



Library at war

The effects of the Second World War on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek

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Introduction

Never before in the history of mankind has there been a century as destructive to books as the twentieth. . . . Library historians apparently are not much inclined to study what has been lost, yet this is a subject that the world can hardly afford to ignore. It reminds us how fragile a thing our intellectual heritage really is and it is an incentive to all concerned to further appropriate measures to preserve as much as is humanly possible for future generations.¹

For centuries, libraries have been considered centres of knowledge. They are, together with museums and archives, the keepers of cultural heritage. In times of war these centres of knowledge and culture often have been targets for war violence. Yet, despite the fact that libraries are important institutions for cultural heritage throughout history, the history of libraries remains underexposed in the academic world.²

This year, the Netherlands marks 75 years of freedom, since the liberation of the Netherlands and the end of the Second World War in 1945. In these 75 years, many studies have been written on all kinds of topics related to this war. However, there is a lack of studies into Dutch libraries during wartime. Research concerning cultural heritage in relation to the Second World War is often about the destruction or plunder of libraries, such as the destruction of the University Library of Louvain during the First and Second World Wars. Meanwhile, little research is done into the effects on scientific libraries that were not destroyed or deprived of their collections during the war, while these libraries naturally also had to deal with certain consequences of war. Therefore, this study will focus on the effects of the Second World War on one library, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague.³

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek was established in 1798 as the national library of the Netherlands. At the time, the library was called the Nationale Bibliotheek (National Library)

¹ Sanja Zgonjanin, 'The Prosecution of War Crimes for the Destruction of Libraries and Archives during Times of Armed Conflict', *Libraries & Culture*, 40:2 (2005), 128. (quote from Hans van der Hoeven and Joan van Albada, *Memory of the World: Lost Memory- Libraries and Archives destroyed in the Twentieth Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 1996), 2, 5 <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/lost-memory-libraries-and-archives-destroyed-in-the-twentieth-century/>> (17-6-2020).

² Ibid.

³ Mark Derez, 'De brand van een bibliotheek', *De Boekenwereld*, 31:2 (2015), 5-6.

and it was housed at the Binnenhof, where the stadholder's quarter was located.⁴ According to the first catalogue of the library, compiled in 1800, the collection contained 5500 books and journals. When the Netherlands became a kingdom under the reign of King Louis Napoleon, the Nationale Bibliotheek was renamed the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library). When the library's collection grew, the location in the Binnenhof became too small and the library was temporarily located in the nearby Mauritshuis. As the collection continued to grow, King Willem I decided in 1821 to move the library to Lange Voorhout 34, where it was housed until 1982. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek's collection grew through donations, loans and purchases of collections and individual, often precious items. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek developed into a scientific library, with an emphasis on the humanities. When it was founded in 1798, it was already the intention to collect the national heritage in handwritten and printed form.⁵

In 1998, on the occasion of the library's bicentenary, P.W. Klein and M.A.V. Klein-Meijer wrote a history of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek *De wereld van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1798-1998. Van statelijke institutie tot culturele onderneming*. This is considered to be the most complete and accurate history of the library. It is therefore all the more striking that the effects of the Second World War on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek are not discussed in this book.⁶ Earlier in 1948, a memorial book had been published by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek for the period 1798-1948, edited by Leendert Brummel (1897-1976). Brummel had been the director of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek from 1937 to 1962 (fig.1).⁷ A large part of the period of his appointment was therefore devoted to the Second World War and its aftermath.⁸ Yet, this collection of essays too hardly discusses the various effects that the war had on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Brummel does write that the period 1940-1945 was not a favourable time



Fig. 1: Leendert Brummel, 1937.

⁴ Parlement.com, 'Gebouwen op het Binnenhof', <https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrrz1r3/gebouwen_op_het_binnenhof> (19-6-2020).

⁵ KB Nationale Bibliotheek, 'Geschiedenis van de KB', <<https://www.kb.nl/organisatie/organisatie-en-beleid/geschiedenis-van-de-kb>> (19-6-2020).

⁶ P.W. Klein and M.A.V. Klein-Meijer, *De wereld van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1798-1998: van statelijke institutie tot culturele onderneming* (Amsterdam: G.A. van Oorschot, 1998).

⁷ Huygens ING, C. Reedijk, 'Brummel, Leendert (1897-1976)' (12-11-2013), <<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn3/brummel>> (14-7-2020).

⁸ Ibid.

for the collection management of the library. However, his chapter, like the annual reports he produced during the war, is more of a summary of events without an analysis of the impact of the war.⁹

This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on the impact of the Second World War on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. It aims to contribute both to the particular history of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and to general studies about the consequences of the Second World War for libraries and cultural heritage in general. To understand which effects the Second World War had on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, several topics need to be addressed. First, it is important to understand the cultural politics of the Nazis and how these were implemented in the Netherlands during the occupation. This cultural policy also included book censorship and the seizure of some cultural heritage by the 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg' taskforce, the main task of which was to steal art and cultural heritage from, amongst others, libraries. Both book censorship and the threat of the 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg' taskforce could have affected the Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

After Nazi cultural policy, the physical threats to libraries from war violence will be discussed. First, an introduction will be given on why libraries have been a target for war violence in history. Next will be examined which measures the Dutch government prescribed to protect national cultural heritage and which of these measures were also implemented by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. It will also become clear here to what extent these measures actually were effective.

Finally, the consequences of the war for the activities and services of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek will be analysed. The effects on loan statistics and thus the use of the library will first be examined. Subsequently, the impact on the library staff will be described, since the library staff has a major influence on the functioning of the activities and services within a library. In addition it will be examined to what extent it was possible to organise other events in the library, such as exhibitions. The developments regarding collection management will also be addressed extensively. Since the second chapter deals with the preservation and protection of the collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the third chapter will focus primarily on the acquisition of new collections and items. Finally, the consequences of the war on the

⁹ Leendert Brummel (ed.), *Koninklijke Bibliotheek: Gedenkboek, 1798-1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), 22.

functioning of the Ruilbureau (Exchange Office) will be studied. Since one of the main tasks of the Ruilbureau was to exchange collections with foreign libraries, the effects of the war will be of importance for this department.

This research is mainly based on primary sources. In order to answer the questions about the effects on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the archive of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek has been of great importance for this study. However, this archive is not yet publicly accessible and therefore does not yet have a proper inventory with access numbers. Nevertheless, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek has made an exception for this research and kindly granted access to the archives created between 1939 and 1947. In addition, letters from the archival collection 2.14.73 'Ministry of Education and Science: Department of Archaeology and Nature Conservation and predecessors'¹⁰ of the National Archive in The Hague were consulted. On top of that, secondary literature on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the cultural policy and propaganda of the Nazis, the 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg' taskforce and the destruction of libraries in wartime was studied to provide a general framework for this case study.

¹⁰ Original Dutch name of the archival collection 2.14.73: 'Ministerie van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen: Afdeling Oudheidkunde en Natuurbescherming en taakvoorgangers'.

Chapter 1: Cultural Politics in the Occupied Netherlands

To answer the question of what effects the Second World War had on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, it is important to look at how German cultural politics affected the Dutch cultural heritage. In order to analyse this, the role and position of cultural heritage in relation to wartime propaganda will be explained. Subsequently, changes in the cultural policy of the Netherlands will be analysed starting from the arrival of the occupying force. In addition, substantial attention will be paid to two important themes within the German cultural politics, namely book censorship and the 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg' taskforce, which dealt with confiscating cultural property in the by the Nazis occupied countries.

Propaganda and Cultural Heritage

For Hitler the idea of a national-socialist community was incredibly important. There was no place for the individual in this community. Culture was a very important instrument to establish the concept of 'Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer'. Books and literature were seen as a powerful tool to destroy old communities and build this new community. They could ensure that the people would not deviate from the Nazi ideology. To establish this national-socialist community, the Nazis had to find ways to strengthen the idea of a German unity. That feeling of unity often comes when people share a history, language and culture. That is the reason why so much attention was paid by the Nazis to cultural politics. National-socialism was strengthened by new and old 'Germanic' heritage.¹¹

Not only did Hitler want to strengthen national-socialism through a specific cultural heritage, he also wanted to eliminate the cultural heritage of everyone who did not belong to the 'Volk'. Especially the cultural heritage of the Jews was seen as a threat. However, this was not the only threat. Even the non-Jewish cultural heritage that was not in line with the Nazi ideology was seen as a danger to the 'Volk'. According to Hitler, literature of authors such as Heinrich and Klaus Mann, Ernst Toiler and Kurt Tucholsky were toxic for the German mental health. In May, 1933 national-socialist students associations organised a book burning ritual on the Opernplatz in Berlin. During this burning speeches were given about the books they

¹¹ Gerard Groeneveld, "'Het boek mag niet leiden tot ontarding van den volksgeest.'" Boekencensuur in Nederland tijdens de bezetting 1940-1945', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis*, 2 (1995), 127-128.

held responsible for the demise of Germany after the First World War and the economic crisis in the 1930s. The German propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels was also present at this event. That night he spoke about 'his hope that from the ashes of the pacifist, defeatist and un-German books that had been burned, the phoenix of the new Reich would rise.'¹² The next week several university cities organised similar events and burned thousands of books, which were not in line with the Nazi ideology.¹³ In addition to thinking that some books were dangerous to the German culture, the national-socialists believed that the most prominent German newspapers and literary magazines were controlled by the Jews. That gave all the more the reason for the strong cultural politics in the Third Reich.¹⁴

Thomas G. Weiss and Nina Connelly acknowledge the importance of cultural heritage in warzones. In a recent article they state that cultural heritage is a strong tool in warfare. When cultural heritage is intentionally damaged, it gives the message that the culture which is under attack, is submissive to the culture of the one who do the damaging. They write the following about the attitude of the Germans towards Jewish cultural heritage in World War II:

The destruction of tangible and intangible heritage foreshadows a forthcoming genocide or ethnic cleansing – as during Kristallnacht in 1938.¹⁵

The Nazis were convinced that their culture and race were superior to all others, especially to the Jewish culture and race. By destroying the cultural heritage of others, the superiority of the attacker is demonstrated. With this message they showed that they did not approve of the Jewish cultural heritage, and therefore the culture and its people.¹⁶

New authorities

The German plan for the occupied Western territories was different from their ideas for the East. The plan for the western countries, such as the Netherlands, was to include them in the German sphere instead of exploiting them as was done with countries in the East. The

¹² Matthew Fishburn, *Burning Books* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 31.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 128.

¹⁵ Thomas G. Weiss and Nina Connelly, 'Protecting Cultural Heritage in War Zones', *Third World Quarterly*, 40:1 (2 January 2019), 4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Netherlands was seen as a 'Germanic' area and was therefore suitable to become part of the 'Nordic Reich', as a future German province. That is why the Netherlands not only had to be conquered, they also had to become part of the Reich.¹⁷

After the German invasion on May 10, 1940 the entire Dutch government fled to London. Among them was the minister of Education, Arts and Science, Gerrit Bolkestein (1871-1956).¹⁸ With the departure of the ministers, the ministries came to a halt in the Netherlands. On the 19th of May Arthur Seyss-Inquart was appointed as Reichskommissar of the occupied Netherlands. He gave the secretaries-general of the ministries a great deal of independence in making decisions, although they were controlled by the Germans. For the Department of Education, Arts and Science G.A. van Poelje remained the secretary-general until September 1940 when he was arrested and imprisoned. His successor was Jan van Dam, who was appointed in November 1940. Van Dam was a great admirer of German culture and literature and a supporter of national-socialism. It soon became clear that the Germans were interested in this department and especially in the Education division, because of the possibilities to spread the national-socialist spirit.¹⁹

Because the Germans intended to make the Netherlands part of their empire, departments were replaced by new ones. On November 25, 1940 the Department of Education, Arts and Science was replaced by two new departments, the Department of Education, Science and Protection of Culture and the Department of Public Information and Arts, which also had a special Book Division. Both of them would become important departments for the cultural sector in the Netherlands. The reason for replacing the Department of Education, Arts and Science by two departments was that the Germans wanted to implement a special department for propaganda. Initially they also planned to name the Department of Public Information and Arts the Department of Propaganda. However, they feared that the Dutch people would be more suspicious of this name. It also made sense for the Germans to add the 'Arts' to this department, as the arts were seen as an important part

¹⁷ Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa. The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 96-97.

¹⁸ Parlement.com, 'G. (Gerrit) Bolkestein', <https://www.parlement.com/id/vg09llivmezb/g_gerrit_bolkestein> (14-7-2020).

¹⁹ Hans Knippenberg and Willem van der Ham, *Een bron van aanhoudende zorg. 75 jaar Ministerie van Onderwijs [Kunsten] en Wetenschappen, 1918-1993* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 177, 180.

of propaganda. By means of the arts, the Dutch people could be raised to become national-socialists.²⁰

Beside these two departments, a third new department was of importance for the book industry, the Department of Trade, Industry and Navigation. The National Office for Paper, Paper-Processing and the Graphic Industry fell under this department, which from October 1941 onwards was in charge of paper allocation for all new books, newspapers and journals, although the actual implementation of the new regulations regarding the paper allocation was executed by the Book Division. The Book Division ultimately decided whether a manuscript could be printed or not. However, for school textbooks and scientific publications a different arrangement applied. To publish these books, the guidelines of the Department of Education, Science and Protection of Culture had to be followed.²¹ Overall, the introduction of these new departments had a large impact on the cultural politics of the Netherlands. Not only had the Germans taken over the country, they also infiltrated in the cultural government agencies, which controlled the production of books and libraries services.

The change in authority had also consequences for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. One of them was a change of the name of the library. Before the occupation the library was called the 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek', or 'Royal Library'. In August 1940 the government decided that several government institutions had to change their name. Therefore, the 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek' was renamed into 'Nationale Bibliotheek', or 'National Library'.²² The reason for these name changes was that the names of the relevant government institutions were associated with the Dutch monarchy. After all, in the Third Reich there was no place for ruling authorities other than the Führer. Another reason was that the Royal family was a symbol for resistance and an important element of Dutch national identity. Since the intention was that the Netherlands eventually would become part of the Third Reich, that Dutch identity should gradually be replaced by the national-socialist identity.

²⁰ Ibid., 202-203.

²¹ Hans Renders, 'Gecensureerd door de bureu. De invloed van het nationaalsocialisme op de vrijheid van drukpers', in Marita Mathijssen (ed.), *Boeken onder druk. Censuur en pers-onvrijheid in Nederland sinds de boekdrukkunst* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 125.

²² Koninklijke Bibliotheek Archive (henceforth KBA), Correspondence 1940, box 1, Incoming letter of G.A. van Poelje, secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, to the librarian of the 'Nationale Bibliotheek', The Hague, 8 August 1940.

The elimination of a Dutch national identity was also displayed by the new orders regarding the national flag. In June 1940 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek received the following letter from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Science:

For the time being, public buildings are not allowed to raise national flags, including the orange flag. The people mourn those who were killed and maimed in battle, and under those circumstances it is not appropriate to display flags of joy publicly. Every official is expected to follow the government's course of action and will leave flagging or other public display of joy behind. It is hoped that the public will follow the guidance of the public bodies.²³

The ministry did not want the Dutch and orange flag on the streets, under the guise of respect for the dead. Of course, the real reason for this ban was to counter the opposition against the Nazis by publicly forbidding Dutch national symbols and thus nurture the national-socialist spirit.

Censorship

During the occupation, book censorship was used by the Nazis to press the Netherlands towards the national-socialist ideology.²⁴ However, censorship is a complex concept. Generally two different sorts of censorship can be distinguished, repressive and preventive censorship. For example, repressive censorship is executed when books are already printed. The authorities decide whether or not specific books can be distributed and sold by issuing lists with forbidden books. Preventive censorship, on the other hand, happens before books are printed. In this case the manuscript needs to be approved by an authority. During the Second World War, both forms of censorship were present in the Netherlands. New books had to be approved by a censorship committee and there was a list of forbidden books compiled by the Nazis.²⁵

²³ KBA, Correspondence 1940, box 1, Incoming letter of G.A. van Poelje, secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, to the librarian of the 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek', The Hague, 22 June 1940.

²⁴ Groeneveld, "'Het boek mag niet leiden tot ontwaarding van den volksgeest'", 125.

²⁵ Mathijsen, 'Introduction', in eadem (ed.) *Boeken onder druk. Censuur en pers-onvrijheid in Nederland sinds de boekdrukkunst*, 8.

In addition to the distinction between preventive and repressive censorship, censorship can take place at two different levels. The first level is formal censorship. This is also the level usually associated with the concept of censorship. Formal censorship means that control is dictated by an authority. The examples mentioned above about lists of banned books and censorship committees are examples of formal censorship. Both repressive and preventive censorship can be formal. There is also a level of informal censorship. This occurs when there is a certain pressure on authors or readers that can lead to self-censorship.²⁶ An example of this informal censorship is that some people censored their own bookcases during the war. For fear of house searches by the Gestapo, people decided to get rid of any books that could be considered anti-German, by throwing them in the canals, bury them underground, or even burn them. When the Germans invaded the country, at certain points the canals in Amsterdam were full of self-censored books and magazines.²⁷

Censorship, however, was not a new phenomenon in the Netherlands. In fact, shortly before the Netherlands was occupied by the Germans, some books were censored. An example is *Das Vaterland* by the German writer Heinz Liepmann. He escaped Germany in 1934 as a prisoner of a concentration camp, where he had been imprisoned because of his public protests against the new antisemitic actions of the German government. In his book he discussed the political affairs of Germany following the appointment of Hitler as Reichskanzler. He criticized how certain groups, such as Jews and Communists, were at risk of being arrested and taken to concentration camps. When he came to Amsterdam in exile, he was arrested by the Dutch authorities on suspicion of insulting the leader of a friendly state. At that time, according to Article 117 of the then-applicable criminal law in the Netherlands, 'deliberately insulting a reigning monarch or other head of a friendly state' was prohibited. When the Dutch translation of his book was published in 1934, certain sections of the book were deleted and replaced by the notification that these sections had been changed because of the inappropriate content.²⁸

In March 1940, a few months before the occupation of the Netherlands, the book of the former Nazi Hermann Rauschning was censored as well. The Dutch translation of his book

²⁶ Ibid., 9.

²⁷ Groeneveld, "Het boek mag niet leiden tot ontarding van den volksgeest", 125; Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Deel 3 – Mei '40* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1970), 449.

²⁸ Renders, 'Gecensureerd door de bureu. De invloed van het nationaalsocialisme op de vrijheid van drukpers', 121-123.

Gespräche mit Hitler was confiscated after the Germans had pointed out that this book did not take a neutral stance towards the war, which was not acceptable because the Netherlands claimed to be neutral in the war. These examples illustrate how the Netherlands was already censoring books on moral or political grounds. Although clearly censorship was not a new phenomenon, censorship did change with the arrival of the Nazis. Not only was the Dutch government replaced with the German one, many new rules and laws regarding censorship were introduced.²⁹

The new laws and regulations for censorship were different for each sort of medium. Where newspapers were most often censored repressively, books were part of preventive censorship. There are many cases of informal as well as formal, preventive and repressive censorship executed during the war. However, for this research it is important to look at the types of censorship that had an impact on libraries, in particular on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

The lists with forbidden literature was one of the types of censorship that had a major impact on libraries. The lists compiled for the Netherlands were coming from the Referat Schrifttum located in The Hague, which was part of the Hauptabteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda of the Reichskommissariat für die besetzten Niederländische Gebiete. The execution of the list was in the hands of the Book Division. Because all Dutch governmental institutions were officially under control of the German government, the Referat Schrifttum was supposed to check the proceedings of the Book Division. However, the Referat was more concerned with newspapers than with books, because public opinion was directly influenced by mass media, which included newspapers.³⁰

Most of these banned books were by American, Jewish, English, Russian, and Polish authors.³¹ This meant that all libraries had to follow the order that these books could no longer be lent to library users. All libraries were supposed to write to the Department of Education, Science, and Protection of Culture and report which books of the list were in stock and which measures were taken to assure that the books were no longer available for loan. Even small libraries in The Hague, such as the library of Het Damesleesmuseum, the library of the Dr.

²⁹ Ibid., 124.

³⁰ Ibid., 128.

³¹ Ibid., 131; Groeneveld, “‘Het boek mag niet leiden tot ontarding van den volksgeest’”, 126.

Abraham Kuypertstichting, and the Vereeniging Scandinavische Bibliotheek had to send catalogues or lists of their collection to prove they were not withholding any banned books.³²

This was not any different for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. On May 21, 1940 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek received a letter from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Science with the order:

I hereby confirm the private order already given to you, in the interest of peace and order, to not make available to the public, until further notice, polemical writings about national-socialism and the current war.³³

This was only the start of the censorship. In August the library was asked by the Department of Education, Arts and Science to withhold a selection of books directly from loan traffic and store them behind bars. This applied to all books, in any language, that had a hostile or disapproving attitude towards the German people, the Führer, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (henceforth NSDAP), the German state, the German government, and the German Wehrmacht.³⁴

In addition to these political writings, there were also biased novels, short stories, and magazines that qualified for this regulation. An example on the banned list is the anti-Nazi thriller *Escape* by the American author Ethel Vance. After receiving the letter, the library was supposed to compile a list of all books in the library that met these criteria. Within four weeks this list had to be sent to the Department of Education, Arts and Science. It was also necessary to indicate if there was more than one copy of a book. If a work was still on loan, it had to be back in the library within eight days. If this did not happen, the department demanded a list

³² National Archive The Hague (henceforth NA), 2.14.73: Ministry of Education and Science: Department of Archaeology and Nature Conservation and predecessors, Inv. nr. 233: Letter of the Damesleesmuseum Lyceumclub, to the secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, The Hague, 13 November 1940; Letter of the Dr. Abraham Kuypertstichting, to the secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, The Hague, 6 November 1940; Letter of the Vereeniging Scandinavische Bibliotheek, to the secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, The Hague, 15 November 1940.

³³ KBA, Correspondence 1940, box 1, Incoming letter of G.A. van Poelje, secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, to the librarian of the 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek', The Hague, 21 May 1940. Original Dutch text reads: 'Hierbij bevestig ik nog de onderhands reeds aan U gegeven opdracht om in het belang van rust en orde tot nader order niet ter beschikking van het publiek te stellen polemische geschriften over het nationaal-socialisme en over den huidige oorlog.'

³⁴ Ibid., Correspondence 1940, box 1, Incoming letter of G.A. van Poelje, secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, to the librarian of the 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek', The Hague, 28 August 1940.

of data from the borrowers who had neglected to return their books.³⁵ Although there is no record in the archive of the library that this order was followed, it is likely that the library went along with these demands.

A month later the Koninklijke Bibliotheek received another letter from the Department of Education, Arts and Science. This letter addressed academic anti-German books and magazines. A list was provided with 63 authors, amongst whom were Freud, Marx, Einstein, and the Mann family. However, the order regarding these scientific anti-German books was not to remove them from the shelves. Since these books were considered scientific, they could still be lent, with the restriction that they were only lent for scientific purposes.³⁶

Beside the lists with banned books, the book industry faced serious paper shortages during the war. Because of the scarcity, paper allocation was needed for the publication of a book. The scarcity was also a great excuse for more censorship by the Book Division. Paper allocation could be used as an effective means of shaping and guarding the national-socialist ideology.³⁷ From the beginning of 1942 every manuscript had to be approved by the Lectoraat, which was part of the Book Division. This was necessary, because otherwise a publisher would not get paper allocation. A few months before this rule came into effect, publishers were already asked to submit manuscripts to the Lectoraat on a voluntary basis. The Lectoraat would judge whether the manuscripts complied with the national-socialist political and moral views. Books that showed appreciation for Jews, the living members of the Dutch Royal Family, Marxism, Bolshevism or other enemies of the Nazi Empire were automatically rejected. However, the manuscripts were also judged on language, literary value, historical correctness and expertise. This was carried out by the so-called 'lectoren', who were often pro-German teachers who volunteered their services.³⁸

However, not only publishers and authors were affected by the new regulations, libraries also had to deal with paper scarcity, amongst them the Koninklijke Bibliotheek.³⁹ They

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., Correspondence 1940, box 1, Incoming letter of Dr. H.J. Reinink, acting secretary general of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, to the librarian of the 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek', The Hague, 26 September 1940.

³⁷ Renders, 'Gecensureerd door de bureu. De invloed van het nationaalsocialisme op de vrijheid van drukpers', 125.

³⁸ Ibid., 132.

³⁹ KBA, Correspondence 1944, box 1, Incoming letter of Mr. J.K. van der Haagen, from the Department of Education, Science and Protection of Culture, to the librarian of the 'Nationale Bibliotheek', The Hague, 14 June 1944.

had to submit their requests for new books at the Department of Education, Science and Protection of Culture instead of the Book Division. The reason for this was that the applications most often concerned scientific books, so they belonged to the Department of Education, Science and Protection of Culture. Because of the scarcity, the department asked the library to consider four questions about the proposed printing of a book, before placing a request. The first question was if the publication can be considered to be very important. Second, does the publication meet an urgent need or can the work come out later without major objections? Third, is there a publication on the same subject that can be used equally well, at least under the current circumstances? And last, does the work meet the needs of a highly specialized, small group of people, and may a smaller print-run than proposed be sufficient for this purpose?⁴⁰

So not only was there preventive and repressive censorship during the Second World War in the Netherlands, there are also many examples of formal and informal censorship during this period. The types of censorship that made the most impact on libraries, including the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, were repressive, formal lists of banned books. Although libraries were not forced to destroy the prohibited books or hand them in, users of the library were no longer permitted to read everything. In addition, the paper scarcity, caused by the war, combined with the preventive and formal censorship committees were an obstacle for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek as well.

Einsatzstab Rosenberg

It has become clear that the Nazis tried to force their ideology through cultural politics and censorship on the countries they conquered. It can also now be established that books played an important role in the cultural propaganda of the Third Reich. The national-socialist ideology could be spread through books and books that did not support the Nazi ideology had to be eliminated. When the Nazis came to power in Germany, 1933, as many as 10% of books in public libraries were blacklisted, many of which ended up in public book burnings in May, 1933. So, many books that were considered inappropriate for the national-socialism had been burned.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Hans van der Hoeven and Joan van Albada, *Memory of the World: Lost Memory – Libraries and Archives destroyed in the Twentieth Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 1996), 7

However, not all books that contradicted the Nazi ideology were burned. In 1939 the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage (Institute for the Study of the Jewish Problem) was founded in Frankfurt am Main. For the archive of this institution it was necessary to collect a selection of religious and non-religious Jewish books. Therefore, a special taskforce was created, the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (Taskforce Reich leader Rosenberg; henceforth ERR).⁴² This taskforce was led by Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946), who also was the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories and had founded the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in 1939.⁴³

Beside his work, Rosenberg was known for being one of the founders of the Nazi ideology. He was also the author of the book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930), on which Nazi ideology was built. Rosenberg described why the Jewish race was considered a threat to the Aryan race. He also explained how Christianity had to be replaced by an imperialistic political ideology. National-socialism as a political religion was supposed to gradually take over all other ecclesiastical religions. He also discussed the idea of 'Lebensraum' (Living space) for the Germanic peoples and how this could be achieved by the forced emigration of Polish and Czech people, a plan which became reality nine years later. Understandably, the book was not well received by the Lutheran and Catholic church in Germany. Still, despite the fact that Hitler did not agree with everything Rosenberg had written, he made it mandatory to read the book at all schools in Germany from 1933 onwards.⁴⁴

Rosenberg's taskforce was allowed to steal cultural property of the occupied countries. To be more specific, Hitler allowed the ERR to confiscate precious manuscripts and books from libraries and archives, important artefacts of churches and masonic lodges, and all valuable cultural property belonging to the Jews. Therefore, the taskforce included specialised German librarians. Not only was the ERR interested in Jewish cultural heritage, they were also interested in confiscating artefacts that belonged to the so-called 'Aryan cultural heritage' and

<<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/lost-memory-libraries-and-archives-destroyed-in-the-twentieth-century/>> (17-5-2020).

⁴² Groeneveld, "'Het boek mag niet leiden tot ontarding van den volksgeest'", 145; Peter Manasse, *Verdwenen archieven en bibliotheken. De verrichtingen van de Einsatzstab Rosenberg gedurende de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (The Hague: NBLC Uitgeverij, 1995), 16-17, 20.

⁴³ Manasse, *Verdwenen archieven en bibliotheken*, 11-16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

that of other opponents of the national-socialism, such as communist and anarchist institutions.⁴⁵

This meant that all libraries in possession of special collections could be in danger of losing their collection or parts of it. The reason that artefacts belonging to the 'Aryan cultural heritage' were also confiscated was that the Nazis wanted to support their ideology in a scientific way. It was important to indoctrinate the German citizens and to accomplish that, the national-socialist doctrine was made part of the school and education systems. On January 29, 1940 Hitler gave Rosenberg permission to establish and manage a special national-socialist university in Frankfurt am Main, the Hohe Schule der NSDAP. The ERR did not only confiscate materials for the archive of the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, but also for the library of this new university.⁴⁶

Although the Hohe Schule was located in Frankfurt am Main, the institute's Zentralbibliothek was established in Berlin in the beginning of 1939. This was a central library for all the confiscated books and archival material from occupied countries. From the summer of 1940 the number of book transports increased. As a result, the shipments were taken to various locations in Berlin. The registration and selection department of the ERR was also located in Berlin, which was called the Buchleitstelle. After some time, the number of books sent to Berlin and Frankfurt took on such great proportions that people were no longer able to process them. The focus therefore shifted to processing only the books that could form a collection. All other materials were put on hold with the idea that these would be processed after the war.⁴⁷

However, not all books were sent to the Zentralbibliothek and the Buchleitstelle. From 1941 selections were made for the so called 'Landenbibliotheken'. The idea was to establish a library in every occupied country. Each library would contain a selection of books in the native language that would embody the national-socialist ideology. A start was made for libraries in Amsterdam, Paris, and Brussels, but the plan to establish these 'Landenbibliotheken' was never actually executed.⁴⁸

Because the Netherlands was a occupied country, Dutch libraries were also targets of the ERR. The main focus of the ERR was to collect materials for the Hohe Schule and the library

⁴⁵ Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 96-97; Manasse, *Verdwenen archieven en bibliotheken*, 13-15.

⁴⁶ Manasse, *Verdwenen archieven en bibliotheken*, 16-17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

of the Erforschung der Judenfrage. The ERR was split up over the occupied countries, where every country had a Hauptarbeitsgruppe which was under the command of an appointed SS-Sturmbahnführer. In the Netherlands this SS-Sturmbahnführer was Albert Schmidt-Stähler, who resided in Amsterdam. The Netherlands was also split up in different regions with their own leaders, who each had to report to the headquarters in Amsterdam. When a library was selected by the ERR to be occupied and vacated, the ERR had to ask assistance of the Sicherheitsdienst, because they did not have their own police force to facilitate these attacks. The Hauptarbeitsgruppe of the Netherlands had the task to collect, register, catalogue, and ship all confiscated materials to Germany. Most of these items were stolen from Jewish institutions or private collections. The Hauptarbeitsgruppe was also in charge of destroying forbidden literature.⁴⁹

Examples of Dutch libraries that have been victims of this taskforce are the libraries of the International Institute for Social History, the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, the International Archives of the Women's Movement, and the Ets Haim library, all located in Amsterdam. However, the ERR was not only focused on Amsterdam. For example, the Societas Spinozana in The Hague was also robbed of its collection.⁵⁰ The examples above mostly involve libraries that were in possession of books belonging to the cultural property of movements and religions that were opponents of the Nazi ideology. Given that the Netherlands was seen as a fellow Aryan nation, it is remarkable that with regard to libraries collections which represented opposing doctrines were confiscated more often than collections that were considered part of the Aryan cultural heritage.

Despite the fact that Hitler allowed to confiscate precious manuscripts and printed books from national libraries, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was not robbed of its treasures. In the archives of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek there are no signs that the library was hiding specific manuscripts or printed books from the Germans. However, the most vulnerable and precious parts of the collection were brought in safety for fear of air raids, as was the case for many other collections of Dutch museums and cultural heritage institutions. This was known to the Nazis.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁰ Groeneveld, "*Het boek mag niet leiden tot ontarding van den volksgeest*", 145; Manasse, *Verdwenen archieven en bibliotheken*, 46-54.

⁵¹ Leendert Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1944), 7.

All in all, it is clear that with the arrival of the German occupiers, the wartime cultural policy in the Netherlands severely limited libraries in making their collections available to the public. Because the Nazis saw books and art as ways to spread their ideology, they also practiced various forms of censorship. The installation of new governmental departments ensured that formal censorship could be executed. It is also obvious that the cultural politics and censorship hit the Koninklijke Bibliotheek hard. Nonetheless, things could have been worse, as the library did not have to destroy or hand over its collection of banned books, nor were they the victims of the activities of the ERR.

Chapter 2: Protecting Cultural Heritage

The previous chapter focused on the effects of German cultural politics regarding Dutch cultural heritage and the role of cultural heritage in wartime propaganda. However, the limitations caused by this cultural policy were not the only effects of the Second World War on libraries. In this chapter the measures taken by the Dutch government and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek to protect their cultural heritage will be analysed. In order to understand what measures were taken by the government and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, a short introduction on the threats of wartime for libraries will be given. After this, the guidelines provided by the Dutch government before the German occupation will be analysed. Finally, the actions of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek to protect its heritage, in response to the guidelines of the government, will be discussed.

Libraries as target

Cultural heritage has many forms, such as paintings, statues or even entire buildings. However, the most preserved intellectual cultural heritage exists in written form. Books, manuscripts and periodicals are all part of a country's memory. They are written evidence of how civilisation has developed over time. Therefore, these written memories are considered treasures that need to be well preserved in institutions such as libraries. However, books, and therefore libraries, have many enemies. According to *The Enemies of Books* (1880), published by the printer and bibliographer William Blades, books are constantly threatened. In his book Blades lists fire, water, dust, heat and ignorance as some of the potential enemies.⁵²

In the past centuries, librarians have done their best to preserve this written cultural heritage. However, history shows that not only Blades' accidental and natural causes are the enemies of books. The hatred of certain books by humans has also proven to be a danger to the written word. The first recorded book burning occurred in 213 BC, when Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the Chinese Qin dynasty, ordered to burn all books of previous dynasties that could undermine his government. Since, there have been many rulers with the same

⁵² Van der Hoeven and Van Albada, *Memory of the World: Lost Memory – Libraries and Archives destroyed in the Twentieth Century*, 2.

thoughts about banning, burning and destroying books they considered inappropriate.⁵³ In the article 'The Prosecution of War Crimes for the Destruction of Libraries and Archives During Times of Armed Conflict', Sanja Zgonjanin writes the following about why libraries have been a target during wartime:

The destruction of cultural property and of libraries in particular is as old as the concept of culture. The purpose of cultural property destruction is common throughout history: to erase ethnic, religious, and cultural memories and therefore to undermine or eliminate groups' identities and existence. Whether exercised as a part of planned military operations or carried out by belligerents, the destruction of cultural property plays a significant role in the annihilation of an enemy. Libraries and archives as repositories of collective and individual memories, knowledge, and achievements have been specifically targeted during armed conflicts.⁵⁴

Modern explosives in particular can cause major damage during an armed conflict. In the history of warfare, libraries have often been targeted. However, an air raid can also happen accidentally. During the Second World War, the technology was not very advanced and bombing a specific location was more difficult than it is today with laser guided ammunition. In the twentieth century, many libraries have fallen victim to war violence. For example, the University Library of Louvain in Belgium was burned down by the Germans in both World Wars. During the First World War the library lost 300.000 books, manuscripts and incunabula. After the war, the library built up the collection with the help of other libraries and institutions. Nevertheless, in 1940 the library was damaged again by the invasion of the Nazis and almost the entire book collection went up in flames again.⁵⁵ Fortunately, the libraries in the Netherlands were largely spared this fate in the Second World War. An exception is the Provincial Library of Zeeland in Middelburg. It was destroyed when the Germans bombed the

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Sanja Zgonjanin, 'The Prosecution of War Crimes for the Destruction of Libraries and Archives during Times of Armed Conflict', *Libraries & Culture*, 40:2 (2005), 128.

⁵⁵ Van der Hoeven and Van Albada, *Memory of the World: Lost Memory – Libraries and Archives destroyed in the Twentieth Century*, 3; Mark Derez, 'De brand van een bibliotheek', *De Boekenwereld*, 31:2 (2015), 5-6.

city of Middelburg in May 1940. The library lost about 160.000 volumes of its scholarly collection and the remaining holdings were damaged by fire and water.⁵⁶

However, Germany was not the only perpetrator in destroying libraries during the Second World War. About a third of all German books were destroyed between 1939 and 1945 as many libraries in various German cities were victims of Allied air raids and lost large parts of their collections. These included the National Library in Berlin, the State and University Library of Hamburg, the Municipal and University Library of Frankfurt am Main, and the University Library of Leipzig. However, often libraries were only casualties when a city was bombed and were not the specific target. In any case, it was very important for heritage institutions to protect their collections during a war.⁵⁷

Government guidelines

After the United Kingdom declared the war on Germany on the 1st of September 1939, in reaction to the invasion of Poland by the Nazis, the Second World War officially started. The Netherlands wanted to remain neutral in this war, as they had been during the First World War. Until Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940 the Netherlands was successful in maintaining that neutrality. Although the war only started in May 1940 for the Netherlands, the Dutch government had already been concerned about potential war hazards in the previous year. After all, the Netherlands was geographically located between two countries that were at direct war with each other, the United Kingdom and Germany. If bombers would fly from the United Kingdom to Germany or vice versa, they would fly over the Netherlands. So, even by remaining neutral, the Netherlands was at risk of accidental bombings. While there was concern that British or German planes would accidentally bomb Dutch cities, there was also fear of an invasion of the Nazis in the Netherlands. This fear was well-founded, since after the invasion of Poland Hitler had declared his intention to invade the Netherlands on October 19, 1939. This attack was postponed no less than seventeen times until it was finally carried out in early May 1940. It also meant that museums, libraries and archives were at risk of losing their cultural heritage collections in the event of an air raid or fire since the beginning of the Second World War on the September 1, 1939.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

⁵⁸ Friso Wielenga, *Geschiedenis van Nederland. Van Opstand tot heden* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012), 304, 309.

In 1939 the booklet *Richtlijnen voor de bescherming tegen oorlogsgevaaren van kunstschaten in musea, bibliotheken en archieven* (*Guidelines for protection against war hazards of art treasures in museums, libraries and archives*) was published on behalf of the Dutch Department of Education, Arts and Science. The guidelines presented in this booklet were established by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Science, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Defence. They were drawn up in accordance with the adopted law of April 23, 1936 regarding the protection of the population and the treasures of history, art and science against air raids. The Royal Decree of August 15, 1936 pertaining to this law, stipulated that all municipalities in the Netherlands had to adopt provisions concerning the safekeeping of treasures of history, art and science. The mayors would be responsible for determining which treasures would be eligible. To give mayors and managers of cultural heritage institutions a common thread for these measures, specific guidelines had been established by the government.⁵⁹

These guidelines were divided into four categories. Firstly, measures for the security of the buildings in which the treasures were located. Secondly, measures for the choice of objects to be rescued, their packaging and transport. Thirdly, measures regarding storage places. And fourth, measures for the control and preservation of the stored objects.⁶⁰ As for the security of a building, it was mandatory for cultural heritage institutions to adopt these measures, even if the valuable cultural property was housed elsewhere. After all, a building also had an economic and cultural value and the measures would also be beneficial to limit the risk of fire in times of peace.⁶¹

First, there were measures that could be taken for the roofs and attics of buildings. In times of peace, these attics and roofs had to be made as much fireproof as was possible, by brushing woodwork with fire-resistant paint, water glass or chalk. The attics also had to be evacuated. When there was electric light installed in the attic, emergency lighting had to be present as well in case the power would fail. On top of that, iron or concrete boxes filled with sand had to be placed in the attics. These could help to extinguish a fire. It was also

⁵⁹ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen (1918-1940), *Richtlijnen voor de bescherming tegen oorlogsgevaaren van kunstschaten in musea, bibliotheken en archieven: vastgesteld bij beschikking van de Ministers van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen, van Binnenlandsche Zaken en van Defensie* (The Hague: Algemene Landsdrukkerij, 1939), 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

recommended to install insulating material or fire resistant plates on the floors, if the construction of the building would allow it. In addition, a system had to be installed so that any extinguishing water could drain outside.⁶²

The safety of a building was increased if the other floors were treated in the same way as the attic, although often not all measures could be applied, because the other floors were often still in use. With regard to the outer walls of a building, there was no architectural aesthetic option to change them. However, the walls could be checked by a structural engineer to detect and strengthen the weak parts of a building. All doors and windows should not be equipped with shutters, because in the event of an alarm or bombing, the windows and doors had to be opened. It was also necessary to prevent windows from breaking during a bombardment and prevent the shards of glass from spreading. This could be done by covering the glass with transparent fabric, such as cheap net curtains, or in any emergencies with newspapers.⁶³

In addition, all gas and electric lines had to be shut off in the event of an alarm or bombing. Therefore, emergency lighting equipment had to be available in all departments at special designated locations. It also had to be prevented that the interior lighting could be seen outside. Finally, the necessary fire extinguishers had to be installed in the building, if they were not already present. These resources included gas masks, shovels, axes, and ladders. The fire extinguishers also had to be examined at least twice a year to see if they were still in working order. The library staff also had to practice using the fire extinguishers regularly. As a final measure, a fire guard needed to be appointed, who would do rounds in the building day and night, as long as a state of war lasted.⁶⁴

The second category of measures was about the choice of which objects had to be transported to air-raid shelters, what package material had to be used and how it would be transported. When war broke out, certain objects had to be secured. To do so, the availability of personnel and means of transport were required. To ensure that this all went as smoothly as possible and that the right and most valuable items would be secured, preparations had to be made for this scenario. Since it was not likely that all cultural heritage could be saved in these circumstances, the manager of a cultural heritage institution had to decide which

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 26-28.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 28.

objects were of extraordinary importance and therefore worthy to be saved first.⁶⁵ As the guidelines have it:

... manuscripts that have already been published and books of hours, which are not of the very first edge, or non-illuminated incunabula, of which a number of copies exist, will be counted among the objects, which will be left if necessary. As a criterion can also be adopted that products of – in the broadest sense – the Dutch area, under otherwise equal circumstances, will have the leading edge above objects of foreign origin. The monetary value that an object, separated from its art value, can have, for example because it is made of precious raw material or decorated with gemstones, should play a completely secondary role.⁶⁶

With the selection criteria mentioned above, collections of libraries could be divided into three categories: I. the irreplaceable, II. the very important, and III. the remaining. It goes without saying that categories I and II were to be first brought to safety. Category III would not be relocated, unless both category I and II were brought to safety and it was still possible to move category III, or a part of it, as well. Lists had to be drawn up in all museums, archives and libraries to know which items belonged to which category.⁶⁷

In addition to classifying the collections, there also had to be packaging material in a heritage institutions to transport the items safely to other shelters. These materials included blotting and wrapping paper, fillers, and boxes. These boxes had to consist of wood planed on the outside and inside, with a layer of fire-resistant paint on the outside. Number and colour codes on the boxes made it clear which boxes had go to which shelter. The boxes should not be nailed shut, because it had to be possible to open and check the boxes. A systematic schedule was lined up in each cultural institution for the transportation of the collections. In

⁶⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Original Dutch texts reads: ‘... handschriften die reeds uitgegeven en getijdenboeken, die niet van den allereersten rand zijn, of niet verluchte incunabelen, waarvan een aantal exemplaren bestaat, gerekend worden tot de objecten , die desnoods worden prijs gegeven. Als criterium kan ook worden aangenomen, dat voortbrengselen van – in den ruimsten zin – Nederlandsch gebied, bij overigens gelijke omstandigheden, den voorrang zullen hebben boven voorwerpen van buitenlandsche herkomst. De geldwaarde die een voorwerp, afgescheiden van zijn kunstwaarde, kan bezitten, b.v. omdat het van kostbare grondstof of met edelsteenen versierd is, behoort tot een volkomen secundaire rol te spelen.’

⁶⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

an emergency this scheme could clarify who would be responsible for which part of the process and who would replace the person in case of absence.⁶⁸

The storage areas for the valuable collections also had to meet certain conditions to guarantee safety. If the building of a cultural institution itself did not have a safe storage place for their collection, an alternative shelter had to be found in consultation with the mayor. When the collection had to be moved to alternative shelters, it was desirable to spread the collection over several buildings to reduce the risk that the entire collection would be lost in an attack on one of the air-raid shelters. The shelters had to be made shard-free and resistant to collapse. On top of that, the shelters were supposed to be fire-proof, well ventilated and free from moisture. Finally, the storage spaces needed to be large enough to allow check-ups to guarantee the quality of the treasures. The shelters had to be furnished with enough cupboards and shelves in times of peace, because of the possibility of scarcity of materials in wartime. In any case, the boxes were not allowed to be placed on the floor, in order to prevent rising moisture from damaging the collection inside the boxes.⁶⁹

The technical requirements for these air-raid shelters were also written down in the government's guidelines. All walls, including any doors and windows, that could be hit by flying shards, had to be made shard-proof. They also had to withstand any ground vibrations and changing air pressures caused by explosions. Therefore, it was favourable for these air-raid shelters to lie underground. Even for the walls of a building that rose above the ground, the guidelines provided specifications for the thickness, height and material of the walls.⁷⁰

Besides consulting a structural engineer regarding the risk of a collapse of the building, the fire safety of the shelter had to be carefully considered. It was important that the storage rooms were fire resistant and waterproof. This could be achieved by an insulation layer of at least 8 cm of sand and the construction of a drain for the extinguishing water. The guidelines also discussed the importance of good ventilation in the shelters, because vibrations and airflows could occur during explosions. With a good ventilation system, these vibrations and airflows would cause less damage. Better ventilation was achieved by perforating shutters and doors or making additional openings with shard-free grids. Finally, it was desirable that there were no gas and water pipes in the air-raid shelter. If there were any, those should be easy to

⁶⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 15-16.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 16-17.

close from within the shelter. Each room also had to be provided with emergency lighting. Similar to the cultural heritage building, these light sources also had to be shielded, so that the light could not radiate outwards.⁷¹

The last category concerned guidelines for the control and conservation of the stored objects. It was desirable not to put boxes on top of each other in the storage places. After all, it was not desirable to damage items in the boxes due to pressure from boxes above. Temperature and humidity were also important in connection with the conservation of the collections. It was therefore recommended to place buckets of quicklime in the storage rooms and to air the shelters regularly by opening doors and windows.⁷²

With regard to the control of the objects, paintings, drawings, prints, archives, manuscripts, and books had to be checked once every fourteen days. When several objects from the same category were present, a sample test of a few copies was also sufficient. When an object showed traces of damage, the collection manager had to take measures. If the collection manager did not consider himself expert enough, he could turn to the main experts. The government guidelines indicated, for example, that the director of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague was the designated expert for all manuscripts, books and volumes.⁷³

Protecting the Koninklijke Bibliotheek

The above mentioned government guidelines for the protection of art treasures in museums, libraries and archives also applied to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, since this library was also in possession of valuable manuscripts and books, that were considered treasures of the Dutch cultural heritage. This meant that the Koninklijke Bibliotheek had to adopt certain measures to protect their collection against air raids. On top of the valuable collection, the library was housed in a monumental building, which also falls into the category of precious cultural heritage. Some measures had already been prepared in 1938 and were actually implemented in 1939. These measures included the purchase of carbon dioxide snow machines capable of putting out small fires. The buying of a sufficient amount of bandages and some tools were also part of these measures.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid., 18-19.

⁷² Ibid., 20.

⁷³ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁴ Leendert Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1939* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1940), 4.

In addition to purchasing these resources, the basement of the building on Lange Voorhout was partly redesigned as an air-raid shelter and partly as a new storage place for precious manuscripts. Lists, based on the categories I, II and III, were created in preparation for the redesign of the basement for these manuscripts. When the threat of war increased in August 1939, it was decided to start moving the manuscripts to air-raid shelters outside the library. Due to the good preparations, the transport could take place in only one day. However, these measures were insufficient. A few weeks later it was decided to clear the attics of the building as well. About 2500 bags of sand were piled up in the attic and a great collection of manuscripts had to be moved to the basement. Since all these works were carried out by the library staff themselves, the library was forced to close to the public from September 11 to 16. Although the manuscripts were safely stored against air raids, visitors of the library could still request to see the manuscripts that were placed in the air-raid shelter inside the library building.⁷⁵

Despite all these measures, the protection of the building was still insufficient. One of the main problems was the lack of storage space. As a result, the attic could not be completely evacuated. More than 30,000 works were therefore left behind in the attic. The lack of space was not a new problem for the library. The previous year the library had already struggled in storing the ever-growing collection and because of problems with suppliers, the purchase of new bookcases was pushed to 1940.⁷⁶

In the 1940 annual report of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, library director Leendert Brummel described how frightened the May days of 1940 were for the library, as several libraries in the Netherlands were damaged or even destroyed by the invasion of the Nazis. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek, however, remained intact and was not noticeably damaged. After a short closure of a few weeks in May, the library soon opened to the public again.⁷⁷ Since the central location of the library and the great vulnerability of the old building on the Lange Voorhout gave cause for concern when the war broke out, additional measures were taken. A security group was installed to guard the building day and night. This group included male members of the library staff. The guard teams initially had eight-hour shifts. The duration of these shifts was later extended to 24 hours. Because the precious manuscripts had already

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4, 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

⁷⁷ Leendert Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1940* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1941), 7.

been sent to the basement in August and September 1939, there was no need for special measures in regard to the safekeeping of the collection when the war started.⁷⁸

As a precaution, the library's alphabetical card catalogue was also placed in the same room as these valuable manuscripts. Since a library cannot function without a catalogue, it was very important that it would be safe from possible outbreaks of fire.



To further reduce the risk of fire, the Rijksgebouwendienst

Fig. 2: Catalogue Room of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1935. Photographer: Wiel van der Randen, via Memory of the Netherlands.

(Government Buildings Agency) had made a number of provisions on the roof and attics of the Lange Voorhout building in consultation with the Inspectorate for Art Protection. A number of buckets of water had also been placed in the building, which had to be checked and refilled once every three days. Another problem related to the building still was the lack of storage space in 1940. Extra cupboards had been placed in some corridors of the book warehouse as a temporary solution, but with the advent of the war, the chance of further expansion of the



Fig. 3: Reading Room of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1935. Photographer: Wiel van der Randen, via Memory of the Netherlands.

Koninklijke Bibliotheek had been greatly reduced.⁷⁹

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek did not only take safety measures for the building and the collection, but also for the staff and visitors of the library. Because the air alarms went off more often, even when

there was no direct danger to

⁷⁸ Ibid, 1.

⁷⁹ Ibid; KBA, Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Regulations for an air raid alarm, written by the librarian of the 'Nationale Bibliotheek', L. Brummel.

The Hague, the director of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek drew up some regulations that everyone in the library had to follow in case of an air alarm. When the air alarm went off, every staff member had to open at least one window in his room. Then the outer door of the Kazernestraat had to be closed by the cloakroom attendant. All visitors of the library were no longer allowed to leave the building and, if they desired, could go into the air-raid shelter of the library or remain in the catalogue room (fig. 2)⁸⁰ or reading room (fig. 3)⁸¹ at their own responsibility. To make sure the visitors of the library were aware of these rules, the rules were made clear by means of a notice (see fig. 4).⁸² The library staff was also allowed to go to the air-raid shelter. If they did not want to go, they could continue with their work. However, it was forbidden for the staff to go outside as well, including the roof and the courtyard, or to be in the attic or in front of the windows. In any case, the supervisory staff in the reading room would lead the visitors to the bomb shelter.⁸³

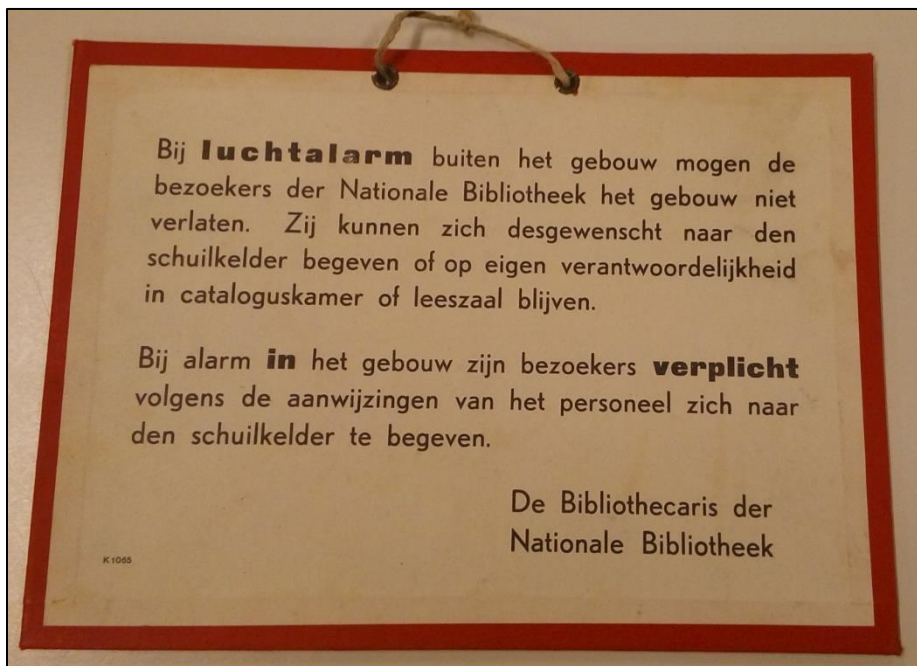


Fig. 4 Notice with rules regarding the air-raid alarm, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Archive.

If the situation gave cause to do so, the leader of the Air Protection Service could sound a special alarm in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. This alarm consisted of whistle signals. Thereafter, the groups of the light

line in the building, with the exception of those in the bomb shelter, had to be switched off. Next, the lending administration had to be brought in the appropriate drawers to the air-raid

⁸⁰ Het Geheugen, 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Den Haag, [1935]', <<https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gvn:SFA02:1001765>> (14-7-2020).

⁸¹ Het Geheugen, 'Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Den Haag, [1935]', <<https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gvn:SFA02:1001766>> (14-7-2020).

⁸² Ibid., Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Notice with rules regarding the air alarm.

⁸³ Ibid., Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Regulations for an air raid alarm, written by the librarian of the 'Nationale Bibliotheek', L. Brummel.

shelter. After the lights went off, staff and visitors in the building on the Kazernestraat were led along the large staircase to the air-raid shelter by the reading room staff and the library staff, while visitors in the building on Lange Voorhout were led via the connecting corridor of the Krantenkelder (Newspaper basement) to the air-raid shelter. The person who was on guard at the shelter had to close the door of the Kazernestraat five minutes after the alarm had started. When staff and visitors entered the bomb shelter, flood defences were installed. If the building would be in danger of being damaged, the electrical light and power lines were switched off by means of three switch boxes that were located in the shelter. Any fires under the central heating boilers were also removed and the heating was shut off.⁸⁴

One year after the outbreak of the war, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek still had not suffered any physical damage from war violence. Since the Inspectorate of Art Protection considered that permanent surveillance of the building was necessary, because of the risk of a fire, a security team was housed in the building day and night from July 1941. In addition, barrels of water were placed in the attics and additional buckets with sand were placed on all other floors.⁸⁵ In 1942, the library again had to undertake measures to protect their collection, measures that were even more drastic than those taken so far. The more precious manuscripts and old printed books were packed in crates and brought to bombproof shelters.⁸⁶ In 1943, the library continued to house parts of their collections in various safe locations. In this way the risk that the entire collection was endangered would be reduced. Due to several rules of the Nazis, the library had less staff available this year. As a result, it was not possible to keep the library open during the transports of parts of the valuable collections. This meant that the library was closed from March 2 to 5 and again from May 5 to June 1, 1943.⁸⁷

However, there was also a positive change for the library in terms of expanding the collection. An additional building was finally made available to the library in 1942. After years of lack of storage space, this building could be used to expand the book warehouse. The collections that were lent less often could be stored in this building, while the main collection would remain in the building on Lange Voorhout.⁸⁸ However, this change was short lived. The additional building that the library had received in 1942 was reclaimed for military purposes

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Leendert Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1941* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1942), 1.

⁸⁶ Leendert Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1943), 3, 5.

⁸⁷ Leendert Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1944), 2, 7.

⁸⁸ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 3.

in September 1943.⁸⁹ As this claim brought back the problem of lack of storage space, extra provisions were made in the warehouse so that an extra row of books could be placed on the bookcases. In addition to the fire safety measures, all books at the exits, staircases and attics were removed.⁹⁰ Not only was moving parts of the collection to alternative safe locations good for protecting the collection, it also helped with the lack of storage space in the library.

In 1944, the library continued to move even more parts of their collection out of fear for air raids. The reason the library took this threat so seriously was partly due to the location of the library, in the city centre at Lange Voorhout number 34. In itself a location in the city centre was reason enough for concern, but on top of that the Ortskommandantur of The Hague was housed in the building next to the library on number 38.⁹¹ An Ortskommandant was responsible for keeping order and regularity in the occupied municipality, in this case The Hague, and was in charge of the infrastructure, accommodation, supplies and recreation of quartered troops. It was also the admission point for volunteers in the Netherlands to join the German Armed Forces.⁹² All in all, this building could have been a potential target for an attack by people from the resistance or the Allied forces. This put the location of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek even more at risk. As a precaution, the Central Catalogue and the Central Catalogue of Periodicals were therefore taken from the building at Lange Voorhout and transferred to the basement of the building at the Kazernestraat. A wall, wooden partitions and a well were placed in this cellar, so that in the event of a fire, extinguishing water could not reach and damage the catalogues.⁹³

In addition to keeping the collections in the library building safe, many books were also transported to alternative shelters in 1944. These transports were even larger than the transports of the previous years. One of them involved the relocation of approximately 40.000 books from Staverden Castle near Elspeet to the bombproof shelter in the dunes of Heemskerk. The reason these books had to be relocated was because the Hermann Goering-Division had confiscated the castle in late February. The transfer of these books did not go

⁸⁹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943*, 2.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹¹ Leendert Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1945), 5.

⁹² Haags Gemeentearchief, Beeldcollectie

<<https://haagsgemeentearchief.nl/mediabank/beeldcollectie/detail/35532b40-8f52-6119-1682-8674eb8db445>> (15-5-2020); Monument Rozenoord, Begrippenlijst <<http://monument-rozenoord.nl/begrippen/>> (16-5-2020).

⁹³ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 5.

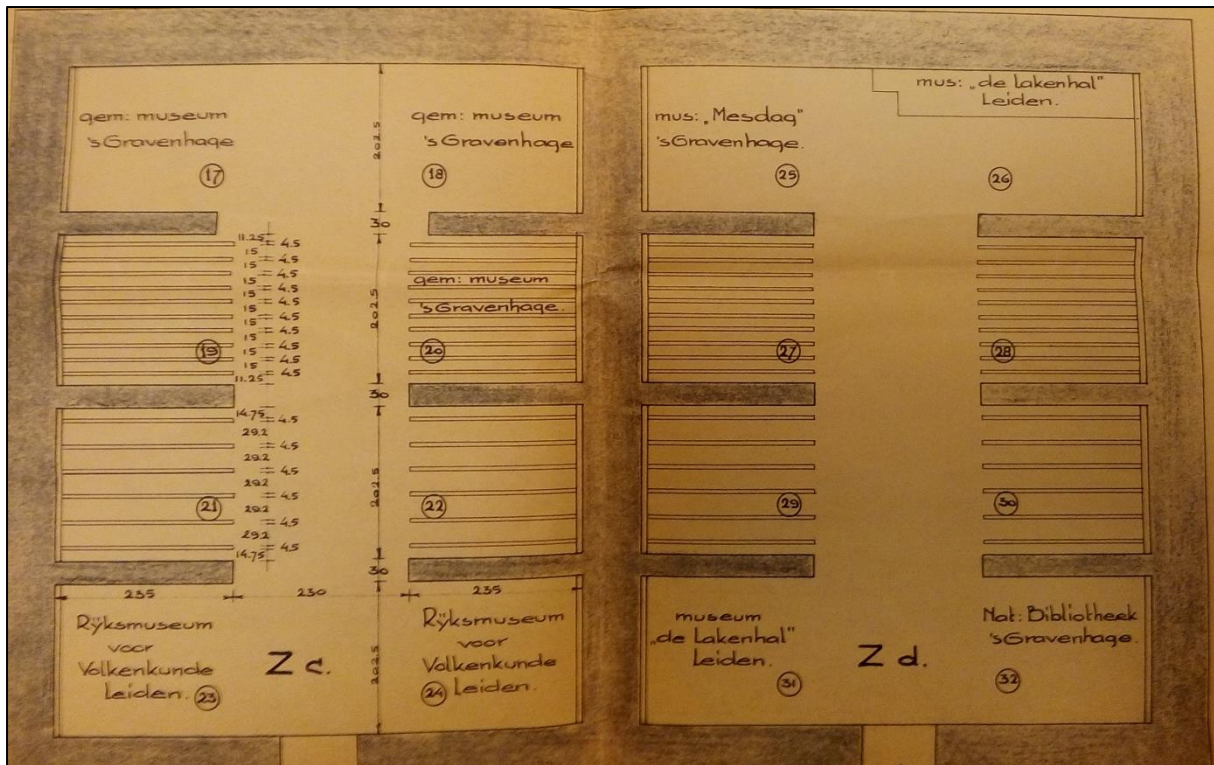


Fig. 5: Detail of the floor plan of the air-raid shelter in Heemskerk, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Archive.

without any problems, but with the collaboration of the Board of the Rijksmuseum the books arrived safely in Heemskerk. In addition to the relocation of the collection from Staverden to Heemskerk, the library decided to bring an additional 101 boxes, filled with manuscripts, pamphlets, one of the alphabetical card catalogues and the Scheurleer and Waller collections, from the library to the shelter in Heemskerk. On top of that, 62 boxes of manuscripts were transported to an air-raid shelter in Zandvoort.⁹⁴ These bomb shelters were shared with several museums and libraries. The floor plan of one of the air-raid shelters in Heemskerk (fig. 5) shows that parts of the collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, parts of the collections of Museum Mesdag from The Hague and Museum De Lakenhal from Leiden were stored in one storage room.⁹⁵

In the last year of the war, 1945, it seemed for a moment that the library's measures against fire and bombing had not been in vain. Many bombings and shootings took place in The Hague in February that year. A bombing took place twice this month, both nearby the main building of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. The first bombing occurred on February 21, when there was a bomb attack in Lange Voorhout, about fifteen meters away from the main library

⁹⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁵ KBA, Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Floor plan of the air-raid shelter in Heemskerk.

building. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek suffered damage to 300 windows that were shattered from the explosion. Two weeks later, the major Allied bombardment of the Bezuidenhoutkwatier took place, which also destroyed the Korte Voorhout. Due to the favourable wind, the Lange Voorhout was spared and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was saved from the spread of the fire.⁹⁶

Because of the increasing dangers to the main building, director Brummel decided to keep the library closed directly after the bombing of the Bezuidenhoutkwartier and to transfer a large number of valuable books from the building on the Lange Voorhout to the basement of the building on the Kazernestraat. This work lasted for weeks and was carried out under great tension. The western part of the Netherlands was still officially occupied, but the Allies conquered more and more areas in the Netherlands. This caused many tensions in the western provinces, also in the city centre of The Hague. When the liberation finally occurred on May 7, 1945 the library was again able to focus on repairing the work and returning the collections of the air-raid shelters to the library.⁹⁷

In the beginning of June, 1945, 25.000 books were brought back from Leiden and later that month another 35.000 books, that had been stored in the basement beneath the Rolzaal in the Binnenhof, came back to the library. Returning the books to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and redesigning the library took a lot of time and effort. The bookcases that had been moved from the attics of the Lange Voorhout to the basement, had to be dismantled and reassembled at their original place in the attic. Hundreds of cases containing manuscripts and books were not retrieved from the bomb-proof storage places at Zandvoort and Heemskerk until the end of September to the beginning of November. In the months of November and December the 40.000 books, that were brought from the Staverden Castle to Heemskerk, were returned to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Only in January, 1946, did the Koninklijke Bibliotheek regain possession of all its dispersed property. It had taken more than half a year for about 100.000 manuscripts and books to return to their original location in the library.⁹⁸

With regard to the damage from air raids, the windows that had been shattered by the nearby bombing on February 21, 1945 had to be repaired. All provisions that had been made in recent war years, to secure the building and the roof, were reversed in the course of 1945.

⁹⁶ Leendert Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1946), 4.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 5-6.

Although it became all the more clear after the war that the building on Lange Voorhout was not ideal for further expansion of the library in the following decades, the building had not suffered much war damage. The collection of the library had not suffered huge losses either. Despite the fact that the library had stored large collections in various bomb shelters, it was able to remain active as a library during much of the war, so they had also lent books to private individuals and other libraries. Not all libraries and individuals were spared as much as the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. As a result, some parts of the collection had been lost because they were on loan. For example, some loaned books were lost in the bombing of the Bezuidenhoutkwartier, but books had also been lent to the bombed library in Middelburg in May 1940. Other books were lent to private individuals who lived in Rotterdam, among whom the renowned early book historian Bonaventura Kruitwagen.⁹⁹ During the bombing of Rotterdam in May 1940, some of these books were destroyed as well. In total, about 750 works were lost this way.¹⁰⁰

Overall, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, both the building and the collection, was fortunate to only have suffered little damage during the war. It is also clear that the library implemented many of the government's guidelines for the security of the building in the event of an air raid, such as setting up a fire watch day and night during war time, clearing the attic and placing additional extinguishing material. Lists were also drawn up in categories I, II and III to determine which parts of the collection were the most valuable and which could be brought to the shelters first. It is also clear that the Koninklijke Bibliotheek tried to apply the rules that were drawn up for bomb shelters to the shelter in the building of the library itself. They followed, among other things, the guidelines regarding the fire safety, the discharge and protection of extinguishing water, the gas and light pipes, and the emergency lighting. Little is known about the control and conservation practices in the shelters of, for example, Heemskerk and Zandvoort. It seems unlikely that staff of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was able to go there once every fourteen days to check the collection in the boxes. Nevertheless, the 1945 and 1946 annual reports do not mention any damage to the collections that came back from the air-raid shelters outside the library building.

⁹⁹ Huygens ING, 'Kruitwagen, Franciscus Josephus (1874-1954)', <<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn1/kruitwagen>> (18-5-2020).

¹⁰⁰ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 6.

Chapter 3: Library Activities and Services during the War

The previous chapters focused on the effects of the war Second World war on cultural policy and the protection of cultural heritage in the Netherlands. This last chapter will analyse a third category of effects of the war, namely the impact on the activities and services of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Of all these activities and services, extra attention will be given to the effects on the loan statistics and use of the library during the war. Furthermore, a library cannot function without its employees, so the effects of the war on the library staff will be analysed as well. Then, the effects of the war on the additional events organised by the library will be discussed, as well as the consequences for collection management. Finally, the influences of the war on the Ruilbureau (Exchange Office) will be analysed. The Ruilbureau was the part of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek that exchanged collection items with libraries abroad.

Loan statistics

With the year 1939 can be illustrated what the regular loan statistics of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek were. Although there was a decline in the number of library users in September 1939, the month that the Second World War broke out in Europe. Nevertheless, after September the visit and use of the library returned to normal.¹⁰¹ In the 1940 annual report of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, director Brummel wrote that in the last half of 1940 there was an increase in the use of the library. This increase also continued in 1941. According to Brummel, this phenomenon was also observed in other libraries. Despite the fact that the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was closed for a few weeks in May 1940 and the library was no longer able to open the reading room in the evenings from September because of the blackout, the figures in library use are particularly high in the first year of the war. There even was a slight increase in the number of books lent compared to 1939.¹⁰²

In 1941, the use of the library continued to increase. This year not only the number of books lent increased, but the total number of visitors and the visitors of the reading room grew as well compared to the previous years. This increase was particularly evident in the

¹⁰¹ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1939*, 10.

¹⁰² Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1940*, 5-6.

number of library users living outside the city of The Hague. The growth of visitors was even more remarkable. The library was often closed in the evenings due to the forced blackout during the war, just like in 1940. In addition, the library was also closed every Wednesday from November 5, 1941 onwards. So even when the library was closed one more day during the week and every evening, there was still an increase in the number of library users compared to the previous years. The reason to close the library on Wednesday was because of the shortages of coal for heating the building. This measure was taken to prevent a period in which the Koninklijke Bibliotheek would have to close completely. Despite this precaution, the coal supply was shut down, so the Koninklijke Bibliotheek had to close its doors for seventy days anyway.¹⁰³

Another event in 1941 that will have been detrimental for the use of the library were the anti-Jewish measures. From September 15, 1941 the infamous placards with the text 'Voor Joden verboden' (Forbidden for Jews) appeared in many places. Jews were no longer allowed



to visit, amongst others, museums, public libraries, and reading rooms.¹⁰⁴ This placard made clear that Jews were also no longer allowed to visit the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (fig. 6).¹⁰⁵ Despite the fact that Jewish people could no

longer use the Koninklijke

Bibliotheek, this did not seem to have any effect on the loan statistics of the library.

Beside the increase in the use of the library, another development was that a notification had to be posted in the library, due to the constant theft of books. The text instructed that visitors of the reading room were obliged to show the books in their possession

¹⁰³ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1941*, 10-11.

¹⁰⁴ Traces of War, Frans van den Muijsenberg, 'Anti-Joodse maatregelen in Nederland vanaf 1940', (19-4-2018) <<https://www.tracesofwar.nl/articles/1938/Anti-Joodse-maatregelen-in-Nederland-vanaf-1940.htm>> (27-5-2020).

¹⁰⁵ KBA, Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Notice with the text 'Voor Joden verboden'.



Fig. 7: Notice with rules in reaction to the theft of books from the reading room, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Archive.

to the supervising staff when entering or leaving the room (fig. 7).¹⁰⁶ The so-called increase in theft is not discussed in greater detail anywhere. One possible reason for theft could be that people wanted to steal books to use as fuel in the winter. The winters were very cold during the war

and there was little fuel available. For example, during the Second World War many trees were cut down in The Hague so that people would have wood to cook on or to heat the house with.¹⁰⁷

In 1942, the year also started with a necessary closure of the library, due to the severe winter of 1941-1942 and the shutdown of the coal supplies. As a result, the library was closed from January 31 to April 10. The library services were also almost completely shut down during this period. An exception to this was when on March 26 the fierce cold was over and a limited service was again started in the unheated building. Through this service, postal requests could be processed again. The long closure of the library had a major impact on visit and lending figures. The number of visitors of the library and reading room in particular decreased in 1942, which is only logical given that the library was closed for several months at the beginning of the year. The number of loans, on the other hand, had not decreased significantly compared to the numbers of 1941. This implies that self-study did continue from home. As another possible reason for the large decrease in library visits and a small decrease in lending, Brummel mentions the forced evacuation of many residents of The Hague.¹⁰⁸ In October 1942, the Germans ordered that large parts of the Dutch coast had to be evacuated. The Nazis wanted to build the Atlantic Wall, a defence line along the coast that should have provided protection

¹⁰⁶ KBA, Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Notice with rules due to theft of books from the reading room.

¹⁰⁷ Gemeente Den Haag, 'Monumentale bomen' (2-6-2020), <<https://www.denhaag.nl/nl/in-de-stad/natuur-en-milieu/groen-en-bomen/bomen/monumentale-bomen.htm>> (15-6-2020).

¹⁰⁸ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 8-9.

against an invasion of the Allied forces. Since the Atlantic Wall would also be built along the coast at The Hague, more than 25,000 houses were forcefully evacuated.¹⁰⁹ The people who had to leave their homes in The Hague and, for example, move to Brabant would no longer be able to visit the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Another consequence of this evacuation for the library was that it caused some irregularities in the return of lent books.¹¹⁰

In 1943, the use of the library was pretty much the same as the year before and the number of books on loan even increased. The library also had to close for a short period this year, from March 2 to 5 and from May 5 to June 1. The reason the library closed to the public was to transport more books and manuscripts to safe locations. During this closing, the library was open to staff and therefore postal applications could continue. After the last closing of the library in May, there was a shortage of employees. Therefore, the book depot had to remain unoccupied between 12:00 am and 1:30 pm, preventing people from borrowing books between these times (fig. 8).¹¹¹ Also, at the end of this year, the library was closed every Wednesday during the heating season to save fuel for the winter.¹¹² Despite all these measures, the library was still well visited and many books were borrowed. It can be noted, however, that there is clearly a decline in the number of visits to the reading room. This had

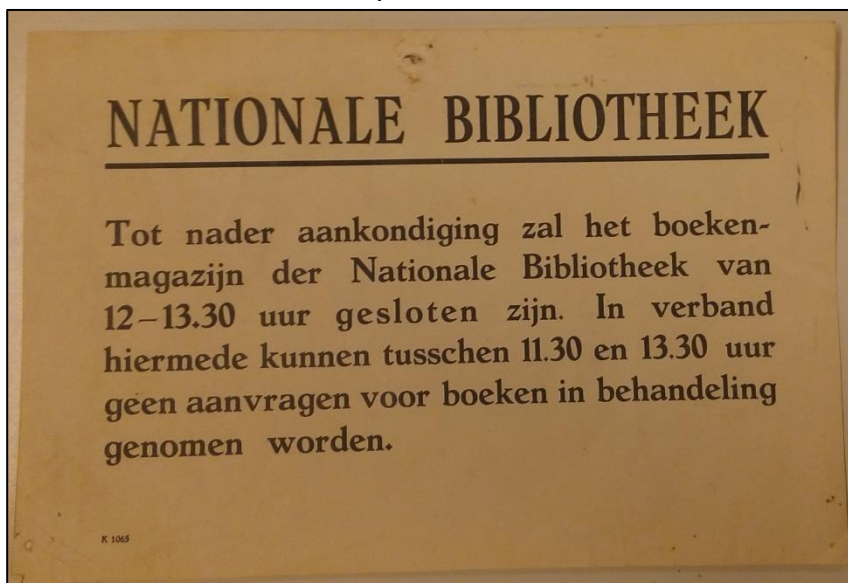


Fig. 8: Notice with announcement about closing the book warehouse, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Archive.

already deteriorated sharply in 1942, partly because of the long periods of closure that year, but in 1943 the reading room's visit declined even further, while the library had been open more often to visitors than the year before. It is also noticeable

¹⁰⁹ Lou de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Deel 6 – Juli '42-Mei '43, eerste helft* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1975), 86; *Geschiedenis van Zuid-Holland*, Geert-Jan Mellink, 'De grote volksverhuizing: verdreven voor de Atlantikwall', <<https://geschiedenisvanzuidholland.nl/verhalen/de-grote-volksverhuizing-verdreven-voor-de-atlantikwall>> (30-5-2020).

¹¹⁰ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 9.

¹¹¹ KBA, Lists and documents for 1940-1945, Notice with announcement about closing the book depot.

¹¹² Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943*, 7.

that the number of loans in The Hague was decreasing, while the number of loans outside the city had increased. According to Brummel, this phenomenon also occurred at other scientific libraries in the Netherlands. He also blamed this development on the evacuation of many regular visitors who had to leave their homes in 1942.¹¹³

In 1944, visits to the library declined even further than in previous years. Not only was this due to the loss of customers, following the 1942 evacuation, but many young people also had to go into hiding this year, because of the raids. So these people could no longer come to visit the library. The library also had to close its doors to the public from February 28 to March 13 because of the rapid evacuation of Staverden Castle where many books were stored. Other developments affecting the use of the library were amongst others that the consultation of newspapers in the reading room was temporarily put on hold due to staff shortages. The library building was also not heated for a long time and from November 8 the heating of the back building was only switched on in the morning hours, except on Wednesdays and Thursdays when the library was closed. This year it was decided to close the doors on Thursdays during the heating season as well to save more fuel for the winter months. This lasted until November 21, after which, following a razzia in The Hague, there was an even greater staff shortage and the operation of the depots was no longer possible with so few staff. In addition to the staff shortage causing problems with lending books and heating the library, there also were people in hiding in the library for a few weeks. Taking all these factors together, Brummel decided to close the library until the end of 1944. Unfortunately, no further information is available about who were in hiding and where and why they had chosen the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. All these obstacles evidently had an effect on the figures for library visits and loans.¹¹⁴

In May 1945, the ongoing demolition of the library ended and reconstruction started again. But before the liberation of the Netherlands took place in May, the library had to function for several more months in wartime. On January 8, the library opened again, visits being limited to four mornings a week. The provision of services was still very limited, so customers could only return their books and consult books in the reading room. It was the only way the library could open its doors. However, the library decided to close again on January 25, because of the severe frost. Since the coal supply was not large enough to heat

¹¹³ Ibid., 8.

¹¹⁴ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 5, 9-10.

the entire building and there was a risk that the water pipes would be frozen with such frost, the central heating had to be drained. Without any heating in the building, the library had no other choice but to close its doors. In addition, the Allied bombardments near the main library building in February were also a sign that it was too dangerous to remain open. Brummel therefore decided that the library should remain closed with the ever-increasing tension about the liberation of the Western part of the country. Obviously, all this resulted in very low figures for library use in 1945.¹¹⁵

The library finally opened its doors to the public again on 14 May. At first, this was only for three mornings a week, so the rest of the time could be spent putting books back in the library. Because there was also a lot of work in returning all the books from the bomb shelters, it took until July 16 before the library could switch to a daily opening of the library to the public from 9:30 to 12:00 am and from 2:00 to 4:30 pm, with the exception of Wednesday afternoons. When tram traffic was restored in The Hague on October 15, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was able to open its doors all day long. However, it was still not possible to borrow books in the afternoon hours, because many manuscripts and books from shelters in Zandvoort and Heemskerk were still being brought back to the library from September to November. Only from January 1946, when all books had been returned and stored, the library

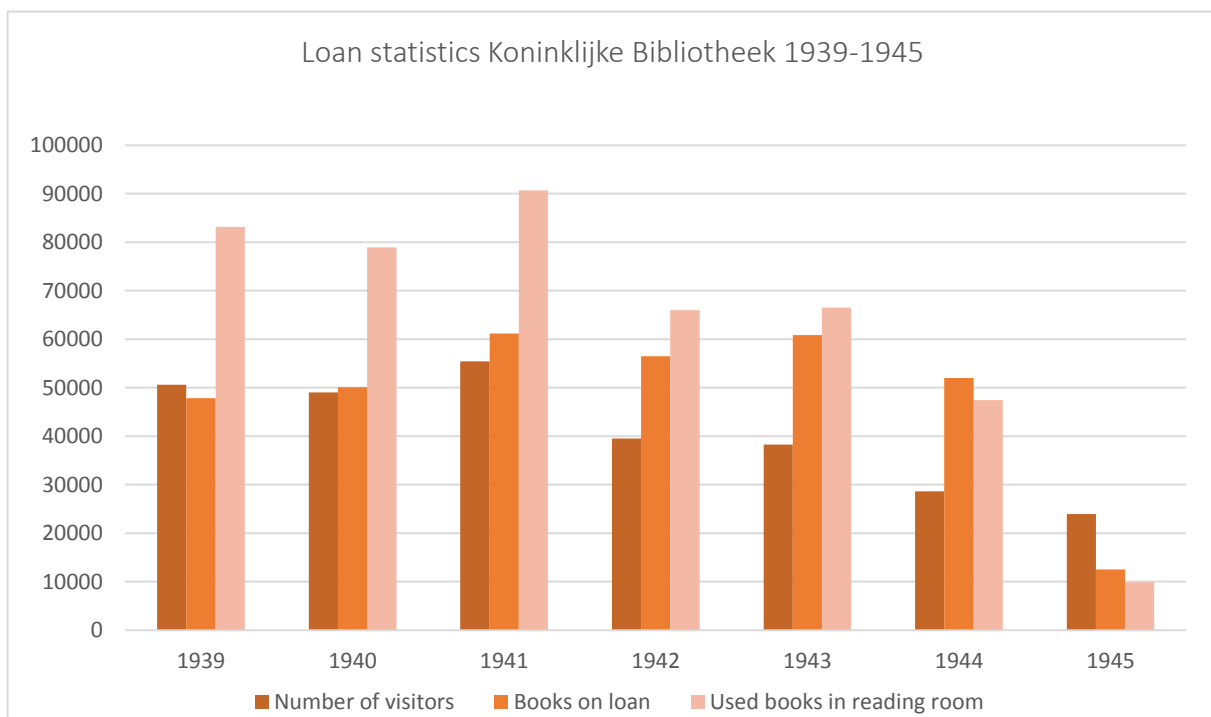


Fig. 9: Graph constructed on the basis of lending statistics in the annual reports of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek

¹¹⁵ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 3-4.

could return to regular services. The closure of the library in the first half of the year and the limited services provided in the second half of the year obviously had a huge impact on the figures for visits and loans in 1945. Even when the library was open to the public the numbers of visits and loans were lower than previous years.¹¹⁶ All in all, it is clear that at the beginning of the war there was a surprising increase in visitors and borrowers at the library. But the longer the war lasted and the more challenges the library faced, the number of users and visitors declined, mainly as a result of the limited opening hours of the library in various periods (fig. 9).¹¹⁷

Library staff

The first challenges regarding the staff already occurred in 1939. Although the war had not yet begun, four members of the library staff were called to arms. Their absence had a slightly negative effect on the state of affairs in the library. Nevertheless, there was no stagnation in the library activities.¹¹⁸ The year 1940, with the exception of the month of May, did not have a huge impact on the staff or their work either. An example of the modest impact the war had on employees was when a certain staff member was supposed to go on retirement at the beginning of the year. Because his successor had been mobilised in May, he had to wait until June for his successor to take over his position. Although it was a hectic year due to the outbreak of the war in the Netherlands and the mobilisation and demobilisation of staff members, the library did not experience any major issues in continuing the daily activities and services.¹¹⁹

Following the occupation in May 1940, anti-Jewish measures were gradually introduced by the German government in the Netherlands. These measures first affected employees in government agencies, which included the staff of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. As early as August 28 the College of Secretaries-General was informally instructed not to appoint, elect or promote any person of Jewish blood in the government service anymore. On September 6 there was an official ban on hiring Jews in government service. Jewish people who were already employed, could not be promoted anymore. Shortly thereafter, this ban

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 4-6, 11-12.

¹¹⁷ Graph constructed on the basis of lending statistics provided in the annual reports of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek over the years 1939-1945.

¹¹⁸ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1939*, 6.

¹¹⁹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1940*, 2.

was expanded from government departments and universities to all subsidised institutions, including the Koninklijke Bibliotheek.¹²⁰

On October 5, 1940, these measures became even stricter as all employees at universities, government departments and subsidised institutions were obliged to fill in an Aryan declaration about their ancestry and thus demonstrate that they were not of Jewish origin.¹²¹ In line with this new rule, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was ordered to make a list of all persons in government service who were either wholly or partly Jewish or married or engaged to a person who was wholly or partly Jewish. To follow these orders, director Brummel wrote on October 24 to the staff of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek that everyone had to fill in a form as to whether or not they were considered to be Jewish according to the aforementioned standards. Brummel further emphasised that a person was not considered Jewish if neither his parents nor his grandparents had ever belonged to the Jewish religious community. He also stated that if a form was filled in incorrectly, this could lead to immediate dismissal.¹²²

Shortly thereafter, it was announced that per November 21 all Jewish civil servants were suspended. On that day, it was made clear by a new announcement that this suspension was converted into the formal dismissal of all Jews with government functions.¹²³ However, it remains unclear how many members of the library staff were regarded as wholly or partially Jewish. The annual reports of 1940 to 1945 indicate that the library had to deal with some issues concerning the staff, but that these were not related to the above measures. There is no information that employees were fired during the war or had to go into hiding because of their Jewish background. The reason that this was not discussed could of course be that director Brummel did not consider it safe to write about the issue in the annual reports, although he did write in later annual reports about a shortage of staff due to Arbeitseinsatz

¹²⁰ Traces of War, Frans van den Muijsenberg, 'Anti-Joodse maatregelen in Nederland vanaf 1940' (19-4-2018), <<https://www.tracesofwar.nl/articles/1938/Anti-Joodse-maatregelen-in-Nederland-vanaf-1940.htm>> (27-5-2020).

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² KBA, Correspondence 1940, box 1, Outgoing letter from the librarian of the 'Nationale Bibliotheek' Dr. L. Brummel, The Hague, 24 October 1940.

¹²³ Traces of War, Frans van den Muijsenberg, 'Anti-Joodse maatregelen in Nederland vanaf 1940' (19-4-2018), <<https://www.tracesofwar.nl/articles/1938/Anti-Joodse-maatregelen-in-Nederland-vanaf-1940.htm>> (27-5-2020).

(Forced labour in Germany) razzias and about employees who had gone into hiding because of these raids.¹²⁴

Nevertheless, according to the annual report of 1940 at the end of that year, following the instruction of the Reichskommissar (Commissioner of the Empire) for the occupied Dutch territory, Miss Annie Lankhout (1886-1960), scientific assistant 2nd class, was removed from her position.¹²⁵ It is not explicitly mentioned that she was fired because of a Jewish background, but since the Lankhout family in The Hague, was known to be Jewish, it is plausible that this was the reason for her dismissal.¹²⁶ She was the only person who had been fired following the instructions of the Reichskommissar for the occupied Dutch territory. This could indicate that of the entire library staff, she was the only one of Jewish descent. In the 1941 annual report, Annie Lankhout is mentioned again. It states that on February 21, 1941 she was granted an honourable discharge.¹²⁷

After her discharge, she was interned in December 1942 on the De Schaffelaar estate in Barneveld. About 670 Dutch Jews were members of the so-called 'Barneveld group'. All of them were interned in De Schaffelaar castle in Barneveld or in Huize De Biezen in Barneveld from the end of 1942. The members of this group had an exceptional position within Dutch society and were able to ensure that they were placed on a list of people who were excluded from transport to extermination camps. Eventually they were also put on transport on September 29, 1943. Their first destination was Westerbork, where they got their own barracks and did not have to fear further deportation to an extermination camp. Nevertheless, the deportation of the group continued in September 1944 and they were deported to Theresienstadt. In Theresienstadt, a deportation to Auschwitz was announced just before the end of the war. However, because of the special status of the Barneveld group, they did not have to leave Theresienstadt and a large part of the group, therefore, survived the war. On May 8, 1945 Theresienstadt was liberated by the Allies and Annie Lankhout was able to start her journey back to the Netherlands, where she would arrive in Eindhoven on June 21.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 8.

¹²⁵ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1940*, 2.

¹²⁶ Omroep West, 'Wij kwamen terug uit de oorlog en waren al onze bezittingen kwijt' (16-12-2016), <<https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/3310144/Wij-kwamen-terug-uit-de-oorlog-en-waren-al-onze-bezittingen-kwijt>> (28-5-2020).

¹²⁷ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1941*, 4-5.

¹²⁸ Genealogy Online, 'Stamboek van Emden (Culemborg) : Anna "Annie" Lankhout (1886-1960)', <<https://www.genealogieonline.nl/en/stamboom-van-emden-culemborg/11191.php>> (8-7-2020);

The continuation of the war had some other, minor consequences for the library staff as well. As operating the telephone in the library required more time, a new secretarial department was established. Also, a vacancy at the Ruilbureau was not filled for the time being, because its activities had been stopped at the outbreak of the war. It was not until 1941 that the exchange was resumed with specific countries and an additional administrative staff member was hired. An expansion of the staff was also necessary for the many visitors coming to the reading room in 1941. The salary scale of the employees in the services department was also adjusted in that year, while measures were taken for providing bookbinding training for young employees of the library.¹²⁹

1942 was not a very eventful year for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in terms of personnel. New staff were hired while others went into retirement. The annual report, however, mentions that during the year quite a large number of people among the staff were on sick leave and that the forced evacuation of a number of employees repeatedly hindered services.¹³⁰

In 1943 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek suffered more losses from its staff. For example, the library lost staff because one employee died after a long illness and another female staff member stopped working because she got married. However, staff also disappeared due to the specific war conditions. For example, an assistant and a warehouse worker of the library were taken captive by the Germans and another assistant and two warehouse workers left the library because they had to go and work as forced labourers in Germany. It is unknown why these two library staff members were taken captive. The shortage of warehouse workers was partly solved by hiring additional female staff, because only men were called for forced labour in Germany. On top of that, there continued to be many cases of illnesses and evacuations amongst the employees. All of this was not contributory to the library services.¹³¹

The forced labour in Germany, also known as the Arbeitseinsatz resulted from the increasing need of labour for the German war economy, following the conscription of many men into the German army. At the end of March 1942, Hitler appointed Fritz Sauckel as Generalbevollmächtigter für den Arbeitseinsatz (General representative for employment). He

Joodsamsterdam, 'De Barneveld groep' (24-9-2019), <<https://www.joodsamsterdam.nl/de-barneveld-groep/>> (8-7-2020).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 4-5.

¹³¹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943*, 3.

had to ensure that the labour shortage in Germany would be resolved. Sauckel appointed F. Schmidt as his representative in the Netherlands. From the beginning of April 1942, Schmidt aimed to send as many Dutch workers to Germany as possible. However, men had already been sent to Germany for work even before the appointment of Schmidt. In the period from summer 1940 to spring 1942, Dutch unemployed men were forced to work in Germany. Initially, the German occupying forces tried to recruit personnel for labour in Germany and the Netherlands through propaganda and recruitment campaigns, which was not very successful. At that time, work in Germany also had to be accepted by unemployed people from the border region. If they declined, they lost support or unemployment benefits from the Dutch government. After the capitulation, unemployment in the Netherlands rose rapidly. Nevertheless, the unemployed were not exactly eager to work in Germany.¹³²

After the capitulation, all Dutch soldiers were released from captivity by Hitler. However, in 1942 the occupying forces feared that these released Dutch soldiers might support the Allies in case of an attack. To prevent this, all Dutch professional non-commissioned officers returned into captivity. In February 1943, 300.000 ex-military men were arrested. An additional advantage for the Germans was that these captives could be used for the deployment of labour. Only the ex-military, who worked in the Dutch armaments industry, were exempt after registration. Others were employed in the construction of the Atlantic Wall in the Netherlands. On May 7, 1943 it was announced that all men aged 18 to 35 were required to report to employment offices. Exemption from employment was only granted to miners, employees in the agriculture or food industries, and to all workers in industrial companies of importance to the German war effort.¹³³

In 1944 the shortage of library staff became an even greater problem for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. As there were many long-term absentees due to illness during the first six months of the year, the staffing in the library was minimal. The staff shortage was only aggravated when calls for men to work for the German Wehrmacht were made. Moreover, the Dutch government in London called for a general railway strike on September 17, 1944. Thirty thousand employees of the Dutch Railways responded to this call, as a result of which Dutch train traffic came to a halt. The aim was to hinder the German war effort at a critical

¹³² Nationaal Archief, 'Tweede Wereldoorlog: (Dwang) Arbeid', <<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/tweede-wereldoorlog-dwang-arbeid#collapse-2958>> (15-6-2020).

¹³³ Ibid.

time.¹³⁴ The shutdown of train traffic also made it impossible for the library employees living outside The Hague to come to work. At the same time, the Germans began claiming bicycles from September 15 onwards, resulting in even more employees who had difficulty to travel to work. This also meant that the working hours had to be changed. On September 16, a new rule was introduced that ordered the arrest of all men between 16 and 50, who were doing 'nothing' on the street. Two days later, a general railway strike ensured that staff living outside The Hague were officially unable to come to work. The partial and later complete suspension of tram traffic within The Hague caused furthermore major restrictions on the services at the library.¹³⁵

The railway strike of September also had other adverse consequences for the west of the Netherlands. By way of retaliation, the German occupying forces stopped the food supply to this region for six weeks. This led to a great shortage of food and fuel. This was one of the causes of the Dutch famine of 1944-1945, also known as the 'Hongerwinter' (hunger winter).¹³⁶ At the end of 1940, Centrale Keukens (Central Kitchens) had already been established in major cities throughout the Netherlands to feed poor people during

10e PUBLICATIE

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Sinaasappelstraat 157	de la Reyweg 626-628	van Ravesteynstraat 303
Vlierboomstraat 362	(Chr. Ambachtschool)	Hoogezand 47
Okkernootstraat 70	Viljoenstraat 97	Gabriel Metsustraat 121
Mient 205, ingang post Hortensiastraat 28	Bloemfonteinstraat 196	Van Oostadestraat 251
Hyacinthweg 1	Fisherstraat 133	Terwestenstraat 105
Sneeuwbalstraat 137,	Deiftschelaan 58,	Winterweg 8
ingang post Sneeuwklompstraat	Vaillantplein 17,	Ferrandweg 2
Acaciastraat 143	ingang post Ruyssdaalstraat 1	Aberdingk Thijmplein 29
Populierstraat 109,	Zusterstraat 121,	Busken Huetstraat 29
ingang post Pijpboomstraat 108 A	J. P. Heijstraat 42	Witthuisstraat 2
2e Braamstraat 6	ingang post Groenesteinstraat	Ary Prinsstraat 11
Meldoornstraat 13,	Noordwal 51	Astraat 3
ingang post Meldoornstraat 11	Tasmanstraat 137	Minckelerstraat 10
Boylestraat 20, ingang post Boylestraat 18	Hollanderstraat 21	Cylinderstraat 6
Weesperstraat 87	v. d. Spieghelstraat 23	Pasteurstraat 305
Naarderstraat 102	Atehpstraat 31	Weissenbruchstraat 228
Dribsbergenstraat 158	Schelpkade 45	Marlotaan 12, Marlot
Weimarstraat 63	Nieuwe Schoolstraat 18	Merkusstraat 19
Keppelerstraat 301	Bullenhof 20 (Cineac)	Van Heutszstraat 12
Stephensonstraat 92a	Lamgroen 14	Louise Henriëttestraat 6
v. Swindenstraat 14	Gouwstraat 13, ingang post Gelestraat 1	Koningin Sophiestraat 24 A
Teijlerstraat 128	Scheldestraat 149	Se v. d. Boschstraat 22
de Gheynstraat 51	Zuidwal 47, ingang post Lepelstraat 6	Vijzelstraat 121, Scheveningen
Gaslaan 80		
Kootwijkstraat 39		

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Fig. 10: Poster regarding the 'Centrale Keukens' in The Hague, via Memory of the Netherlands.

¹³⁴ Is Geschiedenis, 'De spoorwegstaking van 1944', <<https://isgeschiedenis.nl/nieuws/de-spoorwegstaking-van-1944>> (8-7-2020).

¹³⁵ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 3-4.

¹³⁶ Is Geschiedenis, 'De spoorwegstaking van 1944', <<https://isgeschiedenis.nl/nieuws/de-spoorwegstaking-van-1944>> (8-7-2020).

the war.¹³⁷ When food shortages increased after the railway strike, many staff members of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek had to go to a Centrale Keuken. They were located at several addresses through The Hague. There were also fixed times each week when the food was distributed and the weekly tickets for the Centrale Keuken could be purchased (fig. 10).¹³⁸ Only when the food distribution had stabilised, in late October, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was able to replace the temporary closure in the afternoon for a limited service in which only the reading room would be open to the public.¹³⁹

As winter was approaching, the problem of the coal supply arose again. It was therefore decided that all study rooms of the academic staff in the Lange Voorhout building should be evacuated and that the staff would relocate to a few rooms in the building on the Kazernestraat. In order to save coal, there were new restrictions on the opening hours of the library. Not long after, there were rumours that raids would take place in The Hague, by which young and healthy men would be taken to Germany for forced labour. Since the entire warehouse staff and part of the staff in the reading room and the lending agency were younger than 40 years, a lot of unrest arose among the employees. This unrest appeared justified because on November 21, 1944 a raid took place in The Hague and the surrounding area in which thousands of young men were picked up by German soldiers and sent to Germany to perform forced labour. No less than thirteen members of the library staff were taken during this raid.¹⁴⁰

In previous years, men had also been forced to report for the *Arbeidseinsatz*. Many of them did not respond to the calls and went into hiding. In order to get enough labourers, the Nazis held raids. The raid of November 21 was code-named *Operatie Sneeuwvlok* (Operation Snowflake). The streets were blocked and houses were searched; men aged 17 to 40 had to report with warm clothing, sturdy shoes, blankets and eating utensils. The arrested men stood in long lines and many of them were taken to the Arts and Sciences building on the *Zwarteweg*. Other collection points were The Hague Zoo on the *Benoordenhoutseweg* and Haganum, a grammar school, on the *Laan van Meerdervoort*. On November 21 and 22 about 8000 forced

¹³⁷ Verzetmuseum, 'WO2-info: Hongersnood', <<https://www.verzetmuseum.org/museum/nl/tweede-wereldoorlog/themas/eten-in-oorlogstijd/hongersnood>> (8-7-2020).

¹³⁸ Het geheugen, 'Het Rijksbureau voor de Voedselvoorziening in Oorlogstijd Onderafdeeling Massavoeding', <<https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gvn:NIOD01:48064>> (8-7-2020).

¹³⁹ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 3-4.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

labourers from The Hague and about 5000 from Rijswijk and Voorburg were arrested. Since now there was no longer enough staff to provide lending services and to operate the central heating in the building, the library had to close until the end of that year.¹⁴¹

Following the hiring of a new technical expert early in 1945, the central heating could be switched on again and the library opened its doors again for four mornings in the week. The reason the library was only open four mornings was the persistent problem of staff shortage.¹⁴² The situation was now so dire that some staff members died as a result of the war, both directly and indirectly. For example, a former under-librarian died of malnutrition, which was an indirect consequence of the war. Another victim was the administrative officer T.J. Abbenbroek (1890-1945), who was executed on March 12, 1945 by the Nazis in Rotterdam (fig. 11).¹⁴³ After his son's execution in 1942, Abbenbroek had become a member of the Orde Dienst (Order Service) and the Nationale Steun Fonds (National Support Fund). The Nationale Steun Fonds financed the resistance and made money available for people in hiding and for the families of railway strikers. Abbenbroek made a career in the resistance and was even appointed deputy commander of the Binnenlandse Strijdkrachten (Home Forces) in The Hague. On December 27, 1944 he was arrested and imprisoned in the German prison in Scheveningen, better known as the Oranjehotel. He stayed there until his execution in Rotterdam in retaliation for the murder of two Germans, committed by the Dutch resistance.¹⁴⁴

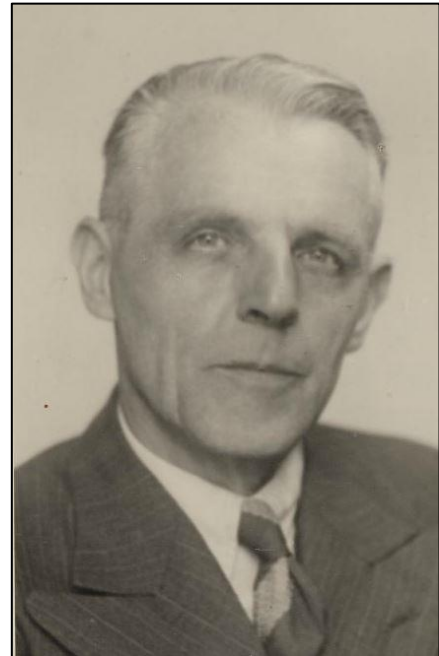


Fig. 11: Teunis Johannes Abbenbroek.

It was not until 1946 that the library was able to return to pre-war services. However, the modest salary that was available for the library staff made it difficult to fill the vacancies.

¹⁴¹ Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 mei, 'Den Haag: Dwangarbeiders', Het monument, <https://www.4en5mei.nl/oorlogsmonumenten/monumenten_zoeken/oorlogsmonument/353/den-haag%2C-%27dwangarbeiders%27> (15-6-2020).

¹⁴² Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 3.

¹⁴³ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 7; Oorlogsgraven stichting, 'Teunis Johannes Abbenbroek', <<https://oorlogsgravenstichting.nl/persoon/556/teunis-johannes-abbenbroek>> (14-7-2020).

¹⁴⁴ KB Nationale Bibliotheek, Huibert Crijns, 'Teun Abbenbroek (1890-1945), KB-medewerker en verzetsstrijder' (3 May 2019), <<https://www.kb.nl/blogs/over-de-kb/teun-abbenbroek-1890-1945-kb-medewerker-en-verzetsstrijder>> (15-6-2020).

In the meantime, many changes took place among the employees, especially in the services department. This made it more difficult for the library to provide good service to the library users.¹⁴⁵ It is clear that even after the war ended officially there were still many problems resulting from the war that had to be solved.

Library events

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek regularly participated in exhibitions related to their collection, in addition to the normal library activities and services. In 1939 the library lent books to various exhibitions, but also organised its own small exhibition for the first time in many years about translations of Dutch literature after 1880. It was open from July 11 to 19 and, given the little publicity that had been given to the exhibition, it had been well attended.¹⁴⁶

Despite the fact that the Netherlands was occupied by the Nazis in 1940, a small exhibition was held in that year as well in the library from October 16 to 30. This time the exhibition was devoted to book illustration in the eighteenth century. Again, little attention was paid to the event. However, 400 people visited the exhibition thanks to a few favourable reviews in the press. Very happy with this result, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek expressed the hope that these events would continue in the coming years. In addition, the library contributed to exhibitions in the Haagsche Gemeentemuseum on the 30th anniversary of the Vereeniging Het Koloniaal Instituut, to an exhibition on modern Dutch poetry in the public library in Kampen and to the exhibition on Maria Sybille Merian in the Utrecht University Library.¹⁴⁷

Despite the continuation of the war, the library was able to continue its work in 1941 in terms of exhibitions. One of the events organised by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was the exhibition on historical book bindings, which was open from September 8 to 27. With over 500 visitors, the exposition was visited even better than the year before. Pieces from the library's own collection and the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum were used in this exhibition. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek also participated in a number of other external exhibits that year, namely the exhibition in the Haagsche Gemeentemuseum on flowers, birds and

¹⁴⁵ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1946*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁶ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1939*, 11; Delpher, 'De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatskundig dagblad' ('s-Hertogenbosch: Gebr. Verhoeven, 12-7-1939), 2, <<https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010406730:mpeg21:a0085>> (9-7-2020).

¹⁴⁷ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1940*, 6.

bugs in the Dutch book over five centuries, the exposition in the Utrecht University Library on German-Dutch relations over the centuries, and the exhibition on Literature from Limburg organised by the literary department of the Haagsche Kunstkring.¹⁴⁸

Due to the unfavourable conditions in 1942, no exhibition was organised in the library that year. However, the library was able to contribute to exhibitions in the Rijksmuseum on four centuries of Dutch musical life and to the exhibition in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht.¹⁴⁹ Conditions deteriorated even further in 1943, when the Koninklijke Bibliotheek did not organise any exhibitions, nor participated in exhibitions at other libraries or museums.¹⁵⁰ The same applies to 1944. Since there was hardly enough staff to carry out the primary tasks of the library, there was certainly no time to organise exhibitions. In addition, the turnout of the public would also be minimal due to the strike of public transport, the threat of raids in The Hague and the limited opening hours of the library.¹⁵¹

1945 was an extremely eventful year, as the Netherlands was liberated and the library was finally able to start repairing the war damage. Since bringing back large parts of the collection was one of the main tasks after the liberation, there was no time to organise an exhibition that year. However, after having received many of its precious manuscripts from the bomb shelters, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was able to lend items from the manuscript collection to the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum for the exhibition on Dutch art from the 15th and 16th centuries (September 1 to October 21).¹⁵² Even in 1946, no exhibition of its own was organised, but the Koninklijke Bibliotheek did contribute to many external exhibitions. After all, the priority was still to resume library services and to rebuild and expand the collection of the library.¹⁵³

Collection management

Another important task of a library is the collection management and, within that area, acquisition and maintenance. Clearly, during the war a large part of maintaining the collection consisted of protecting the library's collection, both in the library and at other safe locations

¹⁴⁸ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1941*, 11.

¹⁴⁹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 10.

¹⁵⁰ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943*.

¹⁵¹ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 4.

¹⁵² Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 12.

¹⁵³ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1946*, 16.

elsewhere against possible air raids. But to what extent was acquisition continued during the war and which new pieces were added to the collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek?

The 1939 annual report states that the Rockefeller Foundation and the American Library Association had expressed their willingness to assist the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in acquiring American books. Because the Rockefeller Foundation considered it important that the Dutch reader would come into contact with American culture through literature, funds were made available for the purchase of books that, in the broadest sense of the word, were related to the American culture. The American Library Association founded an organisation to help with this initiative. Due to the outbreak of the war, this plan was only implemented in the last months of 1939 and the first (and last) shipment of books did not arrive until 1940.¹⁵⁴

According to the inventory of 1939, the library contained a total of 15600 meters of books, which stands for some 590 000 individual volumes. By subtracting the number from the previous year, the library had acquired 10464 new books with a total length of 275 meters. Several works from private collections were also donated to the library this year. A number of valuable works were also acquired for the manuscript department. As in previous years, many of the new acquisitions were already bound, while some of the older works had to be rebound or restored.¹⁵⁵

In 1940 the number of new acquisitions amounted to 10717 volumes with a length of 217 meters. The fact that these figures were so high, even though the country had been occupied in this year, was thanks to a large donation. The number of regular new acquisitions, however, was very disappointing compared to the previous year. This is not surprising, since the supply of books and journals from England and France was discontinued from May onwards. In addition, fewer new books were released onto the market. Therefore, more older works could be purchased from antiquarian bookshops. Thanks to the shipment from the American Library Association and the Rockefeller Foundation, the library received 146 American books in 1940. In that year efforts were also made to have the new acquisitions bound in the library's own bindery. The number of new acquisitions in the manuscript department decreased slightly as well.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1939*, 3-4.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

¹⁵⁶ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1940*, 2-4.

The year 1941 saw a slowing down of acquisitions, compared to the previous year. The purchase and delivery of books from England remained on hold, but it was possible to acquire some books and journals from France. The supply of American books dried up entirely by the end of the year. As a result, the library feared that a huge backlog would develop in the collection, that would have to be made up with extra funding after the war. Also, no journals or bibliographies could be obtained from the countries just mentioned, which prevented the possibilities for taking measures in advance to see which titles had to be supplemented after the war.¹⁵⁷

In 1941 it was also decided to purchase new cutting and punching machines for the bindery, which would make bookbinding tidier and faster. As a result, this year 1117 works were bound in the library's bindery. The number of new acquisitions again decreased compared to the previous years. Only 7068 new books were acquired, with a length of 131 meters. Interestingly, the American Library Association and the Rockefeller Foundation again were able to send a new shipment of American books, which contained 123 books. Because of the lack of loans of new books, the focus remained on acquiring older books. Quite a few rare and/or old Dutch publications could be acquired at various auctions. Also, private individuals continued donating collections and individuals works to the library. The conditions were not favourable for the manuscript department, however. A few manuscripts could be acquired, but the number was again much smaller compared to the previous year.¹⁵⁸

The protection and transportation of precious items from the collection to safe locations outside the library continued to be a major task in terms of collection management in 1942. At the same time, it became increasingly difficult to buy new books. The import of French books was centralised, making antiquarian purchases impossible and limiting the purchase of new books to just a few titles. Ordering books in Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Scandinavian countries became so difficult, that traffic with these countries came to a halt. The purchase of books was therefore limited to Dutch and German publications and antiquarian books from within the Netherlands. The number of auctions also declined, while the prices fetched during these auctions were far removed from the real value of the books. Despite these increasingly difficult circumstances, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek still managed to

¹⁵⁷ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1941*, 4-6.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

collect 5673 new acquisitions with a total length of 97.05 meters. The number of books bound in own bindery decreased to 768. With regard to manuscript acquisitions, the number was similar to that of previous years.¹⁵⁹

In the following year 1943 it became even more difficult to expand the library's collection. Only Dutch and German publications could now be acquired, but with regard to the latter not without difficulty. Nevertheless, the figures for new acquisitions remained almost the same as those of the previous year, with 5670 new books and a total length of 106 meters. This was largely thanks to the acquisition of two larger collections. These collections contained a lot of literature in the fields of sociology, philosophy and history. The number of new acquisitions for the manuscript department even increased slightly compared to 1942.¹⁶⁰

In 1944 parts of the collection were still being transported to bomb shelters in Heemskerk. Acquisition, on the other hand became much more difficult as hardly any new books came out and antiquarian purchases were exceptional. Still, the library managed to purchase at an auction a collection of old children's and school books, which contributed to the total number of 3870 new acquisitions with a length of 68.10 meters. As in the previous year, books were now only bound outside the library due to the lack of staff. However, 1944 was an important year for the manuscript department as a number of letters could be purchased at an auction, including a letter from King William I. Despite the library's efforts to protect the collection against war violence, books were lost due to fighting between the Allies and the Germans in the South and East of the Netherlands, where quite a few items had been sent on loan. Books borrowed by German officials and soldiers were also considered lost.¹⁶¹

Following the liberation of the Netherlands in 1945, the focus of the library was directed more towards preservation of the collection than towards expansion. The mission to keep the books safe during the war had been quite successful, except for the loss of 750 books that were lent to libraries and private individuals in areas where there had been acts of war. It certainly took a great deal of effort to get the supply of new books going again, for which purpose the Boeken Import Bureau (Books Import Agency) was set up at the end of November. All books that came in between May and November had either been purchased during the war by the Government Committee for Scientific Documentation in London or had been given

¹⁵⁹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 5, 7, 11.

¹⁶⁰ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1943*, 4-6, 9-11.

¹⁶¹ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 6-9.

as donations.¹⁶² This committee had been composed by the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences of the Dutch government in London, Gerrit Bolkestein. This committee first met in London on July 15, 1942. The aim of the committee was to collect developments in the field of various branches of the exact and applied sciences in the Anglo-Saxon world. After the war, these books had to be disseminated as quickly as possible to Dutch universities and interested private institutions.¹⁶³ In addition, the Rockefeller Foundation and American Library Association revived their initiative to make American journals and books available. But since no books were purchased from January to about mid-May, the total number of new acquisitions was low, a total of 3295 books with a length of 49 meters.

A category of publications that now no longer was illegal consisted of clandestine journals, newspapers and ephemera, printed by the Dutch resistance and individuals during the war. As the Koninklijke Bibliotheek had not been able to collect these periodicals and booklets itself, it hoped that printers and publishers had kept some copies for libraries. This was almost never the case and only a few separate items were acquired in the years immediately after the war.¹⁶⁴

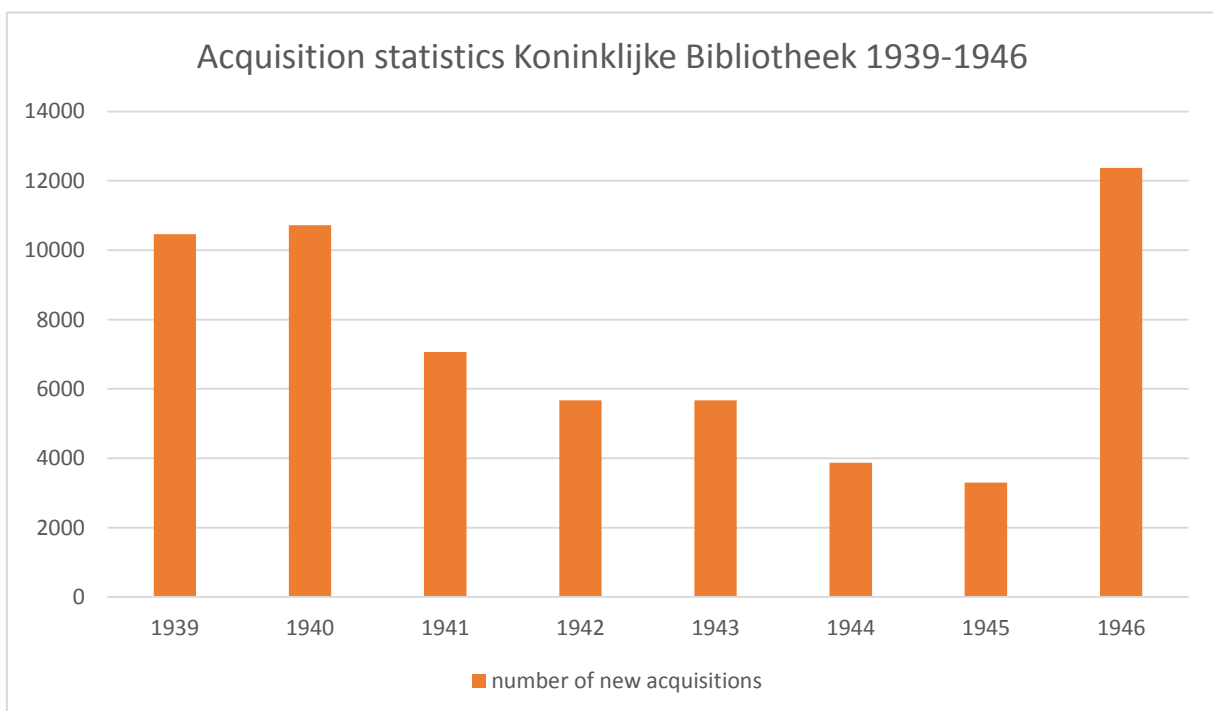


Fig. 12: Graph constructed on the basis of acquisition statistics in the annual reports of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

¹⁶² Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 8-10.

¹⁶³ Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Deel 9 – Londen, eerste helft* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979), 468-469.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

Unlike 1945, 1946 was an important year for the expansion of the collection (fig. 12).¹⁶⁵ For the first time after the war, the library was able to buy foreign books on a large scale again while also receiving many donations from abroad. Such was the volume of new books entering the library that it was difficult to determine any direction in the purchasing policy. 1946 is therefore clearly a transitional year after the war. The 1946 annual report also makes thankful reference to the Help Holland Council, the American Library Association and the American Book Centre for their support in supplementing issues of journals, which were still lacking despite the work of the Government Committee on Scientific Documentation in London. The library also concluded an important agreement with the American Library of Congress, thereby receiving a large number of scientific American books. Due to various strikes in the United States, however, the shipments were delayed and did not arrive until 1947. Because high prices were still being charged for both new and antiquarian books, the library was forced to increase its budget for the purchase of books. In total, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek managed to acquire 12373 new acquisitions with a total length of 261 meters. Of this number, 541 books were (re)bound in the library's own bindery.¹⁶⁶

Ruilbureau

The Ruilbureau (Book Exchange Bureau) of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was established in 1928. As an international exchange office, this department had set itself four goals: 1. The dispatch and distribution of publications of foreign scientific societies and institutions; 2. The exchange of official and government-subsidised editions; 3. Providing mediation between Dutch and foreign scientific and governmental institutions for the establishment of exchange relations; 4. The production of the regularly published bibliography *Nederlandse Overheidsuitgaven* (Dutch Government Publications). Since the Ruilbureau was mainly concerned with exchanging collections with institutions abroad, the war had a destructive impact on its activities.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Graph constructed on the basis of acquisition statistics provided in the annual reports of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1939-1946.

¹⁶⁶ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1946*, 7.

¹⁶⁷ A.J. de Mooy, 'Het ruilbureau', in Leendert Brummel (ed.), *Koninklijke Bibliotheek: Gedenkboek, 1798-1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), 235; P.W. Klein and M.A.V. Klein-Meijer, *De wereld van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1798-1998: van statelijke institutie tot culturele onderneming* (Amsterdam: G.A. van Oorschoot, 1998), 241.

The number of parcels received and sent by the Ruilbureau annually increased in the first ten years after its foundation in 1928. The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 put an end to this. Although the Netherlands was not actively involved in the war in 1939, other countries already were. As the Ruilbureau was dependent on international traffic, shipments abroad were initially put on hold. Not long after, shipments to most countries were resumed on a limited scale. However, there was often a delay in the transports and packages could no longer be shipped with the same regularity as before war. Shipments to and from Poland, Finland, Spain, China and the Soviet Union were completely disabled. Furthermore, the Ruilbureau also was able to publish the tenth volume of the annual bibliography *Nederlandse overheidsuitgaven*.¹⁶⁸

In 1940, parcels shipped to the Soviet Union and Poland were returned, as there was no prospect of a resumption of the exchange with these countries. The shipment of parcels with most other countries still functioned. This ended on May 10. The crates intended for the United States, Australia and South Africa came back intact from Rotterdam, as there were no ships available. The exchange with Germany resumed in July and in October packages could again be sent to (and received from) Italy, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Denmark. Nevertheless, the war had a major impact on the decline in sending and receiving parcels to and from abroad.¹⁶⁹

In March 1941, Belgium and Finland were added to the list of countries with which exchange could take place, as can be seen in the slight increase in the figures compared to the previous year. This year also saw the publication of volume 11 of the annual bibliography *Nederlandse overheidsuitgaven*, which hadn't been possible the year before.¹⁷⁰ In 1942, the exchange was extremely limited; the list of countries with which exchange was possible remained unaltered.¹⁷¹ In 1943, the number of packages sent and received decreased even further, although one package was received from Romania, a country with which there had been no exchange in the years before.¹⁷²

In 1944 the situation further deteriorated. In addition, because of the stoppage of long-distance traffic, it was not possible to forward the packages received from countries to their

¹⁶⁸ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1939*, 11-13; De Mooy, 'Het ruilbureau', 236.

¹⁶⁹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1940*, 6.

¹⁷⁰ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1941*, 11-12.

¹⁷¹ Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 10, 12.

¹⁷² Brummel, *Nationale Bibliotheek Verslag 1942*, 8, 12.

final destination.¹⁷³ Since 1945 was a very eventful year, in which the library was closed a lot and the Netherlands was liberated, no packages were sent abroad. However, no fewer than 131 boxes were received from other countries, two from Belgium, one from France and no less than 128 from the United States. By contrast, in 1944 only 22 boxes were received from abroad, most of which came from Germany. All United States government publications arrived with this shipment, making up the gap of five and a half years.¹⁷⁴

In 1946, the Ruilbureau still noticed the impact that the war had had on the exchange traffic. At the beginning of the year packages were sent abroad again, finally allowing the backlog of the war to be dealt with. Although the exchange with most countries had recovered to the pre-war situation, there was still no regularity. The Holland America Line and Van Nievelt Goudriaan and Co. were willing to resume facilities for shipping parcels to North- and South-America, just as they had done before the war. However, the exchange was not yet possible with Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, China and Japan, while exchange traffic with South Africa, Australia and New Zealand had not yet recovered, as it ran through the High Commissioners in London. In addition, the Dutch Ministry of Overseas Territories was unable to provide mediation for dispatch to the Dutch East Indies. Nevertheless, a total of no less than 178 boxes and 38 individual packages were sent abroad and 131 boxes and 21 individual packages were received.¹⁷⁵ The first consignment to the East Indies was sent in March 1947, through the Ministry of Overseas Territories. Exchange with Poland and China was resumed in the same year. Packages to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were now sent directly, and no longer via London. Exchange traffic with Germany, Russia and Japan, however, was still impossible. So even two years after the war, the Ruilbureau was still troubled by the war, although the number of packages sent and received had increased enormously compared to the previous years.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1944*, 10.

¹⁷⁴ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1945*, 12-13.

¹⁷⁵ Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1946*, 17-18, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Leendert Brummel, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Verslag 1947* (The Hague: Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf, 1948), 16-18, 23.

Conclusion

This research aimed to study the effects of the Second World War on the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. First of all, it has become apparent that in the historiography of the Second World War and of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek itself, little attention is paid to the impact of the war on libraries, with the exception of those which had been completely destroyed or robbed of their treasures. Regarding the consequences of the war on the cultural policy in the occupied Netherlands, it is clear that the Nazis limited libraries in making their collections available to the public. In the wake of the strong German cultural and ideological propaganda, book censorship was implemented in the Netherlands, which affected the collections of libraries, and therefore the collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Nonetheless, the library did not have to destroy or hand over its collection of banned books to the occupier. Although the library did experience the consequences of book censorship, the collection of banned books was unharmed and could be used again after the war. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek was also fortunate that it did not become victim of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg taskforce. On the other hand, a number of books were lost that had been lent to private individuals and German institutions and have never returned.

Another effect of the war was that measures were taken by the government and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek to protect the cultural heritage against war violence. After comparing the implemented measures of the library with the provided guidelines of the government, it can be concluded that the library followed many of the government's guidelines for the security of the building and its collection in the event of an air raid. However, little is still known about the control and conservation practices in the shelters. Overall, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, both the building and the collection, did not suffer great damages during the war, but the precautions to protect the collection were very time consuming.

It has also become clear that the war had a major impact on the library's activities and services. First of all, as demonstrated by the statistics, the loans of books increased during the first years of the war, despite all the uncertainties of that period. From 1942 onwards, however, the use of the library and its collection declined steadily, due to the many closings of the library and the lack of sufficient library staff. The war also had an effect on the library staff. Surprisingly, only one library employee was fired because of her Jewish background,

which appears to indicate that there were no other Jewish employees at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. During the war there was, on the other hand, a constant shortage of personnel, resulting from, amongst other causes, the mobilisation and demobilisation of men at the beginning of the war, the Arbeitseinsatz and raids towards the end of the war, and the many sick leaves of staff. By the end of the war, many employees were also no longer able to come to work due to the disruption of public transport and a lack of bicycles. The substantial shortages of staff also affected the opening hours of the library and the availability of services. The longer the war lasted, the organisation of events such as exhibitions was also reduced or even stopped at all. Organising these exhibitions was clearly not a priority.

An activity of greater concern was collection management. Due to the war, the purchase of books from abroad became increasingly difficult or even impossible. Also, hardly any new books were published during the war, while book prices at auctions and antiquarian bookshops increased dramatically. The acquisition of new books for the library's collection was therefore very difficult. Nevertheless, the library managed to expand the collection on a small scale in every year of the war, often through the purchase or donation of larger collections. Finally, the activities of the Ruilbureau were also affected by the war. As with collection management, the book exchange with foreign countries was very difficult during the war. Interestingly, the consequences of the disruption of activities and services were felt for a considerable time after the liberation in May 1945.

All in all, this research has made it clear that even if a library is not destroyed or robbed of its collection, war can have major impact on a library. For future research it would be interesting to look further into the reading behaviour in wartime, because of the increase in the use of libraries in the early years of the war. Historian Paul Schneiders mentions in his research on the history of public reading rooms in the Netherlands that during the war the most popular book categories were novels, astronomy books, national history and practical books, such as books about growing crops or keeping bees. There would also have been a great demand for cookbooks in the occupied part of the Netherlands during the famine in 1944-1945.¹⁷⁷ It would be interesting for future research to see which book categories in the

¹⁷⁷ Paul Schneiders, *Lezen voor iedereen. Geschiedenis van de openbare bibliotheek in Nederland* (The Hague: Nederlands Bibliotheek en Lektuur Centrum, 1990), 161.

Koninklijke Bibliotheek were read and studied more often during the war and whether this corresponds to the categories mentioned by Schneiders.

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