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Vergelijking van Jodenvervolging in Frankrijk, België en Nederland, 1940-1945 : overeenkomsten, verschillen, oorzaken

Griffioen, J.W.; Zeller, R.

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SUMMARY

Comparing the Persecution of the Jews in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, 1940-1945: Similarities, Differences, Causes

The central aim of this study is to compare the persecution and deportation of the Jews in France, Belgium and the Netherlands in the Second World War. The focus is on the question: What accounted for the striking differences in the Jewish victimization rates in these three Western European parliamentary democracies with a liberal tradition? Of the estimated 320,000 Jews in France in 1940, about 80,000 (25%) did not survive, of the approximately 66,000 Jews in Belgium, about 25,000 (40%) were deported and killed, and of the 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands, approximately 104,000 (75%) fell victim to the persecution.

The central question formulated at the beginning of Chapter 1 is followed by a survey of the literature on the persecution of the Jews in each of the three countries. Various explanations given in the publications of the national differences in victimization in Western Europe are summarized and discussed. Lastly, this chapter describes the comparative method applied in this study.

In France and Belgium, the historical research on the Nazi occupation in the Second World War in general and the persecution of the Jews in particular evolved separately for decades. Greater integration was not attained until the late 1980s. In the Netherlands, the research was integrated from 1945 onward. The reasons for the prolonged difference were that unlike Belgium and France, the Netherlands had no recent experience of occupation before 1940, the impact of the persecution and destruction were the severest on Dutch Jewry, and the great majority of the Dutch Jewish victims had been highly acculturated and belonged to a community with full civic equality for generations, whereas in Belgium and France most of the Jewish victims were immigrants and refugees. In all three countries, the literature had strongly political and moral elements, first accentuating the Resistance in the 1950s, and then shifting the emphasis to collaboration in the late 1960s. In France, this meant broader research on the persecution of the Jews only became feasible after greater insight was attained into the nature of the Vichy regime (Michel, Jäckel, Paxton). Innovative studies on the persecution of the Jews were published in the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s (Presser, De Jong), but this was not the case in France and Belgium until the 1980s (Marrus & Paxton and Klarsfeld in France, Steinberg in Belgium). In France and Belgium, the war crime trials played an important role in this connection. Since the 1980s, the historical research and publications in all three countries have been increasingly characterized by a more matter-of-fact, analytical approach (e.g. Azéma & Bédarida in France, Van Doorslaer in Belgium, Blom and Hirschfeld in the Netherlands). Since then, any number of detailed and local studies have been published on the persecution of the Jews (e.g. Peschanski and Baruch in France, Saerens in Belgium, Meershoek in the Netherlands).

The literature on the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Europe contains few if any balanced and explicitly comparative studies. With the exception of a quantitative sociological comparison at the end of the 1970s (Fein), which elicited fundamental criticism, the literature only cites disparate, brief and to some extent clearly contradictory reasons for the national differences in victimization.

Using the comparative causal mode of explanation as is summarized and analysed by sociologist and philosopher of history Lorenz, this study assesses and explains the similarities and differences, carefully balancing or ruling out competing causal explanations. The comparative causal explanation in this study is mainly of a synchronistic nature. On the basis of explicit chronology and periodization, and three foci for analysis – the occupiers, national factors, and the Jewish populations – thirty-five comparison factors are distinguished. In the final comparative analysis (Chapter 5), their relevance or causal weight is specified in relation to the emergence of national differences in the numbers and percentages of victims.

Chapter 2 addresses the establishment of the Nazi occupation regimes, the position of the local authorities, and the Jewish populations in the three countries before and at the beginning of the occupation. There is also a section on the general evolution of Nazi Germany's anti-Jewish policy on the 'Final Solution' between 1939 and 1942, when the primary initiative and ideological driving force for the deportations and genocide came from the wielders of power in Berlin. Since it is an established fact that the French government in Vichy had already prepared its first anti-Jewish legislation, applicable throughout France, before the first German ordinances were issued, special attention is also devoted to the background, establishment and nature of the Vichy regime and the history of French anti-Semitism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The conquest of territory in Western Europe in April – June 1940 generated two factors to be taken into consideration by the decision-makers in Berlin. Firstly, Germany did not have adequate personnel or financial resources to administer all the territories directly. To preserve law and order and see to the smooth integration of the national economies into the German war effort, supervisory administrations were established. As much as possible, they left day-to-day matters to the local bureaucracy. Secondly, hundreds of thousands of Jews had come under German control as a result of the new conquests, thus expanding *the Jewish question*. Until then, Germany had pursued a policy of forced Jewish emigration. Wartime conditions, however, hampered international shipping and most countries closed their borders to Jewish refugees. A policy of terror and concentration of Jews in ghettos, as in occupied Poland, was not in keeping with the general occupation conception for Western Europe, since it would jeopardize the intended cooperation with the local authorities.

The German army, the Nazi Party and the SS and police apparatus vied for maximum influence in the occupation regimes as part of the general rivalry for power. In contrast to Belgium and the Netherlands, a large part of France remained unoccupied, and that country continued to exist as a state, maintaining a government with its seat in Vichy. Moreover, since the French and Belgian coast was to be the site of the intended attack on Britain, occupied France and Belgium were put under military administration. In the Netherlands though, the German armed forces did not prevail in the power struggle; here an SS and Nazi Party-dominated civilian occupation administration was installed, similar to the one installed in Norway a month earlier. Unlike France, the Netherlands and Norway were both considered *Germanic* regions. As a direct consequence of the civilian occupation regime in the Netherlands and of Hitler's Nazification order, leading figures were appointed with a strong ideological background in an effort towards the gradual self-Nazification of the Dutch.

The French Cabinet was headed by Prime Minister Pétain, who had been appointed shortly before the armistice of June 22, 1940. With the consent of a majority in Parliament, it abolished the democratic system. Pétain became head of state (*Chef de l'État*) and had sweeping powers to rule the country. With the exception of Laval, his government in Vichy barely included any of the politicians of the previous Third Republic. State power mainly passed into the hands of former top civil servants, who now became Cabinet Ministers. In practice, this heralded the beginning of a conservative authoritarian regime that was bent on maximum autonomy for France in a German-dominated Europe and opted for a *politique de collaboration* with the occupying force. The new government launched a nationalistic, corporatist and xenophobic domestic program: the *Révolution nationale*. Family values, patriotism and traditional Christian principles were to be reinforced by legislation, education, the church authorities, the civil service and the local notables. French society would no longer have room for certain groups: Freemasons, Communists, other political dissidents, most foreigners and last but not least, Jews.

Unlike France, in the Netherlands and Belgium the Cabinet Ministers went into exile when the Germans invaded in May 1940. The Secretaries General of the Cabinet Ministries received orders to stay in office and cooperate with the occupying authorities. The two countries were cut off from the world overseas and to keep the economy running, both of them depended

on Germany. Trade and industry and numerous social organizations adapted to the new circumstances in the summer of 1940. German rule seemed permanent.

The Jews did not have solid communities with a majority consensus on their Jewish identity in any of the three countries. There were numerous economic, social, cultural and religious differences and internal conflicts. As a consequence of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century processes of economic and cultural modernization and secularization, on the eve of the German occupation, the Jewish populations were characterized by diversity and dissension. Most of the Jews in the Netherlands had been emancipated for generations, acculturated and partly assimilated, though this was not at all the case in Belgium, where about 90% of the Jews were immigrants from Eastern Europe and recent refugees from Germany. France was in between in this respect, and as in the Netherlands, there was a large group of integrated, acculturated Jews, though there was also a group of about equal size of refugees and immigrants without French citizenship.

The escape and emigration options during and shortly after the Nazi invasion in 1940 can account for a maximum of 5.5% and 9% respectively of the total survival rates of 75% of the Jews in France and 60% in Belgium. Since the difference between the two countries is no more than 3.5%, this factor can only explain less than a quarter of the total difference of 15% in the survival rates. In the Netherlands, the escape and emigration options during the Nazi invasion were less than a 0.5%.

The first section of Chapter 3 addresses the Nazi anti-Jewish policies in the three countries from the summer of 1940 to the summer of 1942, in particular the internal power relations in the occupation regimes and their effects on the policies. These were important determinants for how the occupiers organized the deportations at a later stage.

France and Belgium on the one hand and the Netherlands on the other had different types of occupation administration, military and civilian respectively, but in the fall of 1940 the occupiers in all three countries cautiously and gradually launched their anti-Jewish policy in a predominantly orderly, administrative fashion. This was in keeping with the conception of supervisory occupation administrations. In addition, the Vichy government in France had started its own policy against the Jews that the German authorities in the occupied zone could partly rely on. In 1941, the German Security Police in all three countries made an effort to centralize the anti-Jewish policies via new institutions with either indirect German influence (CGQJ in France, the failed proposal for a similar general commissariat in Belgium) or direct SS control (*Zentralstelle* in the Netherlands). These efforts were only partially successful if at all. Rather than facilitating the German objectives, the CGQJ soon created obstacles. This was clear during the efforts of the Security Police to further intern the Jews in the occupied zone and establish one mandatory Jewish organization. Both efforts were preceded by tardy negotiations and the ultimate results signified a lack of SS control over the Jews in France as compared with the Netherlands.

After the German attack on Russia in June 1941, the occupation policy in all three countries became more demanding, especially the anti-Jewish policy. New and more radical measures against the Jews started to generate growing passive resistance among national and local authorities – such as sluggish or inadequate implementation of certain decrees – and there was an increasing tendency on the part of the Nazis to abandon the use of long hierarchic lines in Jewish matters. To be more efficient, the Nazi authorities preferred or felt compelled to direct other anti-Jewish measures themselves on a *local* level. Especially the SS strived for the direct use of imposed Jewish organizations such as the Amsterdam Jewish Council or, as in Belgium and France, exerted strong pressure on the military administration and national authorities to impose mandatory organizations of this kind on the Jews. This led to the AJB in Belgium and the UGIF in France, both created in November 1941. However, unlike the case in the Netherlands, where the Amsterdam Jewish Council was subordinated and responsible solely to the *local* German authorities, in Belgium and France at first similar imposed organizations were of less importance and partly (AJB) or entirely (UGIF) subordinated to the *national* authorities.

In France, the efforts of the German Security Police to get more of a grip on the anti-Jewish policies converged with a broader struggle by the SS to gain control over the police at the expense of the military administration. In the spring of 1942, this struggle was concluded in favor of the SS with the nomination of a Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) in Paris. But the French authorities largely maintained control over the Jews, including those in the occupied zone. In Belgium, the military administration wanted to prevent the Security Police from pursuing an independent Jewish policy. In the Netherlands, where all the police fell under the HSSPF from the start, disputes were not so much about the contents and objectives of the anti-Jewish policy itself, but about competencies. Following the meeting at Wannsee near Berlin in January 1942, the German Security Police in France, Belgium and the Netherlands had control over organizing the impending systematic deportations, largely bypassing the occupation administrations.

The second section of Chapter 3 deals with the local authorities' role in the anti-Jewish policy, the responses in society and the attitudes of the non-Jewish population. The anti-Semitism of the French state (*antisémitisme d'État*) was based on a policy of unification through exclusion. The exclusion was of a mainly legal nature and aimed at the complete abolition of the emancipation of 1791. In this respect, no clear distinction was drawn between Jews with and without French citizenship, as became evident in the Jewish laws passed in 1940 and June 1941. In addition, French government policy was especially directed against Jewish foreigners; this was a continuation and expansion of the French refugee policy of the late 1930s. Foreigners were interned in camps under very poor conditions, awaiting emigration, deportation or repatriation. On the basis of the German decree of late September 1940, the French authorities carried out a registration of the Jews in the occupied zone, counting 165,000 Jews, about 90% of whom lived in the Paris region. In December 1940, Pétain removed Laval from office and in early 1941, he was replaced by Admiral Darlan. From the fall of 1940 onward, the French government made efforts to obviate the German decrees removing Jews from the economy (Aryanization) by issuing its own laws and measures. A law passed in early June 1941 summoned all the Jews in the unoccupied zone to report for registration. This resulted in a total figure of 140,000 including the internees in the camps, to which the French authorities added an estimated 15,000 unregistered children and evaders. Though characterized by rivalry, the French and German policies on the Jews were also often complementary. After the German attack on Russia in June 1941 and the frequent attacks by Communist and other Resistance groups on German servicemen and buildings in occupied France, increasing legislative and police intervention by the Nazi administration became an ever growing serious problem for the French authorities. Vichy reacted by passing new repressive laws and creating special ideologically imbued police services. Pétain decided to dismiss Darlan in April 1942 and call back Laval as Prime Minister, mainly because until then, the general collaboration policy had cost France too many concessions and yielded nothing. Laval went even further towards total collaboration in an effort to make France's economy, administration and police indispensable to the Germans and compel them to make substantial concessions regarding occupation costs, executive powers in the occupied zone, the demarcation line and the return of French prisoners-of-war.

The central focus of the French-German negotiations in May – July 1942 was on the French sovereignty in the occupied zone, French police competence there, mandatory labor of Frenchmen in Germany and deportation of the Jews. The outcome of the negotiations on a high political and police level was to prove crucial at the start of the large-scale deportations.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, the Nazis actively incorporated the state bureaucracy into the preparations for the anti-Jewish decrees and measures. At first, the anti-Jewish policy provoked objections on the part of the highest civil servants, the Secretaries General. In both countries, they cited the fact that the Constitution clearly prohibited racial or religious discrimination. In Belgium, the German military administration did not press them any further. Instead they issued and enforced the decrees themselves or ordered lower-rank Belgian state agencies to cooperate. The Belgian civil service followed the guideline that it was forced to implement the German decrees but would not take any steps to ensure their effectiveness.

According to this line of reasoning, Belgian civil servants were *undergoing* occupation policy rather than actively *taking part* in it. Thus the Belgian administrative apparatus moved towards submissive but indolent cooperation. In the Netherlands, after Nazi pressure and the deletion of the pertinent articles from the Dutch Constitution via a decree issued by the *Reich* Commissioner, the Dutch Secretaries General acquiesced and began to cooperate. The registration of the Jews was carried out by the local authorities in both countries, but less strictly and only on a local level at first in Belgium. In the Netherlands, where the civil service processed the data centrally, everyone with as much as one Jewish grandparent had to register. This brought the total figure up to 160,000 instead of 140,000. In Belgium, the registration figure was 42,000 at first and the German authorities estimated the number of unregistered children up to the age of 15 at another 10,000. After new registrations in 1941 and early 1942, actively supported by a Belgian anti-Semitic group, the Nazi police obtained the personal data of more than 56,000 Jews in Belgium.

If we compare the role and reactions of the local authorities in regard to the occupation policy in general and the Jews in particular, we conclude that by the spring and early summer of 1942, on the eve of the deportations, there had been a process of increasing *dissociation* in Belgium and the Netherlands in regard to the anti-Jewish policy: the Jews were gradually transferred entirely out of the control of the Dutch and Belgian authorities. With the exception of the Dutch work camps for Jewish men, the involvement of the national authorities in the anti-Jewish policy had decreased in the Netherlands and the function of the Amsterdam Jewish Council had increased. By the early summer of 1942, the only exception to the disconnection in Belgium were the AJB directors and the small group of Jews with Belgian citizenship. Instead of a disconnection with regard to decision-making on anti-Jewish policies between the German and local authorities on the national level as in the Netherlands and Belgium, in France there was a continuing interaction on the national level between the German and local authorities in this connection. These national differences were to have crucial consequences at the time of the large-scale deportations.

Based on our comparison of the three societies' responses in 1940 – 1942, we can conclude that the protests against the anti-Jewish policy, at first in the fall of 1940 and then culminating in the February Strike in 1941, were the most vehement in the Netherlands. In France and Belgium, indifference and passivity dominated. However, the protests and strike in the Netherlands did not in any way mitigate or delay the implementation of the anti-Jewish policy there. Due to the rapidly deteriorating economic situation and food shortages in France and Belgium in 1940 – 1942, which were far worse than in the Netherlands, and because of their prior experience with occupation in the First World War, underground and resistance organizations emerged earlier on the national level there than in the Netherlands.

At the end of 1940 or early in 1941, the Jews themselves in all three countries created new organizations or committees to better serve their interests in the face of the occupation and persecution. These organizations were continued in an adapted form as mandatory organizations from the fall of 1941 onward, which resulted in the AJB in Belgium and the UGIF-Nord in occupied France. They did however retain a certain degree of independence. In the Netherlands, the committee created by the Jews at the end of 1940 was effectively ignored by the occupier, marginalized and ultimately dissolved in the fall of 1941. Instead, in February 1941, the occupier ordered the formation of a Jewish council (*Judenrat*) in Amsterdam that was to be directly subordinate and responsible to the Nazi civilian and police authorities in the city. Later, the council developed into a country-wide, highly bureaucratic organization that the Nazi decrees and measures made the Jews increasingly dependent upon. Nazi intimidation and allusions to Mauthausen concentration camp effectively made many Jews comply with the regulations. Young Jewish men had been arrested at random in February, June and September 1941 and deported to this camp, and hundreds of death notices had come from there.

On the eve of the deportations, there were clear differences in the positions of the various Jewish organizations and consequently in the positions of the Jews in the three countries. Due to the continuous involvement of the German and French authorities and agencies in the anti-

Jewish policy and the preparations for the deportations, the UGIF-N was only enlisted to a limited extent and its role remained confined to supplying necessities to the interned Jews about to be deported. The SS thus had much less of a grip on the deportation of the Jews in France than in Belgium and even more in the Netherlands, where the Jewish Council had been used in the preparation and implementation of the regulations at a relatively early stage. In Belgium, the AJB was in between in this respect because it was mainly subordinate to the military administration instead of the local authorities as in France, or the German civilian and police authorities on the local level as in the Netherlands. It was not until shortly before the deportation began that the SS gained more direct influence over the AJB. As a result, the AJB could be enlisted in the administrative preparation of the first deportations.

The first section of Chapter 4 describes and analyses how the deportations were organized and carried out by the Nazis in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. We investigate and compare the following six aspects of the Nazi efforts: planning the deportation numbers, transport (availability of trains), size of available police forces, capacity of transit camps, freedom of action of the German agencies directly involved, and the methods used by them in seizing the Jews for deportation. How did these factors influence the differences in the percentages of Jews deported from the three countries? The second section of Chapter 4 addresses the role of the national authorities and local police in the process, the societies' responses and the hiding and escape options in the three countries. The last section examines the role and responses of the Jewish organizations and the Jewish population confronted with mass arrests and transport to the so-called *compulsory work camps in Germany under police supervision*.

In comparing the occupiers in France, Belgium and the Netherlands at the time of the deportations, ultimately the differences in the type of occupation administration – military versus civilian – were not of decisive importance. Although the military administration in France did initiate the first deportations of the Jews, with the introduction of the HSSPF in France in the spring of 1942 the SS acquired full control over Jewish as well as police matters. Unlike the case in Belgium and the Netherlands, however, a conflict of interests soon developed in France *within* the German Security Police, resulting in a weaker position of its anti-Jewish section. This was clearly demonstrated when the French special anti-Jewish police were disbanded. According to the new German-French police agreement of July 2, 1942, the Vichy government now only allowed its police to arrest Jews without French citizenship for deportation. The course of the deportations in the three countries shows that logistic aspects such as the transport capacity and the capacity of the transit camps were not crucial explanatory factors for the lower percentage of Jewish victims in France. Variations in the relative freedom of action of the anti-Jewish sections of the German Security Police in each of the countries proved to be a more important factor. It is striking that the German Security Police's anti-Jewish section in France was curtailed by its own SS superiors. This was directly related to considerations of the Vichy government since, influenced by church protests and American pressure, starting in September 1942 it no longer permitted the French police to arrest Jews on the same scale as in July and August of that year. To maintain law and order and in view of France's important economic contribution to the German war effort, the SS police chiefs nonetheless gave priority to continued general cooperation with the Vichy regime, and as a result the deportations were interrupted in October 1942 and from late March to June 1943. Unlike the case in France, in the Netherlands the anti-Jewish policy as part of the decision-making process became more and more of an *exclusively* German matter in 1941, implemented in part via the Amsterdam Jewish Council. Though they refused to share responsibility for the deportations, by March 1942 most top Dutch civil servants had resigned themselves to the HSSPF order removing the Jews from their authority. The German authorities in charge of the persecution now had much more leeway, which enabled them to effectively organize the deportations. In comparison with the situation in the Netherlands, the German SS agencies in Belgium in charge of the deportations were only given sufficient freedom of action shortly before the actual departure of the first trains, and thus had little time for extensive planning and preparations. In addition, they had no police force at their direct

command that could be used at all times, as in the Netherlands, nor could the regular local police be systematically employed for mass roundups as was the case at first in France. As regards German and Belgian police competencies as well as the AJB, the German Security Police in Belgium had no choice but to cooperate closely with the military administration and its agencies.

As regards the precise role of the regular local police, the research results can be summarized as follows. Of the nearly 76,000 Jews deported from France, a proven minimum of about 46,000 (or 61%) were seized exclusively or mainly by the regular French police (Paris police prefecture, municipal police, *gendarmarie* etc.). About 30,000 deportees (or 39%) were seized by the German Security Police, the German Military Police, special squads under the German Security Police that included miscellaneous French forces – members of radical collaborationist groupings, the paramilitary *Milice* (French Militia) or other pro-Nazi elements – or were turned in by individual denouncers. As to the more than 25,000 Jews transported from Belgium to the Nazi death camps, the regular Belgian authorities and regular police were directly involved with at most about 4,300 (17%), mostly from the Antwerp area. So the large majority of Jewish deportees in Belgium fell into Nazi hands in a variety of other ways, i.e. by written call-up orders at the beginning, mass roundups by the German Military Police, individual arrests and arrests in small groups either by other German agencies connected with the military administration, such as currency police units and border patrol police, or by pro-Nazi elements and individual Belgians often connected with the German Security Police and SS. Of the approximately 107,000 Jews deported from the Netherlands, at least 26,000 (or 24%) were arrested exclusively or mainly by regular Dutch police (municipal police, *marechaussee*). More than 80,000 were seized by other forces or in another way, i.e. by written call-up orders, the German Order Police, the Security Police, newly trained pro-German police units such as the Amsterdam Police Battalion, members of the Dutch National Socialist party or the Dutch SS who served in the Voluntary Auxiliary Police, other pro-Nazi elements and individual denouncers.

After the deportations began in the summer of 1942, the first forms of organized help for people in hiding in all three countries focused on Jewish children. In France and Belgium, this was partly a continuation of the general relief work for children that had already started in 1941 because of the food shortages. From August and September 1942 onward, the infrastructure that was often already in place, e.g. children's camps, was used for Jewish children. In the Netherlands, where the scarcity was less dramatic, the first steps to help Jewish children were taken by private individuals, mostly students. It was months before a professional rescue network was set up.

In September – October 1942, when compulsory labor in Germany was introduced for French and Belgian men, they were now in a situation similar to the one the Jews had been in for months, facing the threat of deportation. Jews went into hiding side by side with Frenchmen and Belgians who now realized the impact of the persecution. The general indignation about the compulsory labor was advantageous for the persecuted Jews. Networks where non-Jewish and Jewish individuals and organizations worked together gradually became of crucial importance to Jews who had gone into hiding. In France this often went via cooperation with humanitarian aid organizations, and Roman Catholic and Protestant individuals and organizations worked with Jewish underground and relief organizations with funding from American Jewish organizations like the Joint Distribution Committee via Switzerland. In Belgium, hiding and escape options were supported by the leftist general underground organization Independence Front that the Committee for the Defense of Jews – set up by Jews themselves – was an integral part of. Thousands of people were willing to help Jews hide in Belgium, often for payment. Even more people offered indirect support by supplying false identity papers for Jews who went underground or rented rooms and tried to blend into society as inconspicuously as possible.

A similar fright as in France and Belgium in September – October 1942 occurred in the Netherlands at the end of April and early May 1943, with country-wide strikes after the re-imprisonment of all the former Dutch military men was announced. In the following months, when the compulsory male labor in Germany was further stepped up, the hiding options in the Netherlands were increasingly professionalized via agencies like the National Organization for

Aid to People in Hiding and the National Assistance Fund. This also improved the chances for the remaining Jews to go into hiding. However, since the deportations had been going on for more than a year and about 80,000 Jews (75% of the 107,000 deportees) had already been deported, it is clear that unlike the case in France and Belgium, until then the hiding options had been of less significance for the survival of the Jews in the Netherlands. For a long time, the aid to Jews in hiding in the Netherlands was the product of individual contact between Jews and non-Jews, whereas in France and Belgium the collective efforts of networks and organizations started earlier and were on a larger scale. In France this was particularly true of the escape routes to Switzerland and Spain, although the routes were arduous and hazardous and thus mainly suitable for healthy young people, and required large sums to be paid to the mountain guides. Moreover they involved a great deal of deceit and betrayal. Since the borders of Belgium and the Netherlands were more strictly guarded and they had no neutral neighbors, there were absolutely and relatively fewer successful escapes of Jews from these countries than from France.

The Jewish responses to the deportations were a major factor in the national differences in victimization. In the Netherlands, the Jewish response was largely determined by how the deportations were organized and the dearth of alternative organizations or leaders with sufficient authority and support. The prolonged lack of sufficient hiding options, the SS intimidations citing Mauthausen concentration camp, the direct subordination of the Amsterdam Jewish Council to the German Security Police, the very limited manoeuvring space for the Council and the predominantly integrated and acculturated background of the Jewish population led to a situation where passivity was facilitated. In France and Belgium, the predominantly Eastern European background of the Jewish immigrant populations targeted for deportation and their degree of organization played a major role in the development of Jewish self-help and underground organizations. After the large-scale roundups in Belgium, the significance of the AJB soon decreased for the remaining Jewish population as well as the occupier. At the same time, hiding options emerged and were used by the remaining Jews, at first often on an individual basis, but as of late 1942 and early 1943 largely through the CDJ. This Jewish underground organization had been set up in September 1942 on the basis of cooperation between Communists, Zionists and certain lower-ranking AJB staff members. It was financially supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee via Switzerland and France and backed by the above-mentioned Independence Front. Jewish self-help and resistance organizations also developed in France, but due to a profound ideological split and divergent views on priorities between Communist and non-Communist immigrants, it took much longer, up to mid-1943, to overcome the differences and create forms of organized cooperation regarding hiding and escape options. This period (spring 1943) coincided more or less with the months when the deportations in France were interrupted for *other* reasons on the part of the occupiers and Vichy. In so far as there was anything but passivity in the Netherlands, until early in 1943 the responses focused on an optimal use of the legal option, i.e. temporary exemption from deportation, created by the occupiers as part of the deportation system.

In Chapter 5, the comparative causal method is used on the overall research results. This leads to the conclusions on the main causes of the national differences in Jewish victimization. For each consecutive phase of deportation, the conclusions can be formulated as follows.

In the first phase of the deportations, June 1942 to mid-November 1942, the difference of 10% between France (13%) and the Netherlands (23%) was caused by the attitude of the highest local authorities in France in September – October. The difference of 12% between France (13%) and Belgium (25%) can also be explained by this factor. The ultimate difference of 15% in the victimization rate between France and Belgium has thus been largely explained. Since the victimization rate in Belgium (25%) was proportionately still higher than in the Netherlands (23%) in this first phase, the causes of the ultimate difference between the two countries (Belgium 40%, the Netherlands 75%) are to be found in the following phases of deportation.

In the second phase of the deportations, mid-November 1942 to mid-June 1943, the difference of 25.5% between France (2.5%) and the Netherlands (28%), as in the previous phase,

was caused by the attitude of the highest local authorities in France, although in the Netherlands the freedom of action of the German agencies that were directly involved was the most important factor. The difference of 2% between France (2.5%) and Belgium (4.5%) can also be explained by the attitude of the highest local authorities in France. So in combination with the first phase, the total difference of 15% between France and Belgium has now been almost completely explained. The difference of 23.5% between Belgium (4.5%) and the Netherlands (28%) had complex causes: in Belgium the interaction between the resistance and the hiding options as national factors and the Jewish response, and in the Netherlands the interaction between the methods used by the German agencies directly involved and the role and responses of the imposed Jewish organization and the Jewish population. So unlike the first phase of the deportations, at least 23% of the total difference of 35% between Belgium and the Netherlands have been explained.

A comparison of the last phase of the deportations, mid-June 1943 to September 1944, results in the following conclusion: the difference of 14.5% between France (7.5%) and the Netherlands (22%) in this phase can be explained by the insufficient German police forces in France. The small difference of 1.5% between France (7.5%) and Belgium (9%) was also caused by insufficient German police forces in France. Of the difference of 13% between Belgium (9%) and the Netherlands (22%), 10% was caused by the nature and effects of the methods used by the occupiers in the Netherlands, and 3% by the relatively more extensive hiding and escape options in Belgium.

We can now summarize the main causes of the large differences in the deportation rates in the three countries as follows.

At least 35.5% of the total difference of 50% between the victimization rates in France and the Netherlands can be explained by the impeding effect of the attitude of the highest local authorities in France (the Vichy government) and the freedom of action of the German agencies directly in charge of organizing and carrying out the deportations in the Netherlands, and also the relative dearth of hiding and escape options there, which were conducive to the course and ultimate extent of the deportations.

Of the total difference of 15% between the victimization rates in France and Belgium, 14% can solely be explained by the impeding effect of the attitude of the highest local authorities in France, and by the relatively more extended freedom of action of the German agencies directly in charge of organizing and carrying out the deportations in Belgium, which were conducive to the course and ultimate extent of the deportations.

The total difference of 35% in the victimization rates between Belgium and the Netherlands can mainly be explained by the interaction in Belgium between the responses of the Jews and the generally more extended hiding and escape options with an impeding effect, and by the interaction in the Netherlands between the occupiers' freedom of action and their resulting methods and the position and the responses of the imposed Jewish organization and the Jewish population, which were ultimately conducive to the course and extent of the deportations.