already arranged, de Bijenkorf, Gerzon, Hema, these buildings will be beautiful circuit houses while we will destroy the rest of the Jewish buildings.*⁴⁹

Around 1880, many Jews started to benefit from economic growth in Amsterdam. They saw new marketing opportunities to sell their varied traditional products. Therefore, new retail businesses, where one could buy different products, opened in Amsterdam. For example, Bijenkorf, Hema, Maison de Bonneterie, Metz & Co, were established around this time. In fact, they are companies that are still in business today.⁵⁰ These businesses welcomed all customers. They grew quickly and could compete with non-Jewish owned enterprise. All of this success was due to a Jewish assimilation process that began in the nineteenth century.⁵¹

Jews became part of socialist political parties and became members of labor unions as their assimilation progressed. One example of a labor organization that Jews joined is the General Diamond Workers Union. Jews also started to live throughout the city instead of remaining in a single Jewish neighborhood. However, Jews continuously remained close to their community both socially and religiously. Despite their involvement in economic life, Dutch Jews experienced continuing anti-Semitism at the end of the nineteenth century.⁵²

At the beginning of the twentieth century, criticism grew of the success of Jewish owned retail businesses. As a result, such businesses became the focus for anti-Semitism. For example, in a critical article that appeared in a newsletter from 1910, the Bijenkorf was viewed as a store bought by Jewish capital.⁵³ Despite growing

⁴⁹ Pogrom-illusies van een N.S.B.-er', *Het Volksdagblad: Dagblad voor Nederland*, 28-01-1939.

⁵⁰ J. Stoutenbeek and P. Vigeveno, *Gids van Joods erfgoed in Nederland* (n.p. 2016) 40.

⁵¹ J. Stoutenbeek and P. Vigeveno, *Joods Amsterdam: een cultuurhistorische gids* (Amsterdam 1997).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵³ 'Kerstgedachten', *De Tribune*, 23-12-1916.

anti-Semitism, Jews were still able to continue in business until the late 1930s. Within the social structure of the well-developed Jewish community, owners of the retail businesses and other wealthy people joined the Jewish elite. People who worked in intellectual professions, such as civil servants, diamond dealers, textile workers or tobacconists stood in the middle. At the bottom of the ladder stood hawkers, market traders and individual retailers.⁵⁴

For my dissertation, it is impossible to categorize different Jewish professions for the simple reason that Jews worked in a variety of industries. This is why I will categorize the Jewish businesses by size in Amsterdam. In my research question, I differentiate between micro (smaller than 10 workers), small (between 10 and 50 workers) and medium-sized businesses (between 50 and 250 employees). In medium-sized businesses, there was a Jewish director.⁵⁵ As previously mentioned, I want to consider whether the size of the store made any difference for restitution after the Second World War. For example, did a medium-sized retail store gain restitution more easily than a micro store?

To specify my research, I will only investigate the first period of restitution and compensation in Amsterdam, which occurred from the mid-1950s.

There are several theories that could explain if and why there was a difference in the amount of restitution granted. The difference could be triggered by:

- 1) Re-building the Dutch economy;
- 2) Pressure from large companies and networks;
- 3) Agreements during the war;
- 4) Chance of survival of Jewish owners;

⁵⁴ Stoutenbeek and Vigeveno, *Gids van Joods erfgoed*, 40-41.

⁵⁵ MKB Nederland, 'Informatie over het MKB (midden-en kleinbedrijf) in Nederland',

< <http://www.mkb servicedesk.nl> > Link: [Informatie over het MKB \(Consulted on 26 October 2016\)](#).

5) Other factors, such as whether survivors stayed in the Netherlands.

- 1) First, there was a shortage of housing in post-war Netherlands because of German bombing. Second, there was not enough food for the Dutch population following the war. Third, the population wanted to eliminate any support or collaboration with the Nazi cause. Dutch society felt that political collaborators such as *NSB'ers*, the Dutch Fascist Political Party, and Nazis deserved punishment. Fourth, the Dutch government wanted to solve the problem of unemployment and had to create more jobs for the population.⁵⁶ Therefore, the Dutch government's primary focus was not Jewish restitution after the Second World War.⁵⁷ However, a Jewish business' restitution might have had a higher priority if it could have contributed to the reconstruction of the Netherlands. For example, a thriving business before the war could contribute to the post-war economy and could provide more employment. Another example is a successful butcher before the war, which could contribute to the post-war food supply. To summarize, it is possible that the government gave priority to the restitution of those Jewish businesses that could contribute to the post-war economy.
- 2) The difference in size of the company could contribute to the fact that war restitution was not equal for medium and small sized Jewish companies. Alternatively, as the economist Bauw states: 'it is not clear that judicial independency can exist in a country during an economic crisis'.⁵⁸ However, the economy is dependent on jurisdiction at times of economic crises.

⁵⁶ Blom, J.C.H., 'Jaren van tucht en ascese. Enige beschouwingen over de stemming in herrijzend Nederland (1945-1950)', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 96:2 (1981) 300-333.

⁵⁷ Veraart, *Ontrechting*, 17.

⁵⁸ E. Bouw, *Rechtspraak in tijden van crisis: Over bedreiging en kansen voor rechtspraak, economie en rechtstaat* (Amsterdam 2011) 8.

Therefore, extensive lawsuits worked against economic growth, while a quick solution could help the economy grow. As a result, they acquired restitution and compensation as quickly as possible, while smaller companies had to wait for their turn for such settlement disputes to end.

To summarize, because of the Dutch government's desire to rebuild the economy after the war, the negotiated settlements of restitution for larger companies took precedence because they could contribute faster to economic improvement. As a result, these bigger companies also could demand higher restitution and compensation amounts in the courts because both sides benefited from each other.

- 3) Some Jewish directors of profitable large companies before the war made contracts with non-Jews so they could run the company until peace returned. It was easier for wealthy Jewish directors to keep a contractual distance from their companies, as they were not financially dependent on their business. For example, one of the biggest department businesses in the Netherlands, the Bijenkorf, changed their Board of Directors completely in 1940 to prove to the Nazis that it was not a Jewish company.⁵⁹ Despite this contract, the former Jewish board could give advice from exile in England. After the war, companies who did the same as the Bijenkorf did not have to prove to the Commission of Restitution that they were the true owners of their companies. This is because it was contractually agreed before or during the war.
- 4) The chance of survival during the war was also higher for directors of large companies. First, they had more connections with people who could help them hide or flee abroad because of their wide-ranging business contacts. Secondly, they had access to more money, making it easier to survive without their business. De Blij stated in his case study of Delft, for example, that only

⁵⁹ I. Montijn, *'t Gonst, 125 jaar de Bijenkorf* (1995 Amsterdam) 75.

people with money had a chance of escaping the clutches of the Germans.⁶⁰ Therefore, it is possible that mostly bigger companies were able to claim restitution after the Second World War; they had a higher chance of surviving and possessing documentation unlike the owners of smaller companies who were likely to have been killed. In the case of small business owners, restitution only started when their families reclaimed their businesses. For them, the process would take longer because it would be delayed and because they often did not have proof of ownership as it was destroyed or lost during the war.

- 5) Other factors that could explain the difference of restitution between micro, small and medium businesses are:
- The amount of restitution: it is possible that the government prioritized higher requests of restitution by people who were wealthier. Presumably, wealthy people were seen as being more prominent and could expect more favor and help from the government.
 - The psychological factor: micro and small enterprises may have believed that they had less of a chance to receive compensation.⁶¹ By considering this, it is possible that the owners of micro and small businesses did not claim their losses and therefore received no compensation.
 - Emigration from the Netherlands: survivors may have preferred to move overseas – for example, to Israel or the United States – rather than return to a country whose Jewish community had been decimated during the Holocaust.

⁶⁰ J.W. de Blij, *Oorlog en verzet in de Prinsenstad 1940-1945: Een overzicht van de gebeurtenissen in Delft in en rond de bezettingstijd* (Delft 2005).

⁶¹ V. Raman, 'A self-fulfilling prophecy: Linking belief to behavior', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1234 (2011) 104-107.

1.4 Material and method

My research is mostly qualitative. In this paragraph, I will describe how I collected my data to discuss post war compensation for Jewish micro, small and medium-sized businesses. My goal is not to provide detailed lists of these enterprises because it is impossible to investigate all of the Jewish businesses in Amsterdam before the war. As earlier mentioned, I identified a sample of enterprises based on the following criteria: the businesses needed to have a Jewish owner before the war, they needed to have been confiscated by a Nazi collaborator and finally, after the war, somebody needed to claim compensation for the businesses. An advantage to this method is that it is as objective as possible. However, the disadvantage of this method is that many archives about restitution were destroyed because archivists did not think these records were relevant.⁶² Because of this documentation, I went to the archive and investigated carefully the records that still exist and that met my selection criteria. Afterwards, I categorized the few enterprises that did conform to my selection criteria into groups based on the number of their employees. I used the number of employees to define their size. The businesses that I finally chose were

- Gerzon (considered a medium store)
- Metz & Co (medium store)
- Vleeschpaleis David van der Stam (considered a small store)
- Firma Alex Citroen (small store)
- Firma M. Walg&Zn. (considered a micro store)
- Firma H.L. Granaat (micro store)

My research cannot obviously completely represent all the Jewish businesses in Amsterdam in each size category. This is because there is an absence of available

⁶² Nationaal Archief Den Haag, 'Raad voor het rechtsherstel',

<<http://www.gahetna.nl/collectie/archief/ead/index/eaid/2.09.48.02#c01:6>> Link: [Raad voor het rechtsherstel](#)

(Last consulted on 10 November 2016).

datasets for the timeframe of interest. It is also not possible to ascertain background information of all the mentioned persons in these records. Some information about the origin of the confiscators during the war is not accessible. My research into national archives, newspapers, archives of the Liro Bank and birth records did not always produce relevant information.

However, my aim is not to carry out a representative study and provide a complete story. Instead, I strive to provide an extensive analysis using the material I found to answer my research questions. The primary question I address with my research is: Given their disrupted business during the war, was there a difference in compensation and restitution from the Dutch government between small, medium and bigger store? That is why I investigated the same Jewish businesses before (1930 to 1940), during (1940-1945), and after the war (1945-1960). Additionally, I used different sources to include all the actors (the Jewish business owners, the confiscators during the war, Dutch newspapers and the Dutch government) who were involved in the restitution process. The sources that I use are 1) newspapers 2) jurisprudence 3) letters to the Commission of Restitution and 4) personal archives of the individuals involved.

Newspapers

I will investigate how newspapers wrote about the post-war governmental compensation for Jewish businesses that were confiscated or sold in the Second World War. During the war, the Nazi-approved government took control of the Dutch media in its attempt to indoctrinate the Netherlands' population. Therefore, in the media available in the Netherlands during the Second World War, the legitimacy of the sales and confiscation process is hard to determine because of the difficulty distinguishing facts from indoctrination.⁶³ Because of this, I concentrate on newspaper media after the Second World War.

⁶³ C. van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden, Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (2008, Amsterdam).

After the liberation of the Netherlands on 5 May 1945, by primarily Canadian armed forces, the media became independent from governmental influence again. To begin, I will use newspapers to investigate if the print news media tried to intervene during the compensation process. It is possible that the media tried to persuade their readers and the federal Dutch government to compensate the Jews.⁶⁴ Secondly, the media can be used as an outlet for Jewish entrepreneurs. It is possible that Jewish entrepreneurs tried to tell their stories and put pressure on the government via newspapers.

In my research, I use the digitalized newspapers that can be found on the online website *Delpher*.⁶⁵ This website was developed by the Royal Library, which digitized 1.3 million newspaper articles. However, many remaining newspapers are not digitally accessible. This lack of digitalized material is a disadvantage because without digitalization, the newspapers are more difficult to access. Despite this difficulty, my research is as extensive as possible.

Jurisprudence

It is important to study the jurisprudence written by the judicial powers regarding the restitution of Jewish properties. It elucidates the rights of the claimant. The jurisprudence in a summary proceeding was invoked when the statement of the Commission of Restitution was not clear. These legal records can be found in the National Archive.⁶⁶ In the archive, there is a separate section that focuses only on Amsterdam. This section consists of around one thousand records that relate to all jurisprudence for the compensation of Jewish real estate.

⁶⁴ Van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden*, 19-20; M. McCombs and D. Shaw, 'The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36:2 (1972) 176-187.

⁶⁵ Site Delpher, Property of the national library, Leiden University and UvA <www.delpher.nl> Link: <http://www.delpher.nl/> (Last consulted on 16 February 2017).

⁶⁶ Nationaal Archief Den Haag (further NA), Raad voor het Rechtsherstel: Afdeling Rechtspraak, 1945-1971 (further RRR) inv No. 2.09.48.02, Griffie van de Kamer Amsterdam, 1945-1969 (further 721).

Letters to the Commission of Restitution

The idea was that returning Jews and the new owner would first try to agree on solutions together. Often, the Jewish families and the new owner came to a compromise. Many cases ended shortly afterwards, whereby the Jewish family got their property back, or was paid an amount of money equal to the value of the property. When both parties did not come to an agreement, they could go to the Commission of Restitution. This governmental institution was meant to give an objective decision. Because the statements of the Commission were extensive, I also use this archive to describe the process of restitution for Vleeschpaleis van der Stam and Firma N. Walg. All the letters to the Commission of Restitution can be found in the National Archive and in personal archives donated to the city of Amsterdam.⁶⁷

Personal archives

The companies Gerzon, Metz & Co and Firma Alex Citroen⁶⁸ transferred their personal archives to the city of Amsterdam. The families collected these archives, which cover a long period of history. There are more than one thousand archived records available, from 1750 to the present. I have selected specific records for the period between 1935 and 1960. I must consider the fact that some relevant records were absent from the files because a family did not see it as necessary to add them. Some reasons for this could be that they felt the documents contained adverse information or because they were simply lost over the course of time. It is also

⁶⁷ Nationaal Archief Den Haag (further NA), Raad voor het Rechtsherstel: Afdeling Rechtspraak, 1945-1971 (further RRR) inv No. 2.09.48.02, Griffie van de Kamer Amsterdam, 1945-1969 (further 721).

⁶⁸ In consecutive order:

Gerzon: Stadsarchief Amsterdam (further SAA), Modemagazijnen Gebroeders Gerzon N.V (further MGG), inv. No. 539; Metz & Co: SAA, Firma Metz en Co. (further MC), inv. No. 977; Firma Alex Citroen: SAA, Karel Alexander Citroen en de Firma Alex Citroen (further KCFAC), inv. No. 30651.

possible that firms who received compensation wanted to keep the exact amount of money private.

However, these archives do contain sufficient information to be good sources for my research. First, these archives give insights into the personal feelings of the Jewish business operators. Secondly, there are no other alternative archives like those from the *Verwalter* (administrator), available. To summarize, in my thesis I consider that the sources declare the opinion of one actor: the Jewish merchants and business people. Although the perspectives were relatively limited, a lack of archives cannot be a reason to avoid research for an issue as important as restitution.

Finally, I found the archive of Firma H.L. Granaat through research on the internet. The family name of Granaat appears on the website of Jewish Monuments. In one of the reactions under an article, it appeared that the new owners, the van Lissum family, has possession of most of the archive of the Granaat family. After contacting Jan Sebastian van Lissum, the recent owner of the buildings formerly part of Firma Granaat, I received the approval to use the personal archive of the Firma Granaat for my Master's thesis. The archive consists of a box full of pictures and correspondence between the brothers Eduard and Louis Granaat. I am thankful that I also could see the mails Mr. van Lissum sent to Granaat family members.

Chapter 2: Jewish companies on the eve and during the Second World War (1930-1944)

*Everywhere Jews are hunting for money, everywhere they deprive their host nations their bread and earnings, mess with the prices and incite people against each other.*⁶⁹

Before 1930, it was impossible to distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish companies. The only way to know that a business was Jewish was because of the store's location in Amsterdam's Jewish neighborhood. The reason that Jewish and non-Jewish businesses could not be visibly separated was because of the assimilation of the Jewish population. The assimilation process on the labor market started after the laws of 1880, which allowed Jews to enter the entire labor market. Under the 1880 legislation, Jews received the same civil rights as everyone else and were full citizens of the Netherlands.⁷⁰ Therefore, many Jews became laborers in cigar factories, warehouses or famous antique markets.

The opening of the entire labor market in 1880 also made it possible for Jews to enter intellectual professions.⁷¹ Thus, Jews became lawyers, doctors and journalists. The growth of the economy after 1870 in the Netherlands provided space for Jews to become involved in the financial world as well. Some Jews started to become wealthy in this period by successfully directing the operation of factories, warehouses, and retail businesses. However, the ability to independently start profitable businesses and therefore climb the social ladder was only attainable for a small minority of the Jewish population. Most Jews joined the labor market as

⁶⁹ H. Graf van Monts, *De Joden in Nederland* (n.p. 1941) 56.

⁷⁰ K. Hofmeester, *Van talmoed tot statuut: joodse arbeiders en arbeidersbewegingen in Amsterdam, Londen en Parijs, 1880–1914* (Amsterdam 1990); M. H. D. van Leeuwen, I. Maas, and A. Miles, 'Creating a Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations: An Exercise in Multinational Interdisciplinary Cooperation', *Historical Methods* 37 (2004) 186–197.

⁷¹ P. Bregstein and S. Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1978) 16.

employees. The biggest industry where Jews worked was in the diamond industry. Around 1914, approximately half of the Jewish working population found a job in the diamond business.⁷²

Jews became more integrated in Dutch economic culture. For example, non-Jewish Dutch citizens began to interact with Jewish businesses. However, while Jewish and Dutch cultures intertwined and relationships between Jews and non-Jews grew, Jews never completely culturally assimilated into the greater Amsterdam society. Jewish culture and religion remained an important factor of Jewish identity. In fact, laborers tried to protect their Jewish culture.⁷³

Although Jews were active in the greater Dutch society, the fact that they did not completely assimilate sparked criticism from sections of non-Jewish Dutch society who condemned Jews for working on Sundays and on Christian holidays.⁷⁴ This criticism began to trigger economic anti-Semitism. Jews were seen as individuals who profited from Dutch hospitality.⁷⁵

In the 1930s, anti-Semitism grew due to high unemployment and the financial crisis of 1929.⁷⁶ Certain historians claim that the growth of anti-Semitism was the result of pre-existing attitudes that peaked during this time.⁷⁷ Openly anti-Semitic statements were made in the Netherlands in the 1930s. Magazines (*The Aristo, Volk en*

⁷² Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering*, 19.

⁷³ S. Bloemgarten and J. van Velzen, 'Joods Amsterdam in een Bewogen Tijd 1890-1940', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 34:2 (2000) 211-214.

⁷⁴ Bloemgarten and van Velzen, 'Joods Amsterdam in een Bewogen Tijd', 211-214.

⁷⁵ E. Gans, "'Vandaag hebben ze niets maar morgen bezitten ze weer tien gulden". Antisemitische stereotypen in bevrijd Nederland', in: Conny Kristel c.s., *Terugkeer en opvang na de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Regionale verschillen* (Amsterdam 2002) 313-353.

⁷⁶ Duitsland Instituut, Property of the Ministry of education, culture and science, 'De lange geschiedenis van Duits-antisemitisme', <<https://duitslandinstituut.nl/artikel/185/de-lange-geschiedenis-van-duits-antisemitisme>>
Link: [De lange geschiedenis van Duits-antisemitisme](https://duitslandinstituut.nl/artikel/185/de-lange-geschiedenis-van-duits-antisemitisme) (Last consulted on 26 January 2017).

⁷⁷ G.C. Quispel, *Anti-Joodse beeldvorming en Jodenhaat: de geschiedenis van het antisemitisme in West-Europa* (Hilversum 2015).

Vaderland), political parties (Het Zwarte Front⁷⁸ and the NSB⁷⁹), and academics (e.g. Professor Kips) spread messages of anti-Semitism.⁸⁰ After the German invasion of the Netherlands on 8 May 1940, life changed for the Jewish population culturally, religiously, and economically. Starting in 1940, all Jewish companies had to register with the *wirtschaftsprufstelle* (audit office). Around 22,000 Jews registered their companies. In 1941, the Germans demanded that every large registered Jewish company had to be Aryanized, while every small company had to be confiscated.⁸¹ The money paid to Jews for confiscation was a deposit to an account in the Lippmann Rosenthal & Co. bank.⁸² This deposited money was not available for Jews to use. Therefore, they could not withdraw the funds and use them to flee the Germans.

Once Jewish companies were confiscated and Aryanized, they came into the possession of a *Verwalter* (the German word for confiscator). The *Verwalter* was a German appointed custodian or trustee of the Jewish company from the time it was Aryanized or confiscated until it was sold to a new non-Jewish owner.

The Germans preferred to appoint a Dutch collaborator as *Verwalter* because they felt that employees would work harder for a Dutch boss than for a German occupier. However, the *Verwalters* had to prove that they were authentic national socialists because the Germans did not want any rebellion against their policies. For

⁷⁸ The fascist party (the black front) was established in 1934 and received around 7500 votes in the 1930s. The Germans chose to make the NSB the only political party in the Netherlands during the war. Het Zwarte Front was abolished in 1941.

⁷⁹ The Nationalistic Socialistic federation (NSB) was the Dutch national socialistic movement that collaborated with the German Nazi Party during the Second World War.

⁸⁰ P. Hendriks, *Antisemitisme in Nederland 1860–1940: Waarom Nederland betrokken dient te worden bij het vergelijkend historisch racisme-onderzoek* (Leiden 1997) 59-60.

⁸¹ While money was involved in the transaction I will still talk about confiscation. In my opinion it was a sham transaction because the transaction indirectly went to the German government.

⁸² R. van Doorslaer, 'Book Reviews: G. Aalders, *Berooid. De beroofde joden en het Nederlandse restitutiebeleid sinds 1945*', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review*, 118:2 (2003) 278–280.

example, the Dutch companies had to send the Germans needed war material and machines.⁸³ However, there were not enough trusted Dutch national socialists, so Germans were also appointed to *Verwalter* positions. Although *Verwalters* were free to earn money and conduct business as they pleased, German needs took priority.⁸⁴

Jewish misery did not end with the growth of anti-Semitism and the loss of their livelihoods. The Germans then began to register all Jewish persons in the Netherlands. The Germans made them walk in public with a yellow star in order to isolate them from everyone else.⁸⁵ Additionally, they ordered the Jews in Amsterdam to move to a quickly built ghetto, established from the Jodenbreestraat towards the Nieuwe Kerkstraat. This made it easier for the Germans to bring Jews to the central train station. From the train station, Jews were deported to a *durchgangslager* (transit camp) at Westerbork. From July 1942 to September 1944, Jews were taken to one of many death camps.⁸⁶

Most of the Jews from Amsterdam did not survive the war. From the 80,000 Jews living in Amsterdam in 1940, only fifteen thousand Jews survived the German atrocities.⁸⁷ The Jews survivors returned with significant trauma and without any possessions. The Jewish victims could not count on a warm welcome. The non-Jewish Dutch population also suffered, especially during the 1944-45 'Hunger Winter', and did not have sympathy for people claiming victimhood.⁸⁸ Because of this disinterest, restitution of property started slowly and in a disorganized manner.⁸⁹

⁸³ L. de Jong, *Het koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, deel zes, Juli '42 Mei '43, eerste helft* (Den Haag 1975) 16.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸⁵ A. Bakker, *"Dag pap, tot morgen!": De kinderen uit de Joodse crèche* (Hilversum 2005) 9.

⁸⁶ L. de Jong, *Het koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, deel zes, Juli '42 Mei '43, eerste helft* (Den Haag 1975).

⁸⁷ M. Croes and P. Tammes, *"Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan": Een onderzoek naar de overlevingskansen van joden in de Nederlandse gemeenten, 1940-1945* (Amsterdam 2006).

⁸⁸ M. Bossenbroek, *De meelstreek: Terugkeer en opvang na de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam 2001).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Whether this also applied to the restitution of companies will be discussed in Chapter 3.

First, I will introduce the businesses in their order of size in the next paragraph. I begin by discussing some general information about each selected company. Thereafter, I explain what happened to these enterprises during the Second World War.

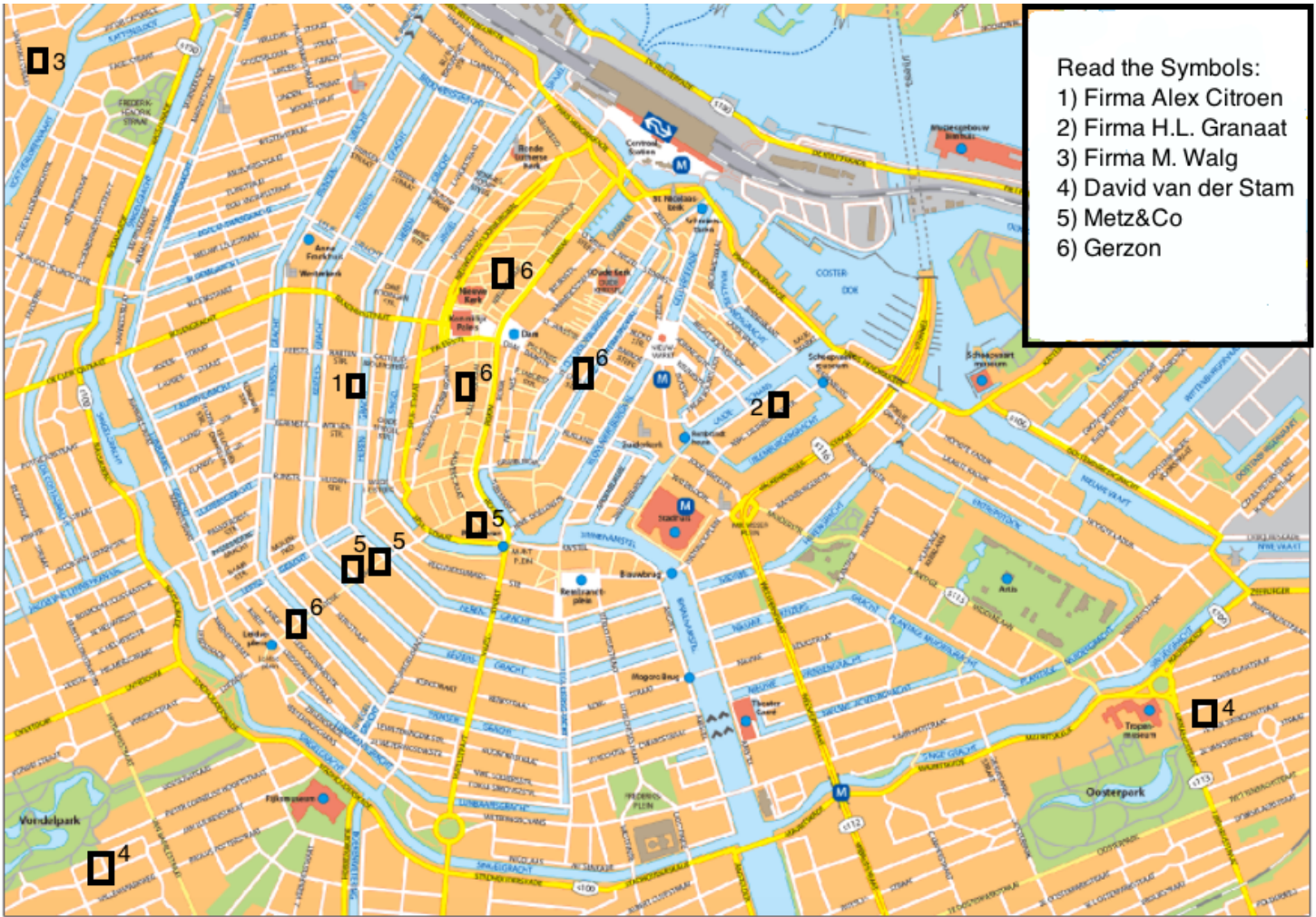


Figure A-1. Locations of the confiscated firms investigated in the text. Note that the quantity of offices linked to each firm differs. Presumably, medium-sized businesses had more money to buy multiple offices in the center of Amsterdam. Often, smaller businesses were established around the outskirts of the central (shopping) part of Amsterdam.

A) Gerzon (Medium business)

On Wednesday 4 December 1889, two brothers, Eduard and Lion Gerzon, opened their retail store on a property located at Nieuwendijk 163. Within forty years, the store became a famous retail store that expanded into three other properties in Amsterdam. It was famous for its fashionable but expensive men's suits and women's clothes. Their customers were mostly wealthy and highly regarded members of Dutch society. Even the royal family was a regular customer at Gerzon.⁹⁰

The business thrived at the beginning of the 20th century, which is why the two brothers put their business on the stock market. They remained on the Board of Directors and they made sure that the family would stay in control by owning the majority of the stock. Although the international financial crisis that struck the world in 1929 caused some problems, the company overcame this through clever marketing decisions. Instead of downsizing, Gerzon tried to expand through two initiatives. The first initiative was to double the amount of advertisements in newspapers.⁹¹ The second initiative was to open a store in the colony of the Dutch East Indies.⁹²

During Hitler's rise to power in Germany, Gerzon grew to become one of the biggest retail businesses in the Netherlands. However, Eduard Gerzon noted the changing political environment in Germany. After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, Eduard said: 'Europe will pay for this treaty, it is way too severe'.⁹³ This prediction is probably the reason why the Gerzon brothers tried to secure the future of their company before World War II.

⁹⁰ J.A.W. Kessels, *Het huis Gerzon: geschiedenis van een modehuis 1889-1964* (Amsterdam 1964) 62-63.

⁹¹ 1920-1929: 2000 advertisements versus 1930-1939: 4000 advertisements, found on delpher.nl.

⁹² Kessels, *Het huis Gerzon*, 70-71.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 69.



Figure A-2. Gerzon Department Store on Kalverstraat.

Left: An office of Gerzon established on the Kalverstraat in Amsterdam.

source: 1['Google maps', <<https://www.google.nl/maps/place>> Link: Gerzon (Consulted on 3 January 2017)];
Left: older photograph from 1890 with mannequins and clothing displayed in windows. [Kessels J.A.W, *Het huis Gerzon: geschiedenis van een modehuis 1889-1964*. (Amsterdam 1964) 29].



Figure A-3. Gerzon Department Store at the Nieuwedijk.

Left is a Current photograph from Google maps

source: ['Google maps', Link: Gerzon (Consulted on 03-01-2017); Right: older photograph from 1890 with mannequins and clothing displayed in windows [Kessels J.A.W, Het huis Gerzon: geschiedenis van een modehuis 1889-1964. (Amsterdam 1964) 29].

Gerzon on the eve of the Second World War

Kessels writes in the *History of Gerzon* that the family probably knew what would happen but they wanted to stay in charge of the business.⁹⁴ However, the records show that something different occurred. The Jewish Board of Directors, the Gerzon brothers, Gustaav Hamburger, and Alfred Platz, came together in July 1939 to talk about the future of the company. The intention of the meetings was to 'ensure that the family stock holdings were safe and to discuss a methodology that an eventual occupier never would get their hands on these stocks'.⁹⁵ Specifically, the idea was that the Board of Directors would save some of the stock certificates somewhere in Switzerland. Their plans were so advanced that they even tried to set up a trust fund in Panama, which would have given management control over the stocks in Switzerland if something had happened.

In August of 1939, another portion of Gerzon stocks was given to confidants in England. In addition, they chose to change the complete Board of Directors to Aryan Dutch persons. However, after the Netherlands surrendered on 15 May 1940, the Germans did not believe that the store was completely Aryanized: it remained Jewish in the Germans' eyes.

It became obvious that the Gerzons' business would change hands when Eduard and Lion Gerzon and Arthur Marx, another member of the Board of Directors, received a letter from the Dutch society regarding the settlement of companies, known as Nagu.⁹⁶ This letter stated that the company would be confiscated because more than 25% of its stock was in the hands of Jews. All the stock and control over the eight offices would go to an Aryan *Verwalter* named Albert Walter Hermann Spiecker, who was originally from Berlin. Spiecker was already in the business of selling suits and trading fabrics. Gerzon was a good opportunity for him to expand his business in countries outside of Germany. According to the

⁹⁴ Kessels, *Het huis Gerzon*, 69.

⁹⁵ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 446-460.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 415-423.

Germans, the Gerzon Company was worth about 7 million Dutch Guilders at the time.⁹⁷ Spiecker would pay this amount to the Nagu and then the Nagu would pay it to the German government. Evidently out of the records it appears that Spiecker only paid 4 million Dutch guilders for a company that was worth much more.⁹⁸

Spiecker's desire to spread his businesses was hopeful, which is apparent in a letter to the German government where he mentions that he would ameliorate the "zehaffender organismus" (value-creating organization) with his years of experience in running businesses.⁹⁹ However, the Gerzon firm lost a lot of money under the *Verwalter's* supervision. This is because personnel did not want to collaborate with the German occupier. Additionally, Gerzon's machines and fabrics, which were needed for their own production, were confiscated by a company named 'safe-in Mercurius' to support the German war efforts.

One of the offices of Gerzon was in Hilversum, which Spiecker did not acquire. Instead, on 13 September 1943, this office became part of the Association of Lingerie Fabrics.¹⁰⁰ The owners, Mr. Lens and Mr. Weinberg, were not Jewish. This company had a *mietvertrag abschlussen*, which means that they had the office under lease. It is clear from the records that Lens and Weinberg were forced to move to one of Gerzon's old offices because their office had to be ceded to the Germans. In return, they had the possibility to use a formal office on the Kerkbrink in Hilversum. After the war, it turned out that the entire interior of the Gerzon office was taken away during the war. Therefore, everything that belonged to the Gerzon firm was removed from the offices.

⁹⁷ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 415-423.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 426-435.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 438.

B) Metz & Co (Medium business)

A migrant from Metz, France, named Moses Samuel Metz, established a wholesale store of fabrics and ribbons in Amsterdam in 1776. After two generations, the store was sold to a nephew, named Isaac Cantor. He was added to the enterprise as a partner. The nephew added Co(mpany) to the name, making the company's official title Metz & Co. Metz & Co grew in the nineteenth century because of good marketing. The company imported its products from London and they proved extremely popular in Amsterdam. Therefore, Metz & Co opened two new offices in Amsterdam in 1922 and 1927. Both of these offices stayed in business until their closure in 2013. All of the company's businesses combined fashion with artistic influences. The elite from Amsterdam and some from Paris bought English fashion such as garments, women's hats, needlework and most importantly furniture at Metz & Co in Amsterdam.¹⁰¹ In 1920, Joseph de Leeuw, another Jew, took ownership. Despite this change, the company's name remained the same. After the international financial crisis in the 1929, de Leeuw saw his revenue drop. However, that was not his only problem.

¹⁰¹ A. Den Dekker c.s., *Modepaleizen in Amsterdam 1880-1960* (Amsterdam 2007) 45-61.



Figure A-4. An office of Metz & Co on the Keizersgracht around 1915 and 2017.

Source [Metz & Co.eu, 'original site of Metz & Co', <metzco.eu> Metz&Co (Consulted on 20 December 2016)];
Inset: ['Google maps' Link: Google Maps (Consulted on 2 January 2017)].

Metz & Co on the eve of WWII

Metz & Co tried to avoid the misery of the economic crisis of 1929 by attracting people to its store by organizing fashion shows with themes such as traveling and vacation. During the 1930s, de Leeuw tried to create an airier and more pleasant atmosphere in the store. When the Germans occupied the Netherlands in May 1940, Metz & Co tried to continue business as usual.¹⁰² However, everything changed in August 1941 when de Leeuw and his Metz & Co businesses were confiscated and sold to an SS-officer named W.A.F. Harsch.¹⁰³ First, in July 1941, Harsch promised that he would not hire any Jews in his firm. He also had to ensure that all the Jews who worked for Metz & Co did not have any influence or leadership in the company.

¹⁰² Den Dekker c.s., *Modepaleizen*, 65.

¹⁰³ SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 48.

The exact date for the handover of the company was 12 August 1941. As mentioned in the record, he obtained full responsibility for the store, acquired access to all the liquid assets, and received full possession of all 400 shares of stocks. Later, in 1942, Harsch also gained possession over the three remaining production houses, which provided leather and textiles for Metz & Co.

As mentioned in the renewed registration at the chamber of commerce, the reason for this handover was because of the rule that all Jews had to be removed from businesses.¹⁰⁴ In 1942, de Leeuw also lost possession over his personal residences in Amsterdam. Harsch, who already owned his business firm, also tried to attain one of de Leeuw's houses.¹⁰⁵ However, Harsch was informed by a message that all of de Leeuw's houses already belonged to a *Verwaltung* (German administrative) company. However, after some negotiating, Harsch also got possession of three of de Leeuw's residences.

It is interesting that the transfer of the houses was included in the records. De Leeuw and Harsch agreed that Harsch would pay 420,000 Dutch Guilders for all of de Leeuw's houses. Afterwards, it appears that this amount was deposited to the account of Metz & Co, Harsch's new firm.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, De Leeuw actually never received any money for his property.

Harsch was the new owner of Metz & Co, while Attorney Karel Hoogenberk was in charge.¹⁰⁷ This was a blessing in disguise. Under his charge, Metz & Co survived the horrors and economic failures of the war.¹⁰⁸ This is because it had built up many reserves before the war. As a result, Hoogenberk could sell all the reserves that were stored in sheds during the war. Therefore, Metz & Co enjoyed a healthy economic position after the war. Despite this success, the personal losses caused

¹⁰⁴ SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 111.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁰⁸ Den Dekker c.s., *Modepaleizen*, 69.

feelings of injustice. Joseph de Leeuw was murdered in Theresienstadt in 1943, along with many of his Jewish employees. Before the war began, Jozeph's son, Hendrik de Leeuw, escaped to America. It is not clear from the sources how Hendrik got to America. However, after the war, he was the only person who could take charge of the business and who could fight for restitution and compensation.

C) Vleeschpaleisch David van der Stam (Small business)

David van der Stam, the first owner of the self-named butcher, was born in Amsterdam in 1886. A son of a butcher, he started his own business at a property on the Kinkerstraat 210-212 in Amsterdam's Jewish neighborhood.¹⁰⁹ He had three children with his wife (a non-Jew). Unfortunately, there is not a lot of information about the store before WWII. However, by examining newspapers and archival records, it is possible to provide a short history of the firm. The years between 1920 and 1930 were good years for the van der Stam butcheries. Over this period, his business was so successful that he opened two new butchers in Amsterdam. One of his businesses was located at Zeilstraat 31 and the other was located at the eerste van Swindenstraat 91, both outside of the Jewish neighborhood.¹¹⁰ Because it was a family business, his son and his nephew became co-owners of one of the new enterprises.¹¹¹ All the stores sold non-Kosher meat and so most of his customers were non-Jewish customers.

¹⁰⁹ 'Advertentiepagina', *De Telegraaf*, 18-09-1932

¹¹⁰ Joodse monumenten. Property of the Jewish historical organisation, <joodsemonumenten.nl> Link: [Joodse monumenten](http://joodsemonumenten.nl) (Last consulted on 26 November 2016).

¹¹¹ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721-723, 35K/46.



Figure A-4 Top: An advertisement by the Meat Palace in the newspaper and the formal office of the butcher, which today is a supermarket (eerste van de Swindenstraat 91).

Source: ['Advertentiepagina', *De Tijd: Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Nieuwsblad*, 30-11-1932]; Bottom is current picture of site [Google maps' Link: [David van der Stam](#) (Last consulted on 02-01-2017)].

David van der Stam on the eve of WWII

The businesses owned by David van der Stam, his son and his cousin Jozeph became famous because of a demonstration by staff on 31 March 1937.¹¹² The financial crisis had a major impact on every small or micro business. Many businesses specializing in vegetables, meat, and manufactured goods became bankrupt because of high taxes

¹¹² 'Sit-Downstaking te Amsterdam. Actie van slagersgezellen in de Kinkerstraat', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31-03-1937.

and the reduced purchasing power of people in the Netherlands at the time.¹¹³ In addition, David van der Stam had to change the content of the contracts of his employees. Instead of permanent employment, they only could work on flexible contracts and they became temporary employees. As a reaction to their new situation, these employees started the first sit-down occupation in the Netherlands. The purpose of this demonstration was to occupy the store peacefully; doing nothing the whole day and waiting until demands for permanent contracts were granted.¹¹⁴ Because David van der Stam needed his business, he ended the demonstration after a day by granting the previously mentioned demands. The consequences of this demonstration were enormous. Pictures of the protest appeared in every newspaper, which led to free advertising and more brand awareness. It was noted after these events that 'the business had good revenue and a name to be proud of just before the war.'¹¹⁵

During WWII, David van der Stam no longer felt safe in Amsterdam. First, he saw that the Germans tried to counter all Jewish actions. Secondly, van der Stam received many anonymous death threats via phone calls.¹¹⁶ Because he took these threats very seriously, he relocated to Hoogkarspel, located in the north of the Netherlands. He gave his son and his cousin Jozeph responsibility for the company as he stepped aside. As van der Stam's son and nephew were half-Jews, he hoped that the Germans would leave them alone. This strategy worked until 1942, as

¹¹³ H. de Jong, *De Nederlandse industrie 1913-1965. Een vergelijkende analyse op basis van de productiestatistieken* (Groningen 1999).

¹¹⁴ Site beeld en geluid, Property of the Dutch government, 'Stakingacties op vele plaatsen, onderhandelingen leiden tot gedeeltelijke overeenstemming',

<<http://www.beeldengeluid.nl/en/search/list/site?page=51&f%5B0%5D=hvaivjfayszstvng>> Link: [Stakingacties op vele plaatsen \(Last consulted on 5 December 2016\)](#).

¹¹⁵ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721-723, 35K/46.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

proclaimed by Jozeph, 'After the take-over of the business of my uncle, the following months were relatively calm'.¹¹⁷

Unfortunately, 'mischlings' (racially mixed members of society who were considered by the Nazis to be of both Aryan and Jewish ancestry) were not allowed to keep their businesses. Therefore, by the end of 1942, the store was confiscated for 2,199 Dutch Guilders and given to one of the butcher's employees who was a member of the NSB. All of the butcher's equipment was sold to Broekhofs vleeschhouwerijen en worstfabriek (butcher businesses and sausage fabrication). Broekhof used the money to open new butcher stores. In one of the records, Jozeph, the nephew of David, describes how he was present at the opening of Broekhof's new business: 'At the opening of their new store, Broekhof organized a party with some beautiful flowers. When I looked from the corner of the street inside the Broekhof store, I saw all my equipment standing the same as I had it in my store. I looked to this opening with understandable feelings'.¹¹⁸ Presumably, he meant feelings of sadness.

David van der Stam was hanged in Amersfoort concentration camp in 1943.¹¹⁹ His family hid in Apeldoorn after they realized they would be forced to work in a camp for people who came from mixed marriages. The son and cousin of David survived the war and tried to attain restitution and compensation for the family's losses in the war.

D) Firma Alex Citroen (Small store)

In 1887, Alexander Citroen started a wholesale business for home supplies in Amsterdam, and he named the business Firma Alex Citroen. The store was located in a canal house at Singel 324 in Amsterdam. Because there is not a lot of secondary

¹¹⁷ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721-723, 35K/46.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Joodse monumenten. Property of the Jewish historical organisation, <joodsemonumenten.nl> Link: [David van der Stam](https://www.joodsemonumenten.nl/over-de-rijksarchief) (Last consulted on 29 December 2016).

literature available about this business, I used mostly primary sources to describe the story of Firma Citroen. All of these records are available in the Amsterdam archives. Alexander Citroen owned the business until his death in 1915. There were three stores, one in The Hague, one in Rotterdam and one in Amsterdam.¹²⁰ When he died in 1926, his wife, Mathilde Citroen, became director and performed leadership duties until 1931, when her son Karel was old enough to take over the director position. After the transfer of leadership, the business ownership was divided between Karel and his mother. This would ultimately be a problem after the war. Under Karel's leadership, from 1931 to 1977, he had to overcome many disappointments. In 1927, a fire that raged on the Singel Street in Amsterdam destroyed Firma Alex Citroen.¹²¹ The walls of the firm were destroyed and the stockroom burned to the ground.¹²² After these setbacks, he rebuilt and resupplied the firm completely. However, new misfortunes would come soon.

¹²⁰ 'Firma Alex Citroen', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, 19-03-1923.

¹²¹ 'De ontploffing te Amsterdam', *Provinciale Gelderse en Nijmeegse Courant*, 01-03-1927.

¹²² 'Een explosie te Amsterdam. Een huis aan de Heerengracht in de lucht gesprongen'. *De Indische Courant*, 02-04-1927.



Figure A-5. Top and bottom left: The office of Firma Citroen at the Singel 324, circa 1920.

source: [Stadsarchief Amsterdam, image library, search term: Singel 324]; Bottom

right: Current photograph of building in 2017 [‘Google maps’, Link: [Firma Citroen](#) (Consulted on 2-1-2017)].

Firma Citroen on the Eve of WWII

As mentioned before, the financial crisis and the additional measures the government took had a huge impact on small and micro firms. The firm openly complained about the government's decision to raise a sales tax on sold goods.¹²³ The Dutch government tried to diminish the national debt with these tax revenues. However, the governmental order was detrimental for the retail trade. The sales tax placed an additional cost on businesses and proved counterproductive since consumer demand dropped. Firma Citroen tried to survive by having a presence at all the emergency fairs.¹²⁴ These fairs were important to firms who faced difficulties. During these fairs, firms could sell their products in a big warehouse to people from all over the country. It is one of the reasons why Firma Citroen still made a small profit of approximately 26,000 guilders in 1933.¹²⁵ In the following years, the economy improved. Therefore, the Citroen family had an overall equity of 11 million Dutch guilders at the beginning of the war.¹²⁶

On 27 August 1941, the Citroen Company was taken over by *Verwalter* H.E.A. Engels. He was a member of the Dutch SS¹²⁷ and already owned other Jewish companies.¹²⁸ Karel Citroen describes in his letter to the investigation team of war offenders how Engels and his wife, Cornelia Morelus, used his possessions. First, they moved all the interior and accessories to other businesses that were already in their possession. Secondly, they changed the name of the stores to the 'Dutch Household Expenses' to conceal that it was once a Jewish business. Karel survived the war by going into hiding with his family. Fortunately, he was smart enough to

¹²³ 'De omzetbelasting. Bezwaren der behangers', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 03-05-1933.

¹²⁴ 'Advertentiepagina', *Provinciale Overijsselsche en Zwolsche Courant: Staats-, Handels-, Nieuws- en Advertentieblad*, 03-08-1940.

¹²⁵ SAA, KCFAC, inv. 30651 fo. 171.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ The Dutch SS was formed in September 1940 and was renamed the *Germaansche SS in Nederland* (Germanic SS in the Netherlands) in November 1942.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

save some of his family's most valuable possessions in a hiding place.¹²⁹ However, retrieving all of his confiscated business possessions from Engels would be a struggle for him after the war.

E) Firma M. Walg & Zn. (Micro store)

Nathan Walg was born in 1888 in Alkmaar. He married Rebecca de Vries and they had three children. Together they moved to Amsterdam and sold fruit and vegetables in a local market. In 1910, they started a family business enterprise in the Amstelkade called Firma M. Walg & Zn. The story of this firm is a good example for lots of other Jewish businesses. The earlier stories of larger firms in the Jewish community, such as Gerzon and Metz & Co, are an exception to the general Jewish experiences of restitution.¹³⁰ Approximately 45 percent of the Jews in Amsterdam were active in retail businesses at the beginning of the 20th century. More specifically, from the 49,823 Jews who were employed in the Netherlands, 3,816 Jews worked in the food business around the year 1930.¹³¹ There was a lot of competition, and most of the demand came from the Jewish community. Firma Walg & Zn. focused on Jewish customers because they sold kosher fruit and vegetables. Later, they also sold cheese that was ritually prepared, blessed, and approved as kosher by the rabbinate of Amsterdam.¹³²

According to articles in the Dutch-Jewish newspaper, *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad*, Firma Walg&Zn. was very involved in the Jewish community. During every Jewish High Holiday or important festivity, the firma Walg&Zn. was thanked for providing free biscuits that they donated to the Jewish community.¹³³

¹²⁹ SAA, KCFAC, inv. 30651 fo. 177.

¹³⁰ Stoutenbeek and Vigeveno, *Gids van Joods erfgoed*, 25.

¹³¹ J.P. Kruit, 'Het Jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving', in: H.J. Pose c.s., *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* (Arnhem 1939) 212. * Calculation: $(95:1000*36121+28:1000*13702) = 3816$.

¹³² 'Advertentiepagina', *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad*, 09-11-1923.

¹³³ 'Liefdadigheidsfeest ten bate der S.A. Rudelsheim-Stichting', *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*, 15-03-1929.

Unfortunately, there is no business data available about this firm in the archives. Nevertheless, it is very likely that the family Walg lived on the edge of survival. According to Blom and Cohen, most of the small Jewish retail businesses were dependent on charity within the Jewish community as these families fought for their personal and business existence, especially during the 1930s.¹³⁴ However, the economic anti-Semitism at the time created a perception that Jews worked together, and therefore owners of small Jewish businesses were viewed as rich, money-hungry, and unfair competition.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ J.C.H. Blom and J.J. Cohen, *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1995) 260-261.

¹³⁵ Blom and Cohen, *Geschiedenis van de Joden*, 279.



Figure A-6. Top: Firma M. Walg at the Centrale Markthallen, circa 1934.

Source:[Website architecture center]Amsterdam, initiative of the foundation architecture, <<http://www.arcam.nl/en/centrale-markthal/>> Link: [Centrale markthallen](#) (Consulted on 2-1-2017); Bottom: Current Firma M. Walg building.

[Website erfgoed stem, initiative of the ministry of cultural heritage, <<https://erfgoedstem.nl/boei-verkrijgt-erfpacht-centrale-markthal-amsterdam/>> Link: [Centrale markthallen](#) (Consulted on 02-01-2017)].

Firma Walg & Zn. on the Eve of WWII

Michman and Been state that most Jewish sole-proprietor shops suffered from the enormous economic fluctuations in the 1930s.¹³⁶ Fruit and vegetables were considered secondary necessities at a time of this financial crisis. This is because these commodities were considered products that were profitable for only a limited amount of people. This may explain the reason why Firma Walg had to sell one of their businesses in Rotterdam to the Firma Cohen in 1932.¹³⁷ However, the economy did eventually improve and Firma Walg&Zn. survived the difficult economic times. Before the war, they were even able to open a completely renovated store in Rotterdam with brand new equipment. The newspaper *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad* even describes this business establishment as a 'beautiful, new, modern store.'¹³⁸

In 1942, the store was confiscated under paragraph 7 of the German orders on Dutch businesses. This meant that the store was seized under a regulation that was designed to force all Jews out of Dutch economic life.¹³⁹ The *Verwalter* appointed for this business was a Dutch participant in the NSB: Franciscus Beugel. During the war, he continued the business as a non-kosher vegetable and fruit store. The name of the store under Beugel is not in the archive. The Walg family chose to go into hiding to try to escape the German cruelties. Unfortunately, Nathan and one of his sons, Moses, were the family's only survivors. They tried with Cohen, who bought one of the businesses in the 1930s, to receive restitution for their possessions. They also tried to agree on a compensation amount for all the financial damages suffered during the war.

¹³⁶ J Michman, H. Beem and D. Michman, *Geschiedenis van de Joodse gemeenschap in Nederland* (Jerusalem 1985) 128-132.

¹³⁷ 'Afslag-Bericht', *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad*, 30-09-1932.

¹³⁸ 'Fa. Walg', *Het Vaderland: Staat-en Letterkundig Nieuwsblad*, 25-07-1940.

¹³⁹ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

F) Firma H.L. Granaat (Micro store)

Hijman Levie Granaat established his firm on 23 November 1880. It was located at Oude Schans 15 in Amsterdam. He and his wife, Hanna Khan, developed a metal and iron supply firm. Levie Granaat was deeply connected with the Jewish community. He offered free meals for the Jewish poor on Shabbat evenings, during the High Holidays, and on Chanukah.¹⁴⁰ The Jewish community deeply appreciated his generosity.¹⁴¹ Levie Granaat retired in 1911. His two sons, Louis and Samuel, inherited the business. They developed the store into a well-known brand in semi-manufacturing that included copper sheets and copper plinths or slabs. They had important customers and delivered materials to the palace on Dam Square. It becomes clear from one of the catalogues before the war that the store also sold kettles, cylinders, hinges and nails. The annual figures of the business between 1911 and 1941 looked very impressive. They had extensive cash equity and a large inventory waiting to be sold.

The result of this growing prosperity was that the Firma Granaat could expand. In the 30 years before the war, they became the owners of multiple buildings from Oude Schans 11 to 15. Interestingly, the business never had more than six employees.

¹⁴⁰ 'De Sèder-avonden in het Stedel.-Armenhuis', *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*, 16-04-1909; 'Een Chanoekah-feestje', *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*, 25-12-1908.

¹⁴¹ Levie Granaat's popularity in the Jewish community was clear after he died when the community honoured him by announcing his death on multiple pages in the newspaper.



Figure A-7. Firma Granaat at the Oudeschans.

Source: Left photo: Date unknown. [Website Joods Amsterdam, <<http://www.joodsamsterdam.nl/h-l-granaat/>> Link: [Firma Granaat](#) (Consulted on 1-1-2017)];

Source: Right photo: Current picture ['Google Maps', Link: [Firma Granaat](#) (Consulted on 2-1-2017)].¹⁴²

Firma Granaat on the Eve of WWII

The Granaat family was a real business family. Louis and Samuel continued the family business. Their brother Willem started the same type of business on the other side of the street and another brother Maurits started a pickle store on the Utrechtse straat. Interestingly, all of the brothers except Louis Granaat were married to Jewish women. Louis lived on the second floor of the store and his second wife was a catholic woman. This probably saved his life during WWII.

The Germans invaded the Netherlands in 1940. At the time, Jewish merchants had to declare their race and were forced to send their material assets to the Germans. The German government ordered Jewish businesses to declare the worth of each of their individual stores. In a futile attempt to keep the ownership of the store, Louis wrote to the Germans, informing them that he was in a mixed marriage. However, as mentioned earlier, the Germans did not make an exception.

¹⁴² The building was renovated between 2009 and 2013 and is currently a modern residence.

Louis and Samuel tried to save as much of their possessions as possible. First, they threw some of their copper stock into the canal. The idea was to ferret this out after the liberation of the Netherlands. Second, they used some of the money from the company to buy stocks in America. They believed that an investment abroad was safe because they thought that America would not get involved in the war. Eventually, the brothers had to leave the store around 1941, when a *Verwalter* was appointed: Jean Engels. When Engels found out that the brothers had siphoned off some of their wealth, he sent a letter to the Germans to confiscate their stocks in America. Meanwhile, Engels tried to personally profit as much from the company as possible. Instead of putting money in the cash register, he kept everything in his own pocket. Therefore, the business was almost bankrupt by 1944. When the German authorities inquired about what had happened, one of the old employees of Louis and Samuel Granaat, named Kampfens, told the Germans how Engels committed fraud. The Germans fired Engels as *Verwalter* and closed the store. It is not known whether a new *Verwalter* was ever assigned or whether any attempt to restart the business was made between 1944 and 1945.

Chapter 3: Jewish companies' experience of restitution (1945-1960)

Eric Slot: *'The robbed had to negotiate with the thief and his henchman'*.¹⁴³

According to Veraart, restitution failed not because of personal interests but because of juridical mistakes.¹⁴⁴ He mentions that the question is not necessarily if somebody wanted to return the stolen goods. The problem was that the juridical laws addressing the subject of property made restitution difficult.¹⁴⁵ A new owner may have received a property and its contents in good faith or by a contractual arrangement.

After confiscation, Jewish owned property often passed through several hands, including those of the *Verwalter*. In some cases, the *Verwalter* did not have any apparent link to the Fascist occupation and its Dutch collaborators. In such instances, it became more difficult for judges to refund the possessions to the formal owner. It was believed that such actions would diverge from judicial *aequalitas* (balance and equal access) under the Dutch guiding principles of its legal system, as one of the parties could be unfairly penalized (especially in the absence of explicit documentation showing the confiscation and illegal transfer of ownership). This was one of the problems the Dutch government faced when trying to return to the rule of law and administration of justice.

Another obstacle that prevented prompt restitution of Jewish owned properties after WWII was that the extent of the looting was not traceable. Archives were often incomplete and the Germans often burned records.¹⁴⁶ There was also a lot

¹⁴³ E. Slot, 'Crimineel vastgoedcircuit verdiende grof geld aan Jodenvervolging', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 9 (2008).

¹⁴⁴ Veraart, *Ontrechting*, 1-42.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁴⁶ C. van Renselaar, *Roof en Restitutie van het bezit van de Joden in Nederland 1940-1999: Uitkomsten van recent onderzoek* (Amsterdam 2000) 10.

at stake financially for many big companies who profited greatly from Jewish property. Consequentially, these companies tried to extend the length of time lawsuits dragged on for to further their own economic interests.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, the Dutch government did not have any desire to participate in extensive investigations and long lawsuits. They were trying to rebuild the Netherlands and to regain possession of its former colonies, especially Indonesia.

In cases decided by the Commission of Reparations, Jews were expected to accept what was offered without disrupting the country's reconstruction.¹⁴⁸ To summarize, the literature that addresses restitution criticizes 1) the German occupiers, 2) the Dutch judicial system, 3) the Dutch government, and 4) other organizations and institutions. Before I answer which Jewish companies were most affected by the unsuccessful attempts to obtain prompt restitution after WWII, I will introduce the institutional organizations involved in restitution that were created by the Dutch government. Through these institutions, Jews could reclaim their properties.

Already by 1943, the formal Dutch government, which had fled to England, began to discuss the post-war restitution process. They talked about how assets confiscated by traitors and Germans would be returned to their formal owners.¹⁴⁹ The government considered traitors to be Dutch people who profited from collaborating with the occupiers. Consequently, all traitors would also be tried. Dutch collaborators and Germans were aware of this and fled immediately after the liberation of the Netherlands to Germany in search of a haven.¹⁵⁰ Because of the shortage of housing in Germany – the Allies bombed many houses – the Dutch collaborators and Germans ended up in refugee camps where they stayed for seven months. When the Allies also liberated Germany from the Nazi regime (25 April 1945), most of the *NSB'*ers were required to return home to the Netherlands to face

¹⁴⁷ Renselaar, *Roof en Restitutie*, 12.

¹⁴⁸ L. Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Den Haag 1994) 886-888.

¹⁴⁹ W. P. J. Pompe, *Zuivering en berechting* (n.p., 1949) 530.

¹⁵⁰ F. Waldenier, 'Het lot van naar Duitsland gevluchte *NSB'*ers', in: *Historisch nieuwsblad*, 8 (2004).

trial. The Netherlands also wanted to prosecute certain Germans. However, Germans often avoided the Dutch justice system because the post-war Dutch government did not have the resources to locate them. Later in my thesis, it will be clear why the inability to trace Germans had an immense impact on the Dutch restitution process.

Following the return of the Dutch collaborators to the Netherlands, it was possible to refund some of the stolen assets that these individuals possessed. The Dutch government gradually established three institutions to implement the restitution process. First, the Dutch government appointed a judicial council of restitution in August 1945.¹⁵¹ The government divided the council into three sections to address stolen property: 1) immovable valuables,¹⁵² 2) stocks, and 3) looted inventories. This judicial council was responsible for judging the Jewish claims and facilitating agreements between the rightful Jewish owners and the immediate postwar owners of the properties. In most cases, there was no possibility for an appeal because the judicial council followed ministerial instructions (a government mandate).¹⁵³ While the concept of *Trias Politica* in the Netherlands was designed to prevent the concentration of power, during the post-war era, the juridical council prohibited appeals in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the state as quickly as possible.¹⁵⁴

Secondly, the council only made judgements when the Jewish owner and the immediate postwar owner did not reach an agreement.¹⁵⁵ However, as Slot mentions, it was impossible for Jews to negotiate amicably with somebody who was a thief in their eyes.¹⁵⁶ A second institution where Jews could claim their

¹⁵¹ Veraart, *Ontrechting*, 80-81.

¹⁵² Immovable property are objects that cannot be moved, such as land or a house. Movable property are all the objects that can be moved from one location to another.

¹⁵³ Veraart, *Ontrechting*, 82.

¹⁵⁴ P. Kop, 'Het Besluit Herstel Rechtsverkeerd van 1944 en de Naoorlogse Rechtspraak met betrekking tot Onroerend Goed', *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 79 (2011) 137-145.

¹⁵⁵ Van Doorslaer, 'Book Reviews', *BMGN* (2003) 278-280, 279.

¹⁵⁶ E. Slot, 'Crimineel vastgoedcircuit verdiende grof geld aan Jodenvervolging', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 9 (2008).

possessions was the Liquidation of *Verwaltung* Sarphatistraat (LVVS). The Dutch government appointed administrators to manage the money that the looting bank, Lippmann&Co., possessed. The idea behind this institution was that Jews could claim their financial compensation at the LVVS.¹⁵⁷ The concept was that the LVVS would find all the original owners or their descendants. If they could not find the original owners or their relatives, cash would be transferred to an institution named Jewish Social Work. The LVVS's main problem was when the pre-war owner and the postwar owner, who had no apparent link to the fascist occupiers and collaborators, both claimed the possessions.¹⁵⁸

According to Staal, there were two solutions for this dilemma. The first solution was that all the possessions would be given back to the pre-war owner and the postwar owner would receive compensation. The second solution would be that the pre-war owner would be given compensation while the possession stayed in the hands of the postwar owner. A problem for the Jews was the presumption of innocence, which meant Jews had to prove the guilt of the postwar owner. The immediate postwar owner was always innocent until proven guilty.¹⁵⁹

A third and final establishment for restitution was the Dutch Management Institute. The government created this institution to reconstitute the board of directors of various companies back to their original composition after the Second World War. They could suspend, fire and appoint people. When there was no other alternative to establishing an old board because of death or disappearance of the persons, they had the power to take over the business for an undetermined amount of time. The Dutch Management Institute's second task was managing all the liquid assets confiscated by a *Verwalter* that Jewish owner never reclaimed. Between its establishment in 1945 and its dissolution in 1955, the Dutch Management Institute

¹⁵⁷ P. Staal, *Roestvrijstaal: Speurtocht naar de erfenis van Joodse oorlogswezen* (Delft 2008) 200-213.

¹⁵⁸ Staal, *Roestvrijstaal*, 206.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

endured a lot of criticism. As the newspaper *De Tijd* wrote: ‘the institute made some awkward decisions in difficult situations.’¹⁶⁰ The cause of this criticism will be described in further detail below.

In the next section, I will investigate whether there was a difference in restitution and compensation between micro, small and medium companies. For this investigation, I will discuss the period of restitution (1945-1960) between the six previously mentioned companies. I choose to describe the lawsuits and claims per possession instead of chronologically because there was no appointed end date for the process of restitution and compensation. The length of the processing of claims for restitution varied because the duration for each process differed.

The below table contains details about the confiscated firms, the ownership before and after confiscation and the names of the claimants who demanded restitution after the Second World War.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Administratie Beheersinstituut liet veel te wensen over’, *De Tijd: Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Nieuwsblad*, 10-04-1954.

Firm	Ownership before start of WWII in Europe (1939)	Confiscator¹⁶¹ awarded ownership <i>during</i> WWII (1940 to 1945)/ nationality	Claimant(s) demanding restitution <i>after</i> WWII (between 1945 and 1960).
Gerzon	1) G. Hamburger 2) A. Marx 3) E. Gerzon 4) L. Gerzon 5) J. E. Gerzon 6) G.F. Vromans 7) C. Marx 8) E.L. Wolff	1) Albert Walter Hermann Spiecker (German) 2) Safe-in Mercurius (Dutch) 3) Association of the Lingerie fabrics (Dutch)	1) A. Marx 2) G.F. Vromans 3) C. Marx 4) E.L. Wolff
Metz&Co	Joseph de Leeuw	W.A.F. Harsch (German)	1) Hendrik de Leeuw 2) Henriette de Leeuw 3) Kitty de Leeuw
Van der Stam	David van der Stam	Broekhofs butcher stores and sausage fabric (Dutch)	1) Joseph van der Stam 2) Louis van der Stam
Firma Alex Citroen	Karel Citroen	1) H.E.A. Engels (Dutch) 2) H.W. Nagel (German)	Karel Citroen
Firma M. Walg	Nathan Walg	Franciscus Beugel (Dutch)	1) Nathan Walg 2) Moses Walg
Firma H.L. Granaat	1) Louis Granaat 2) Samuel Granaat	Jean Engels (Unknown)	Louis Granaat

¹⁶¹ The confiscators were non-Jews who bought the property from the German government. Nazi-Germany confiscated all the businesses of Jews during the Second World War.

A) Gerzon (*Medium store*)

A month after the Netherlands was liberated in May 1945, the Dutch Management Institute immediately tried to reconstitute the old board of directors to Arthur Marx and G.F. Vromans, who were also on the board of directors before the war.¹⁶² The newly appointed board of directors for the Gerzon Department Store found the store in a neglected condition. The Germans stole 16 of the company's vans. They also took merchandise, such as furniture, gloves, stockings, and fur coats. Additionally, they brought 250 industrial assembly machines to Germany or demolished them.¹⁶³ Before Gerzon could reclaim anything, a German insurance company sued them. As a result, they had to pay 27,000 Dutch guilders because they did not pay any of their insurance during the war. However, because all of the transactions made during the war were found to be invalid, the payment was returned. The issue addressing unpaid taxes may also explain why Gerzon took time to start their formal claim for restitution.

Gerzon had its first victory in 1946 when the Board of Restitution declared the purchase agreement of 1943 invalid. As I mentioned earlier, there were different departments for different sorts of restitution. Consequentially, as the Board of Restitution mentioned, movable and immovable possessions that belonged to Gerzon at that time could only be reclaimed by summoning other departments of the Board of Restitution.

Arthur Marx, a member of the board of directors after the war, suggested that 'There should not be a separation between the restitution of the companies' because the *Verwalter*, Spiecker, received both immovable and movable values during the war. Marx also did not see any reason to compensate Spiecker for the money that was used to confiscate the store because the money that Spiecker paid never reached

¹⁶² SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 424.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 439.

any of the formal owners of Gerzon. Instead, it went directly to Lippmann & Co.¹⁶⁴

Spiecker sold movable and immovable goods for millions of Dutch guilders to a company named 'Safe-in Mercurius', a company that confiscated Gerzon's goods to support the German war efforts. It appeared that Spiecker had taken out a mortgage of 2.5 million Dutch guilders on the building of Gerzon. He needed the money for a repayment of the debts of Gerzon, which amounted to 600,000 Dutch guilders. It is unknown what happened with the rest of the 2.5 million Dutch guilders. When the mortgage bank heard of the upcoming restitution case, they sent a letter to Gerzon stating that to own the offices again, Gerzon would have to pay 2.5 million Dutch guilders.¹⁶⁵ The representatives of Gerzon answered that it was 'both Spiecker and the Firma Mercurius who were responsible for acting inequitably'. They explained that Spiecker and Mercurius used the money from the 'mortgage, and so are fully responsible for its repayment'. Additionally, they did not have anything to do with all that happened with Gerzon between 1943 and 1945.¹⁶⁶ Spiecker did not want to pay the amount; he pointed to the fact that he agreed with Mercurius that the mortgage was included in the price during the transfer of firm to Gerzon.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, Mercurius stated that 'The 1944 purchase is totally annulled'.¹⁶⁸

The mortgage bank wanted to claim the money from the Firma Gerzon. Their argument was that the money was used for the redemption of pre-war debts and that they were the current owners of the mentioned buildings.¹⁶⁹

The department responsible for immovable values within the Board of Restitution discussed the issue during the restitution process in 1948. The Board of Restitution came up with the following conclusions: 1) The deal between Lippmann

¹⁶⁴ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 436-437.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 436.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 435-436-437.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 425-437

& Co and Spiecker was invalid; 2) the agreement between Spiecker and Mercurius concerning the immovable goods was invalid; 3) the agreement between Spiecker and Mercurius concerning passing on the mortgage on the immovable goods was invalid; and 4) the claim of mortgage on the immovable goods by the mortgage bank was invalid.¹⁷⁰ This led to the return of the immovable values without any mortgage to Firma Gerzon, and the mortgage bank did not have any rights to reclaim any money. All the judgements were tested and assured by regulation 145/194, decision E 93.¹⁷¹ The regulation considered all the transactions made during the war period invalid. As a reaction to the judgement, Gerzon told the press and all of the stockholders of the company the following: 'an important issue is settled favorably for Gerzon. Yet this does not mean that past suffering is erased, but it is an important step towards a bright future'.¹⁷²

A second restitution process started between the earlier mentioned Association of Lingerie Fabrics and Gerzon. The Association of Lingerie Fabrics was forced to start its business in one of the old buildings of Gerzon. Because the Firma Gerzon paid the rent during the war, Gerzon wanted compensation from the Association of Lingerie Fabrics. In addition, Gerzon wanted compensation for the loss of the original interior. In total, Gerzon ordered the Association of Lingerie Fabrics to pay 21,000 Dutch guilders.¹⁷³ The former owners of the Association of Lingerie Fabrics wanted to pay the money but had two problems. First, the Firma did not exist anymore because of bankruptcy. Second, the director who was previously in charge died during a bombardment. Because Gerzon did not want another lawsuit, they tried to make an agreement with the descendants of the Association of Lingerie Fabric. They agreed that the descendants would pay the money back when

¹⁷⁰ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 425-437.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 436-437.

¹⁷² 'Belangrijke uitspraak van rechtsherstel. Eis van Gerzon toegewezen', *De Tijd: Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Nieuwsblad*, 09-02-1948.

¹⁷³ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 438.

they received compensation from the German government. Finally, Gerzon received the money four years after sending the first letter to the Association of Lingerie Fabrics. The third example shows how the size of the company influenced decision making in the case of restitution. In a letter to Jitta, another (not family related) Holocaust survivor who tried to reclaim goods, it becomes clear that the receiver of compensation had to pay corporation tax and capital gains tax.¹⁷⁴ So as the V.V.R.A. mentioned: from every 100,000 Dutch guilders received in compensation, the tax authorities would get another 52,000 Dutch guilders. However, because Gerzon was able to avail of experienced and skilled lawyers, they knew that a lawsuit challenging such tax would be expensive and the chances of winning were low. Lawyers for Gerzon carried out test cases where it became clear that a judge would support the tax authorities. Representatives of Gerzon wrote in a letter to Jitta the following: 'If you still want to go to court, maybe we can combine our forces'.¹⁷⁵ The representative notes that this action would probably have more chance of succeeding. Yet, after all, the taxes still had to be paid. Nevertheless, these examples make clear that having a good lawyer and good connections contributed to making sensible decisions.

After the restitution of properties, Gerzon tried to obtain compensation for the lost income and damages caused during the Second World War. Gerzon told one newspaper: 'After this important judgement, we can proceed to determine a claim'.¹⁷⁶ For this claim they had to turn to another department of restitution. As earlier mentioned, the compensation for immovable and movable goods had to be claimed separately. According to Meijer, the Dutch government chose to divide the Board of Restitution into different sections for two reasons. The first reason was that these sections would fit better with the idea of the separation of power in the Dutch legal

¹⁷⁴ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 461-463.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ 'Belangrijke uitspraak', *De Tijd*, 09-02-1948.

system. Secondly, it would reduce the workload managed by the Board of Restitution.¹⁷⁷

According to the bookkeeper of Gerzon, the company made loss claims for more than 500 million Dutch guilders. This included an outstanding balance of an existing mortgage, so in the end there was a request for restitution of approximately 285 million guilders.¹⁷⁸ This compensation was meant to be regulated under decision E133 (enemy property, article 28, paragraph.¹⁷⁹ In 1951, Gerzon received another 671,000 Dutch guilders, money that was recovered from the bank account of Spiecker.¹⁸⁰ Gerzon heard from hired advisors that it was better to deposit the money in a pension fund, otherwise companies had to pay 52% tax on compensated money. For big companies, such as Gerzon, who did not need the money immediately, it was more profitable to deposit the money in a fund.¹⁸¹ Yet, even after Gerzon received all this compensation, the company was unable to survive the damage caused by German occupation and the Holocaust. By the end of the 1960s, descendants of the old board of directors sold the company to a third party.

B) Metz & Co (Medium store)

In 1944, the Harsch family, the *Verwalters* of Metz & Co, probably saw that the war was going to end with a victory for the allies. To preserve the money that they received from the Firma Metz & Co, Harsch tried to deposit the entire firm's money into their personal accounts. As Mr. Harsch died at the end of WWII, Mrs. Harsch became the sole owner of the firm. The first records show that Mrs. Harsch deposited two thousand Dutch guilders belonging to the Metz & Co firm into her own

¹⁷⁷ K. Meijer, *E100 en de naoorlogse rechtspraak met betrekking tot onroerend goed* (Nijmegen 2008) 9–11.

¹⁷⁸ SAA, MGG, inv. 539 fo. 424.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 425.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 425-436.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

account.¹⁸² In the year between 1944 and 1945, the Harsch family deposited more than ten thousand Dutch guilders into their personal accounts.

In 1945, when the de Leeuw family returned to Amsterdam, it was clear that members of the family died during the war. From the seven family members living before the war, four died during the Holocaust. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph de Leeuw and their two youngest children did not survive the war crimes committed by the Nazis and died in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. Therefore, there were only three children who could reclaim the family's possessions after the war. Two of the surviving children moved immediately to New York in 1945. The son of Joseph de Leeuw stayed in Amsterdam, but was unable to deal with the restitution process alone. Thus, all the children agreed to hire the lawyer and prosecutor van Hattum as their legal representative.¹⁸³

Van Hattum first tried to reclaim all of Metz & Co. business' possessions. In doing so, he sent a letter to the Dutch Management Institute in August 1946. Van Hattum claimed that the board of governance appointed by the Harsch Family, the *Verwalters* of Metz & Co, should resign immediately to make space for the old board of governance, specifically the de Leeuw family.¹⁸⁴ In other words, the stocks of Metz & Co that Harsch possessed had to be returned to the descendants of Joseph de Leeuw. The response from the Dutch Management Institute was that they wanted to be paid fifty Dutch guilders up-front in exchange for their assistance in the field of restitution.¹⁸⁵ After receiving the payment of fifty guilders, the Dutch Management Institute ordered both parties to wait five years for the restitution process to begin. This is because the Dutch Management Institute thought that it was not beneficial for Metz & Co's ownership to be transferred too quickly. This may have reflected the fear of the government that a transition of power that was too hasty could hinder the

¹⁸² SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 158.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁸⁴ SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 160.

¹⁸⁵ SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 45.

developing Dutch economy. The economic environment was already chaotic, therefore changing the Board of Directors at this fragile time could result in the bankruptcy of Metz & Co.

A second reason why the restitution did not begin immediately was that at that time it was still not clear what happened to Joseph de Leeuw and his other family members who perished in the Holocaust.¹⁸⁶ The Dutch Bank already froze Mrs. Harsch's accounts so she could not use or transfer any money that belonged to Metz & Co.

On 20 March 1950, notaries and deputies of the former and current owners of Metz & Co. met to discuss the restitution of all of the company's possessions. The meeting was held to 'avoid a lawsuit' and to 'come to an amicable restitution without any difficulties'.¹⁸⁷ The following seven agreements were made in 1950: 1) the certificate of liquidation, signed in 1942 by de Leeuw and Harsch, would be considered invalid. Every change in the property deed made after 1942 also became invalid. The likely reason behind this decision was because the de Leeuw family wanted to avoid a lawsuit against Mrs. Harsch. She possessed the stocks. Therefore, she could claim that she was not involved in Mr. Harsch's business and that she acquired the stocks in good faith; 2) the restitution would include everything that Metz & Co. owned before its liquidation in 1942; 3) all debts made by Harsch in the name of Metz & Co. would become expenses for Harsch's descendants. However, this excluded normal corporate debt, which was already factored in, but included mortgage debts; 4) there would be a future negotiation regarding the interior of the houses that belonged to the formal owners: Metz & Co. However, Mrs. Harsch would already lose the ownership of the houses, because they were still the firm's property; 5) the Harsch Family would admit guilt in front of the family de Leeuw and would pay all the fines for damages. This means they would pay all the damages

¹⁸⁶ SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 12.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

on the immovable values. Thereby, they would refund 519,450.90 Dutch guilders immediately from Mrs. Harsch's account; 6) the Harsch family would pay 36,509 Dutch guilders to de Leeuw. This amount equaled the sum Harsch paid to the tax authorities during the war. The judge proposed that Mrs. Harsch could try to reclaim the money later from the tax authorities. They also used company money to pay direct transfer tax in 1944 when Mr. Harsch died and gave the property to Mrs. Harsch; and 7) the de Leeuw family lost the right to claim more than the possessions that were discussed during the meeting.¹⁸⁸ My hypothesis is that the judge wanted this to be signed because he was afraid that the de Leeuw family would return to court with new restitution demands.

Mrs. Harsch signed the settlement for the restitution agreement between 1950 and 1951. She probably knew there was enough evidence that Mr. Harsch bought the confiscated company in bad faith. There is even evidence for this in the attached minutes of the settlement meeting. In these records, it appears that the only reason for the liquidation of Metz & Co. was Joseph van de Leeuw's Jewish background. In the same records, the attendees who were present during the liquidation of 1942 stated that Mr. Harsch knew this.¹⁸⁹ Unfortunately, there is no proof that this was the main reason why Mrs. Harsch signed the agreement.

In the 1950s, Metz & Co. grew as quickly as the Dutch economy. Supply grew and the store experienced economic growth by frequently hosting fashion shows.¹⁹⁰ In the 1950s, Metz & Co received compensation for the affected damages during the war. Although this data is not attached in the archive, newspapers wrote about it. In 1950, Metz & Co. received 416,364.18 Dutch guilders from the V.V.R.A. as compensation for the sale of their property during the war.¹⁹¹ Unfortunately, the total amount of money Metz & Co. got back as compensation is unknown.

¹⁸⁸ SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 15-18.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 38-42.

¹⁹⁰ Den Dekker c.s., *Modepaleizen*, 70.

¹⁹¹ 'Erkenning vorderingen V.V.R.A.', *Nederlandse Staatscourant*, 01-12-1950.

The archive mentions that the family was reminded of the war when the Board of Restitution sent them a letter. According to the letter, Mrs. Harsch still owned some company stocks in Germany. However, it was impossible to reclaim stocks owned by people in foreign countries before 1957. The letter further explained that this German law changed after 1957. Jews who lost their stocks because of the liquidation of Lippmann & Co. were qualified to receive compensation for the lost stocks. The board already had the relevant data to make this claim to the LVVS, and they knew how many stocks were stored at the bank during the war. Therefore, the de Leeuw family only had to sign some papers to complete this compensation process. However, the Board of Restitution explained that it was not certain that it could get compensation for all Jews. This is because only some famous Jewish people succeeded in getting any sort of restitution.¹⁹² However, the Board also noted that they felt an attempt should be made to attain this restitution.

The de Leeuw family did not respond to the Board of Restitution's letter. However, in August 1963 after a third letter from the Board asked again for the papers to be signed, the youngest son of Jozeph de Leeuw finally signed the forms for German compensation.¹⁹³ Metz & Co. continued to run its store until 1973 and then sold it to its formal supplier, Firma Liberty.

C) Vleeschpaleisch David van der Stam (Small store)

When Joseph van der Stam returned to Amsterdam after the war, he was grateful that he survived the terrible circumstances by hiding. As he stated: 'I came back with energy and pent up desire to start working'.¹⁹⁴ He believed that he could fulfil these desires and expected to have his confiscated goods returned. His beliefs were also encouraged when he read about Decision E100: All the injustice of the occupation

¹⁹² SAA, MC, inv. 977 fo. 3-4-5.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

and the sidelining of the judiciary (vermogensrechterlijke) had to be undone.¹⁹⁵ More specifically, Decision E100 was interpreted to mean that every *Verwalter*, *NSBer*, or Dutch collaborator who acquired possessions wrongly from Jewish entrepreneurs had to transfer these confiscated properties and goods back as soon as possible.¹⁹⁶ However, the same article also mentions that ‘While the government tries to reverse these transactions as soon as possible, we assume that there are some very complicated cases.’¹⁹⁷

When Joseph van der Stam tried to get his business back, it appears that his case was complicated. As he mentions, not a single institution for restitution was able to ‘help him get his confiscated goods back’.¹⁹⁸ Consequently, he hired a lawyer. He received advice to request restitution for all the goods that were in possession of the vleeschpaleis before the war that came into the possession of a *Verwalter*. The *Verwalter* told van der Stam that he sold all the goods to a third party. When van der Stam finally found his possessions, the new owner told him that he received the possessions in good faith. Therefore, van der Stam and the third party tried to come to an agreement without going to court. However, they could not agree and therefore eventually ended up in court. Jozeph van der Stam explained later when he wrote to the court why a verdict of the judge was necessary: ‘Months passed and we did not come to any solution.’¹⁹⁹

Finally, Jozeph and the son of David who was in hiding during the war, returned to Amsterdam. Together, they started to pressure on the person who possessed their former property and filed a lawsuit. They did so not only because

¹⁹⁵ ‘Rechtswijzigingen uit bezettingstijd. Het besluit E. 100’, *De tijd: Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Dagblad*, 20-09-1945.

¹⁹⁶ ‘Via beperking naar herstel rechtsverkeer’, *Het Financieel Dagblad: met daarin opgenomen het Amsterdamse Effectenblad*, 12-06-1945.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Via beperking naar herstel rechtsverkeer’, *Het Financieel Dagblad: met daarin opgenomen het Amsterdamse Effectenblad*, 12-06-1945.

¹⁹⁸ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

¹⁹⁹ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

they saw this as their right, but also because it was the only way to recover some money. The case was deemed an unimportant matter. In the meantime, the family van der Stam had to survive on only 30 Dutch guilders per week. As he states in his memoir: 'You understand that a family cannot live with such a small amount of money. I yearned for the moment I would get my possessions back'.²⁰⁰ However, the court decision did not work out as van der Stam hoped. The *Verwalter*, Mr. Broekhof, tried in every way to counteract the restitution. In earlier described cases, there was always help from the LVVS, who typically possessed a bill of sale between Lippmann & Co. and the administrator. However, in van der Stam's case, it appeared that all the transactions mysteriously disappeared. Consequentially, Broekhof told van der Stam that he only came into possession of some specific goods. According to van der Stam the *Verwalter* lied: 'I have witnesses who saw Broekhof dragging my stuff to his own business, they can tell you that there were a lot more possessions than Broekhof claims'.²⁰¹

In court, Broekhof told the judge that he purchased the possessions that the witnesses had seen him transporting. Broekhof then stated that it would not make any difference if he returned the possessions because 'Joseph van der Stam is just starting his business and his old store is now occupied by another store'.²⁰² Thus, the returned interior would not have made any difference. Broekhof's second argument in court was that he offered van der Stam two different freezers for his meat. Van der Stam's denial of this offer demonstrates that he did not need the interior possessions as much as he claimed he did.²⁰³ A third interesting argument Broekhof gave was that his company was more important for the recovery of the Dutch economy than any requirement for restitution: 'In the interest of the Netherlands we should carry

²⁰⁰ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

on undisturbed'.²⁰⁴ Broekhof delivered meat to important institutions, such as hospitals and psychiatric homes, whereas he felt that van der Stam would have to start from the bottom and therefore slow the economy's growth.

Van der Stam asked for advice directly from the Board of Restitution. They told him that he had to start a summary proceeding at the Board of Restitution while waiting for the judgement. During the arguments before the board, it appeared that Broekhof's company also felt cheated because there was a chance that he would lose his business. Van der Stam wrote about the situation: 'When I came to the court, I saw Broekhof on the other side. The person who earned thousands and thousands of Dutch guilders during the war, is now feeling duped. Because the gamble he made during the war, when the Germans were in their heyday, now has turned so decidedly'.²⁰⁵ Finally, during the process, other agencies also started helping van der Stam to receive restitution. First, the abattoir who delivered meat to van der Stam was familiar with the pre-war possessions of van der Stam, and he was willing to testify. Second, a recovery bank wanted to guarantee the money that was needed for the lawsuit. A day before the judgment, van der Stam told the judge one more time how financially dependent he was on his former business. He explained that without his business, it was impossible to feed his family. The judge summarized the situation during the verdict. He stated that Broekhof tried to offer a low amount of money in exchange for the interior goods, however van der Stam denied the offer. The judge thought it was not very credible that Broekhof bought the new inventory for his store on the same day that van der Stam lost his possessions. Besides, an innocent man would not offer compensation for possessions he did not receive. Therefore, the judge stated that Broekhof bought the possessions from the Firma Inverma and Broekhof had to know that these possessions were 'Jewish

²⁰⁴ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

possessions'.²⁰⁶

The judge stated in 1947 that Broekhof had to return all the missing possessions to van der Stam. Moreover, for every day that Broekhof failed to return the possessions, he would pay a fine of 500 Dutch guilders to van der Stam. Later on, the van der Stam family opened a new store on the Reguliersbreestraat in Amsterdam and became one of the largest butchers in Amsterdam. They sold all kinds of foodstuff, in addition to meat. The name of the store changed in 1970, when it became a supermarket called: Galerie Mignon Supermarket.²⁰⁷ It is unknown when the butcher and later supermarket ceased to exist.

D) Firma Alex Citroen (Small store)

Directly after the liberation of Holland on 5 May 1945, Karel Citroen returned with his sisters and mother from one of several hiding places. His brother, who did not accompany them into hiding, was missing. The sisters immediately migrated to the United States of America after their experiences during the war. They moved in September 1945 because of a more flexible American migration quota. Karel and his mother, who were already in Amsterdam, tried to obtain restitution for the Firma Alex Citroen. It was not hard for Karel to restore his business and become its director again. Engels, the *Verwalter*, fled the country, enabling Citroen to immediately take over the business on the same day he returned. The Commission of Restitution agreed to the restitution because Karel proved that his name appeared in the trade registry of 1938-1939.²⁰⁸

The first thing Karel did was to appoint a lawyer, Becker, as the commissioner of the firm. Becker became very useful for the compensation lawsuits he later started. Next, he wanted to make sure that the *Verwalter* and *SS'er*, Engels, would be

²⁰⁶ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

²⁰⁷ S. Boekman c.s., 'Bijblad bij De Industriële Eigendom', *De Industriële Eigendom* 58:1 (1990) 18-19.

²⁰⁸ SAA, KCFAC, inv. 30651 fo. 226.

punished for his collaboration with the Germans. This became clear from the three letters sent to the Political Investigation Team. In one letter, Karel Citroen wrote: 'I don't know where Engels is hiding, but he still has some captured possessions in his hands'.²⁰⁹ He ended that letter with: 'Please can you arrest him, so I will get my possessions back and he can be deported'.²¹⁰ Later, he sent two more letters where he asked for an arrest of the SS'er and administrator of his business. He needed to trace Engels, because if he did not find him, he could not claim compensation. Compensation was necessary because Karel Citroen gradually encountered more and more problems. One difficulty began on 17 September 1945, when Firma Citroen received a letter informing the company that it had to pay 106,000 Dutch guilders for a compulsory security fee.²¹¹ It appeared that Engels was fired in 1944 from the ownership group and that the German H.W. Nagel was the new *Verwalter* of the store. Nagel stopped keeping accounts and the store lost a lot of money. The post-war tax authorities wanted money while Citroen still was figuring out what happened to the money. This is an example of what Klein calls malicious taxes. He states that in many cases the government simply passed on overdue taxes to the restored Jewish owner that the previous administrator did not pay.²¹² This also happened to Firma Citroen. Such setbacks could be catastrophic for small businesses. Larger companies had greater equity and could sell property or holdings to pay for taxes, or they were even more likely to hire lawyers to contest the tax bills.

The post-war tax bills were almost catastrophic for the Firma Citroen. It appeared that after checking the existing balances, in April 1945, the store only had capital amounting to 2,000 Dutch guilders left. As Citroen mentions in the same letter: 'Engels transferred an amount of 80,000 guilders cash to his own account'. The second owner, Nagel, also transferred 9,000 Dutch guilders to his own account. Thus,

²⁰⁹ SAA, KCFAC, inv. 30651 fo. 121.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 66 - 121.

²¹² P.W. Klein, *Het rechtsherstel gewogen: vragen met en zonder antwoord* (Leiden 1999) 98-99.

it was impossible for Firma Citroen to pay the amount of money that the government requested for back taxes. As he wrote: 'As you see, I cannot pay the taxes right now, it will be the complete end of the Firma Citroen, which can never be the intent.'²¹³

The second problem started when Mathilde Citroen died in 1946. She owned some stocks. Becker, as the executor of the family, was aware of these difficulties, as was apparent from a letter sent by Becker to one of the sisters who moved after the war to New York.²¹⁴ First, it was not listed how much capital and stocks Mathilde possessed before the war. Second, the mortgage of Mathilde's immovable values was calculated from its value in 1940. Back then, the value of all their business properties was worth 60,000 guilders. However, because of damages from the *Verwalters* and from physical bombardments, the houses were worth far less than the remaining mortgages. Furthermore, the transfer of the stocks would be the biggest setback. This was because the stocks were not legally included in the will. Although the money that the stocks would generate would be divided among the family, the value of the stocks would be rated on the level of the post-war value of the stock. Therefore, Firma Citroen's stocks were worth only 15% of their value in 1940. As Becker states: 'It is not clear whether the *Verwalters* will return the estimated confiscated amount of stocks. If not, the value of the stocks will be even more unfavorable'.²¹⁵ Fortunately, for the Firma Citroen, Engels paid back 60,000 Dutch guilders in 1947. This was very fortunate because according to the contact group of Jewish assets (a research group who investigated the restitution process between 1945 and 1960), which wrote a report in 1999, 15 percent of Jewish entrepreneurs' stolen money was never repaid.²¹⁶ Until his retirement in 1977, Karel Citroen continued the firm. Unfortunately, no information is available about what happened with the store afterwards.

²¹³ SAA, KCFAC, inv. 30651 fo. 66-121.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

²¹⁵ SAA, KCFAC, inv. 30651 fo. 68.

²¹⁶ F. Hoek and J. ten Wolde, 'Roof en restitutie Joods vermogen', *Report of the contact group Jewish assets* (1999) 25-26.

E) Firma Walg & Zn. (Micro store)

In July 1945, soon after the end of WWII, Nathan Walg got his business back immediately. His son, Moses Walt, became one of the associates of the Firma Walg & Zn. Despite the return of their business, they saw that there were no liquid assets available. It appeared that their *Verwalter*, Beugel, deposited all the money from selling the business to one of the accounts of the Dutch Management Institute. As a reaction, the Walg family's survivors tried to start a summary proceeding against Beugel and the Dutch Management Institute. Without retrieving this money, post-war taxes could not be paid and Firma Walg & Zn. would be forced into bankruptcy. The attitude of the government to asking Jews to pay taxes for periods when they were in hiding or in death camps has been criticized extensively in recent years. Yet, at the time, the government did not respond to allegations from the Jewish community of implementing an unfair tax policy.²¹⁷ The Management Institute that had the control over the money of Beugel tried to prevent any allegations against Beugel. As an argument for not starting a summary proceeding, the Management Institute said 'we don't see any harm of interest for the family Walg when the restitution of liquid assets is omitted'.²¹⁸ Additionally, the Institute stated that very small transactions that had nothing to do with the firm were always paid from 'Beugel's personal account'. This was why it was impossible to know what proportion the Walg family could claim. However, while the Management Institute tried to counter every Citroen allegation against Beugel, the Board of Restitution acted otherwise. Firma Citroen requested a summary proceeding in March 1946. During this procedure, it became discernible why the Management Institute wanted to cancel the lawsuit.

In 1943, the Germans consolidated all the fruit and vegetable traders in Amsterdam into one enormous supplier, the 'Combination of Wholesalers in

²¹⁷ 'Gemeente eiste erfpacht op van teruggekeerde Joden', *Het Parool*, 20-11-2015.

²¹⁸ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

Vegetables and Fruit, Amsterdam' (abbreviation *Crogo* I).²¹⁹ According to newspaper reports, the Germans actually performed this action because the well-known voucher system could work more efficiently when the providers worked together.²²⁰ The German government then decided during the war on which days certain vegetables could be sold and for what amount. All the received vouchers had to be submitted to the German government, so that they could investigate whether there was fraud.

Every grocery store had to participate in this consolidation process and they all had to pay a fee. The contribution was calculated as a percentage of the businesses' sales from previous years. However, Beugel claimed that he also paid money from his personal accounts to the *Crogo*. Therefore, it was impossible to deposit all the money from *Crogo* to the Firma Walg, because doing so would mean that Beugel could not financially survive. He was still the owner of some businesses that were important for the Dutch economy. Bankruptcy of these businesses would be detrimental for the Dutch economy.

Before the summary proceeding, the Dutch Management Institute proposed that the *Crogo* would refund all the money to Beugel's account. After receiving his personal money, he would transfer the money to the Firma Walg. The Walg family responded by saying that 'the *Verwalter* chose to invest and take leadership over our firm'.²²¹ Furthermore, Beugel invested the money in the business of Firma Walg, and 'now it is our business again and thus our money'. As earlier mentioned, the risk for Walg was that they would not get their money back in a timely manner. Therefore, they would have to pay the post-war taxes from their personal bank accounts. This would be disastrous as there was no money left in their personal accounts because of the war.

The Walg family asked the judge presiding over the case to decide that A)

²¹⁹NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

²²⁰ 'Stapelgroente voor 1100 Rotterdamsche kleinhandelaren', *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 14-02-1942.

²²¹ NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

Nathan Walg had to have all his rights reinstated, and also had to be granted the right to claim all money that Beugel deposited in *Crogo's* account; and B) that the Dutch Management Institute was wrong and to demand that they accept the judgment of the court.²²²

The Management Institute was a state body. Thus, Firma Walg appealed the Dutch Management Institute's decisions to a judicial court. Consequentially, the judge of that court said: 'we cannot take any provision whereby we give the government any guidelines'.²²³ As mentioned earlier, the government, including the Dutch Management Institute, had the power to overrule all decisions of the court. The judge dismissed the case and Walg had to pay all the costs that came with the lawsuit. Summarizing, Firma Walg had to wait for the verdict of the Dutch Management Institute. All the efforts that were put into the court of justice were in vain because the Management Institute subsequently overruled the verdict of the judge.

The archives did not reveal whether the restitution of liquid assets continued and what the consequences of the judgment were for the company. Yet, newspapers between 1950 and 1958 still mention the Firma M.Walg&Zn.²²⁴ This may show that the firm won the appeal or had other solutions to pay taxes from the war period. Nathan Walg died in 1958, which heralded the end of the Firma M. Walg&Zn.²²⁵

²²² NA, RRR, inv. 2.09.48.02 fo. 721, 38K/46.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ 'Advertentiepagina', *Het Vrije Volk: Democratisch-Socialistisch Dagblad*, 28-09-1954; 'Advertentiepagina', *Het Vrije Volk*, 04-01-1967.

²²⁵ 'Advertentiepagina', *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*, 31-10-1958.

F) Firma H.L. Granaat (Micro store)

The war had fatal consequences for the Granaat family. From Levie's nine children, only two survived, including Louis. He survived because he was married to a catholic woman. Out of the records appears that he lived in the apartment above his store during the war. The other pre-war owner, Samuel, tried to flee to America in 1942. I drew this conclusion from the fact that he tried to arrange fake passports. However, because he was not successful, he had to report himself and his family in 1943. From Amsterdam through Westerbork, they finally arrived in Sobibor where they were murdered in 1943. One of Samuel's children, Cornelia Granaat, survived the war because she decided to go into hiding.

Cornelia and Louis were the only surviving family members who were able to claim restitution and compensation. However, there is not a lot of information available about Firma Granaat in the period after the war. I will try to describe the period as best as possible. When Cornelia, the child of Samuel, came back after hiding, it appeared that she had post-traumatic stress syndrome because of the war. She married a German Jew who also survived and they moved to the United States. She never talked about her experiences during the war and it was never clear if she ever received any kind of restitution for the family business. If she did, the amount of restitution would not have been sufficient. Restitution for real estate was estimated based on the post-war value of the buildings. As the store experienced extensive damage due to Engels' actions, the restitution amount would have been very low.

After the liberation of the Netherlands, it was easy for Louis to get his business back. As mentioned earlier, the confiscator Engels already returned to Germany in 1944 because of accusations of fraud. Therefore, there was nobody to obstruct Louis from retrieving his business when he returned to Amsterdam after the war. It appeared that the copper that he and his brother threw in the canal before the war was still there. The residual copper could be sold. In addition, Louis stocked a lot of the interior of the store in his own house during the war. That is why there are

still some authentic goods available today.

The business's stocks and equity totally evaporated during the war because of Engels' actions. Louis had to start completely from scratch. Fortunately, the branding of the store that was built before the WWII helped him to survive the first years after the war.

There is no information available of any claims of restitution made by the Granaat family survivors. However, it was possible for Cornelia and Louis to have held Engels liable for the damages done. This is because Firma Granaat bought stocks before the war in an American copper company. Engels had reported this to the German authorities; therefore, all the stocks were registered and transferred to Liro, a looted bank. As the stocks were registered, there was proof of stolen stocks. Consequentially, Firma Granaat could claim the stocks back from the V.V.R.A., who managed the deposit accounts. I hypothesize that Louis never went to court for any form of restitution or compensation. I assume this because there is no evidence of this in any archive, while the other stores mentioned had recorded these cases in detail. However, it is possible that Engels and Louis arranged a form of restitution together. They may have even done this while Engels lived in Germany because they were in contact during the war. This is because Louis lived above the store where Engels worked. Secondly, it is likely that Louis was busy restarting the store and believed there was no chance of attaining restitution for his stocks and the damage done to the company.

In 1952, Louis Granaat sold the store to the Kuiken family because there was no successor in his own family; one of his sons committed suicide in 1945 while another son became a famous painter. In the 1960s, Kuiken sold the firm to van Lissum. The family van Lissum still owns the buildings on the Oude Schans. They renovated everything, as can be seen in the appendix. Yet, the copper that Granaat once sold is still in storage, together with the old façade and old counters. Everybody is welcome to visit and see the old interior.

Conclusion

*The disadvantage of bureaucracy is that it limits a government's flexibility to adapt to current conditions. They forget to empathize in specific situations.*²²⁶

As mentioned in the introduction several online memorial platforms have received serious criticisms. My case study will provide online platforms with new insights to both address and acknowledge these critiques and make the platforms more resilient. It will make online platforms capable of reflecting a more dynamic and broader story to prevent these critiques from arising in the future. The first point of criticism was that online platforms focused too much on one actor. The Jewish houses project will now be able to create maps that both include houses as well as stores on their virtual memorial platform. Secondly, researchers criticized existing online memorial initiatives in the sense that they provide an incomplete description of history, due to a narrow chronological focus on the war period. My thesis focused on the periods before and after the war in order to remedy this lack of information. In broadening the chronological scope, I create a fuller description of the persecution of Jewish shopkeepers during the Second World War. Thus, I explain the consequences and aftermath of these events.

My first question was: how successful were Jewish entrepreneurs from Amsterdam on the eve of the war?

Amsterdam was a place of significant economic activity among Jews before 1930. Jews were represented in all kinds of sectors, from working in retail stores to owning grocery stores. Most Jewish business traded vegetables, diamonds, or they were butchers. Their owners lived at a subsistence level, but could survive from the profit of their businesses. Some Jews had the chance to climb the socioeconomic

²²⁶ J.G.A. van Mierlo, *Bureaucratie en bureaucrativering: een theoretische en praktische verkenning van recente ontwikkelingen in de publieke sector en de particuliere sector* (Houten 1995) 8.

ladder. For example, companies like Gerzon and Metz&Co became famous for and accumulated wealth with their marketing and their stylish variety of products. However, this success was not for every Jew. Most Jews in Amsterdam lived on the edge of survival before the Second World War. Every Jewish store investigated in this study was affected by the economic crisis of 1929. Small- and micro-stores such as Citroen and van der Stam were more drastically affected than medium-sized stores. Gerzon and Metz&Co survived the financial crisis because of good management, while small- and micro-stores were on the verge of collapse. However, in the end all six of the investigated stores survived the economic crisis. The available records are unclear on whether Jewish stores suffered from increasing anti-Semitism in Dutch society in the period before 1940. Presumably, the stores already experienced antisemitism before the war. Antisemitism did not appear at a specific moment but gradually emerged.

My second question was: what happened to the stores during and after the Second World War?

Directly after the war started, the owners of the medium-sized stores, Gerzon and Metz&Co, tried to 'Aryanize' their Board of Directors. They saw their own Jewish heritage as a risk to the longevity of the firm. The owners of the stores tried to change the board to non-Jews before the Germans could do so. The advantage from such a move was that a predefined contract could help the old Board of Directors to retake their position after the capitulation of Nazi Germany.

The reasons vary as to why small- and micro-stores did not pursue any legal measures. First, owners of smaller stores were dependent on the incomes of their businesses. For the van der Stam family, the store was the provider of food, while the Jewish persons in the Board of Directors of Gerzon had sufficient money to flee to America. Furthermore, small and micro stores were owned by one or two persons and did not have the network or the capacity for such formal contractual take-overs. There is one example where a small business took preventative measures prior to

war.; these were the Granaat brothers, owners of the small business Firma Granaat. They tried to hide their belongings and predicted that copper would sink in the canal. This precaution cannot be characterized as a “formal construction” but as a bright and original idea of some individual shopkeepers.

The war was disastrous for all of the Jewish-owned stores described in my study. The German government ordered all the stores still in the hands of Jews to be Aryanized. The consequence was that the looted bank Lippmann & Co. received permission to confiscate the Jewish stores and hand ownership over to ‘Aryans’. The appointed confiscators of two of the investigated stores, Spiecker and Engels, sold their business later in the war to a third ‘Aryan’ party. In two other stores, an administrator ran the entire business until the end of the war. Regarding Gerzon, it is known that the looted bank Liro sold the main building to a third party. The *verwalter* Engels managed Firma Granaat until 1944. Between 1944 and 1945, the store closed.

For the six companies in my study, the consequences of personal persecution were disastrous. For example, in four of the firms, Gerzon, Citroen, van der Stam and Granaat, one or more of the named owners were killed by the Germans. Family members or acquaintances of all the storeowners died in Nazi concentration camps.

My third question is less relevant for the website of Jewish houses, but provides further insights into the historiographical debate regarding Jewish restitution in the Netherlands. In the following paragraphs, I will address the question: Given their disrupted business, was there a difference in compensation and restitution between small, medium and bigger stores?

During my study, I found no persuasive evidence that the size of a company played a decisive role in the restitution and compensation process. However, I found some indications that differences did exist. One of the indicators is that the economic positions of Gerzon and Metz&Co were relatively stronger after the war. Therefore, the restitution process was more extensive and effective because they had money to proceed. Micro- and small-sized stores struggled with collecting evidence for their

case and had a lack of money to pursue long legal processes.

A second indication is that Gerzon had connections and lawyers who helped the stores to be well prepared for lawsuits. While small and micro-stores had neither advisors nor sounding boards, Gerzon and Metz&Co could discuss the procedure with their board of governance contacts and outside experts.

Thirdly, the evidence indicates that it was disastrous for small and micro-stores if the owner died during the war. The reason for this is that if the sole owner died, a descendant who had no experience of running a business had to claim for restitution (e.g. David van der Stam). Medium-sized stores, by contrast, had a Board of Directors and therefore consisted of and had access to a larger network of people with an understanding of the way to claim restitution. Therefore, medium-sized stores were better positioned to claim future restitution than the descendants of small and micro-stores.

A fourth indicator relates to the government's bureaucratic attitude. While Jewish owners lost all their possessions and various family members during the Second World War, unpaid taxes had to be paid immediately. For small stores, such as Walg and Citroen, this imperative was critical. Not only was their financial position precarious after the Second World War, but they had to wait for the restitution of the liquid assets before being able to even pay taxes. Because the government did not cater to each business's situations, Walg and Citroen began with lawsuits to obtain postponement of paying taxes before starting lawsuits for the restitution of their assets.

While these are some indications that business size mattered, I do not want to claim that it was the decisive factor. Every case is so self-contained and unique that it is difficult to draw general conclusions. For example, I also elaborate upon differences between the medium stores. Presumably, this is because other factors also played a crucial role, such as the personal differences between the appointed confiscators. I conclude that the following factors concerning the confiscator of the

store could have influenced the restitution process: 1) their origins 2) decisions 3) money management and 4) willingness to negotiate.

Origins

To start, whether the administrator had Dutch or German origins was an important factor. When the *Verwalter* was not physically present during the trial because of their flight to Germany, the administrator was proven guilty without a lawsuit. This was true for the Metz&Co and Firma Citroen businesses, as their administrators were German. Because these Germans were occupiers, they were automatically guilty for their participation in the occupation of Holland. However, if the *Verwalter* was Dutch, the Jewish owners had to exert much more effort. Thus, the lawsuits took longer when the Dutch administrators were present. The Jewish owners had to prove that the administrators bought the stores in bad faith. The administrators were innocent until proven otherwise according to the law. For example, Jozeph van der Stam had to prove that his administrator confiscated his belongings. Another example is that Gerzon had to prove that the *Verwalter* took a mortgage from one of its buildings.

Decisions

Secondly, the decisions made by the administrator during the war were important. An example of a decision of the administrator that had consequences for the restitution process later on was that two of the firms, Gerzon and Citroen, were sold to a third party later in the war. The restitution lawsuit thus targeted multiple people. Firma Gerzon and Citroen had to prove the guilt of all of those involved. Ultimately, the more parties that were involved in the restitution process, the longer and more complicated the process became.

Money management

The administrator's money management, thirdly, influenced the outcome of the restitution and compensation process. While some firms received all the money

rightfully back, other *Verwalters* deposited money into their personal accounts. Therefore, Metz&Co, Firma Citroen and Firma Walg could not retrieve all of their money. It was unclear if and how much money was illegally withdrawn from the firm and how much was a normal operational loss.

Willingness to negotiate

The willingness of the *Verwalter* to negotiate was the fourth factor that influenced the process. I have found that it was possible that administrators' personal circumstances influenced their position in negotiations. For example, the *Verwalter* of Metz&Co lost her husband directly after the war. She agreed with every restitution proposal and did not counteract any claim. The administrator of the Firma David van der Stam was financially dependent on the store, which may explain why he did not want to return the store to the formal owner. The *Verwalter* of the Firma Granaat had already left the Netherlands in 1944. Therefore, Louis Granaat did not have to retrieve his store because nobody else claimed his possessions.

In sum, my thesis reveals a number of important factors that were necessary for Jewish entrepreneurs to successfully obtain restitution after the Second World War.

- 1) the owners or their family members had to have survived the Holocaust and needed to be willing to make claims, as some survivors just wanted to migrate to forget their recent traumas.
- 2) the chance of success increased if the *Verwalter*/administrator was German and/or a clear collaborator. This prevented the Jewish entrepreneur from asking additional questions about the residence of the *Verwalter* and whether the *Verwalter* received the assets in good faith.
- 3) the *Verwalter's* personal circumstances and decisions during and after the war influenced the process of restitution. Examples are the channeling of money to their own accounts or the resale of the store.

4) all persons or business owners in my study had to possess sufficient capital to proceed with their case as it often took years to solve, while also being enforced to pay taxes in the meantime for wartime expenses despite their obvious absence. However, the available capital improved the possibility of a higher amount of restitution. The bigger the company, the higher chance that they had access to money, property, and assets, which could help to survive the protracted procedures. Presumably, smaller business accepted less compensation immediately because they could not afford to wait.

To conclude, I have three suggestions for future research. Firstly, one of my main findings is that different factors concerning the confiscator influenced the outcome of the restitution process. Therefore, future research should focus on whether there are more factors that explain the differences in the administrator's influence during the restitution process. Secondly, future research should focus on geographical differences in restitution cases. While historiography nowadays mostly compares differences per country, I have shown that differences in receiving restitution existed within the city of Amsterdam. Geographical research can produce new insights in the restitution debate and focusing on important cities and regions can highlight a more human dimension than focusing on the national level and the state.

Thirdly, future online platforms should focus on individual cases of Jewish experiences instead of seeing the Jews as an entity. In contrast with most of the historiography, my research shows that there are many commonalities between the different experiences, but also some differences. The interchangeability of the stories will help people to seek an individual story to which they can relate to and connect with on a deeper level, since it is closer to their personal circumstances and life experiences. Presumably, these stories can create empathy while respectfully commemorating the war's tragedies.

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