



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 86, Folder 19, NBC "Holocaust" - Netherlands, 1979.



THE NETHERLANDS--UNEASY MEMORIES

A Gallup Poll on the viewing of Holocaust found that over half of all the Dutch people ~~xxxxxx~~ 12 years ^{of age} and older watched at least one installment. But they watched it uneasily, for reverberations of that era are still alive in Dutch politics, and ~~the~~ several recent incidents involving former ^{Dutch} Nazi collaborators in ~~Holland~~ combined with the airing of Holocaust to remind the Dutch that they had not all resisted the Nazis extermination efforts against Dutch Jews.

The program was shown by the TROS Broadcasting organization in late April, 1979, after the Protestant NCRV broadcasting system turned the series down. NCRV, which had the first claim to the series, stated that it considered the series of limited commercial potential because of what it thought to be ~~axsuperfixx~~ the imitative quality of the misery depicted; however, NCRV also stated that it felt the show would be traumatic for many people. (12-15)

The series attracted its largest audience among Dutch teenagers, ^{which was followed by a radio broadcast of opposite timing} according to the Gallup poll, ^{But while} its smallest ^{audience was among} among those 55 years old and older, ~~But~~ ^{the show} those between 20 and 24 years of age also provided a small portion of the show's audience.

The series met with much unfavorable response: the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) reported that it "drew anti-semitic comments" from viewers ^{and not some critics.} who also complained ^{then changed it by saying} that it paid attention only to the persecution of Jews, while ignoring ^{or that of the Japanese who lived in Hiroshima,} that suffered by gypsies and other minorities, / Others ~~xxxxxx~~ criticized Jews for not fighting back,

The JTA correspondent found that some viewers resented the preempting of other favorite programs, and that others feared it would spur an increase in anti-semitism, rather than decrease such feelings. Still other viewers reported that the series disturbed them emotionally. Some 500 viewers called the television

That of the Vietnamese who were the America forgot, and the shade of the US Tokyo who suffered with them

station about the series, and most expressed horror at what they had seen.

TROS Broadcasting had to hire armed guards to protect itself against bomb threats while the opening segment was being broadcast on April 23rd, and the station hired a team of special workers to help viewers who were disturbed by the show.

Not only did TROS receive bomb threats, but so, too, did the central Dutch television organization, NOS. No bombs were found at either ~~fix~~ organization's studios and the program went on the air as scheduled ~~z~~ at 11:00 p.m.

It was the recent political events that formed the background to the program's broadcast, however, that provide the greatest understanding of the Dutch reaction to the series. "Many Dutch people are uncomfortable ~~w~~ about the Second World War and its legacy," stated the American ~~Week~~ ~~Examiner~~ Examiner-Jewish Week. While those Dutch who did resist the Nazis feel that their efforts have not been appreciated, their small numbers and relative ineffectiveness have left the nation ill at ease about its own history during that era.

Thus, reported that newspaper, "it is becoming increasingly clear to large sections of the public, and particularly younger members, that the role of the Dutch majority during the Nazi occupation was not as bright as has been depicted abroad, and as many people like to suggest at home."

The Dutch Jewish population in 1910 was 140,000; today it is about 30,000. The Dutch Jewish community then suffered losses proportionately among the highest in Europe.

Holocaust was aired in a context which had already made for some national soul searching, and perhaps it is this context which made the show a focal point for already stirred feelings of ~~shame~~ shame, and anger.

In November, 1976, the Menten case hit the Dutch headlines. This ... involved

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a millionaire art collector, Pieter Menten, 79, who was sentenced by an Amsterdam court in December 1977 to 15 years on a charge of complicity with the Nazis in the killing of 28 Polish Jews in ~~Rok~~ Podhoroce in 1941. In May, 1978, the Supreme Court quashed the conviction, calling for an inquiry into his claim that he had been promised immunity from future prosecutions in 1952 by the former Justice Minister, L.A. Donker. (Menten had served an eight month sentence in 1949 in Holland for helping Nazi forces in Poland as an interpreter.)

At Menten's ^{re}trial at The Hague in December, the court accepted his contention of immunity and freed him, ~~and~~ the prosecutor had appealed the case to the Supreme Court, *when the TV show was aired.*

In addition, soon after this case made headlines, it was revealed in ~~the local press~~ that ~~three~~ three Dutch war criminals, Wilhelm Bos, Siert Bruins and Jan ~~v~~ Hayon Klimp, sentenced by Dutch courts after the war's end, were living in West Germany after having escaped from Holland.

Added to this was the resignation ~~xxx~~ in November 1979 of William Aantjes, the Parliamentary leader of the Christian Democratic Party after disclosures of his wartime links with the Nazi SS. Aantjes, who had ~~been prominent in defending~~ Jewish interests after the war, claimed ~~that~~ "I made mistakes in the war, but I did not do anything wrong."

Then, in March, 1979, the Dutch Institute for War Documentation accused Dr. Joseph Luns, the secretary general of NATO and a former Dutch Foreign Minister, of having been a member of the Dutch Nazi Party fr-m 1933 to 1936, a charge which Luns denied.

Newspaper reporters also claimed that a physician ~~in southern Holland~~ Jan Koldijk, who had been accused of war crimes, was practising his profession in southern Holland, near the German W and Belgian borders.

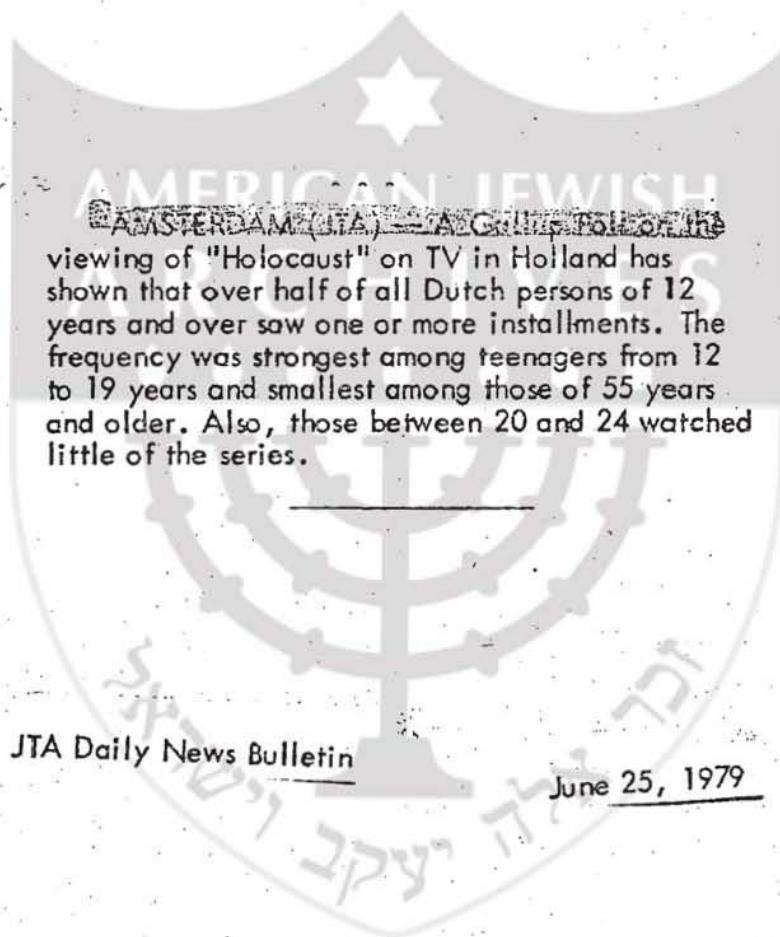
All this led the Examiner-Week to conclude that "the trauma of the Holocaust cannot be forgotten" in Holland.

The airing of Holocaust did not help its Dutch viewers to forget, and, while many were shocked, at once again, at what it told of the Nazi era, others were angered at the stirring of memories the show represented.



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Committee~~AMSTERDAM (JTA) - A.G. GILLES POL OF THE~~

viewing of "Holocaust" on TV in Holland has shown that over half of all Dutch persons of 12 years and over saw one or more installments. The frequency was strongest among teenagers from 12 to 19 years and smallest among those of 55 years and older. Also, those between 20 and 24 watched little of the series.

JTA Daily News Bulletin

June 25, 1979

HOLLAND

J. Chronicle reports:

"... it is becoming increasingly clear to large sections of the public, particularly to its younger members, that the role of the majority of the Dutch during the Nazi occupation was not as bright as has been depicted abroad and as many people ~~would~~ like to suggest at home."

The Dutch Jewish community suffered proportionately high losses, going from 140,000 in 1940 to 30,000 now.

"Several factors have contributed to the public soul searching" that occurred before the first show.

Public concern over the Menten case; discovery of 3 Dutch criminals under Dutch court death penalties, alive in W. Germany; the resignation last year of William Aantjes, the parliamentary leader of the Christian Democratic Party, after disclosure that he had links with the Nazi SS.

"Dutch schools have received instructions about the screening of H and other publicity material is being distributed."

- ① The fact that they knew that, when they turned down, the series would be aired in any case, because nearly all the broadcasting associations had claimed the series, makes it clear that the attitude of the NCRV is ^{only} not the expression of ~~a~~ high ethical standards. I think that also fear for the reactions of members played a role. There is a hard struggle between the associations in Holland.
- ② The Radio-call in registers some 1.400 reactions. The Emotional-Social aid Telephone-service also about 3.400 calls. Both in 4 days.
- ③ There were some antisemitic reactions.
By the way: every evening that a part of the series was aired, there was before or thereafter a documentary program of 50 min. in which additional information was given, about other groups of victims and about the Dutch situation, during and after the war, talks with survivors (also gypsies, a.s.o.). One week before there was an introductory program of 50 min. + the Saturday after.
- ④ The team of "telephoners" was not hired by TROR, they volunteered, and worked under the guidance of the Jewish Social Association. In some about 100 telephoners received in 4 groups 3.400 calls. Also not armed guards were hired, but the local police patrolled very intensively.

It seems to me a little incorrect to suggest a connection between the airing of the series and what is called "the background to the showing of the Holocaust". The interaction between both is less than suggested.

What not is mention is the enormous activity in the field of information. 1.000.000 copies of a Holocaust viewing guide by Marina Harenberg and Willem Zuidema found their way. The guide was inspired by the American Guide. translated from English

- 30.000 copies of a documentation packet (2 books: Holocaust-Atlas + Persecutions of Jews in Holland) by Judith Belinfante and Edward van Voolen
- 30.000 copies of a brochure "Holocaust the Nazi Murder Machine" by Willem Zuidema
- 75.000 informative guide for teachers by Ido Ahran

Special brochures for priests, pastors theologians by Willem Zuidema (3000)

Special edition of a church review - 130.000 copies

Special editions of journals like Algemeen Dagblad (first class information)

The impact of this flow of information will be researched in a big the third phase of a Gallup Poll about end of October.

The production of informative material was coordinated by a coordination group in which many institutions and organisations cooperate:

Jewish historical Museum

Anne Frank Foundation

General Pedagogical Study center

2 Jewish communities (orthodox and progressive)

7 churches, working together in ICI (Interchurch Contact Israel)

(+ 2 representatives of TROS - since Dec. 1978 - whereas the group was formed in Sept. 1978.)

(Chairman was Willem Zuidema)