Introduction

The Holocaust in Western Europe is a story of identification, registration, despoliation and deportation. Few Jewish victims were killed by their German persecutors in France, Belgium or the Netherlands. Instead, they were transported to concentration and extermination camps in Eastern Europe. Understanding how that process was facilitated and enacted has therefore been central to the national Holocaust historiographies of all three countries albeit in different ways. Analyses of the perpetrators and of the economic, sociocultural and political circumstances, both regional and national, have played their role in the debate, but perhaps the most contentious issue has been the contribution made by the victims themselves; unwittingly through their social and economic position within society, or wittingly through either resistance or cooperation. Of prime concern have been the roles played by the 'Jewish Councils' in the three countries – all created in 1941 and at the behest of the Germans, but different in form and function: the Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam (JR) in the Netherlands, the Assocation des Juifs en Belgique (AJB) in Belgium (in Dutch referred to as Vereniging der Joden in België, VJB) and the Union Générale des Israélites de France (UGIF) in France.

These organisations were intended to serve as intermediaries between the Jewish communities and the German authorities. Among other things, their functionaries communicated anti-Jewish decrees and regulations, and were held responsible for tasks that had previously been carried out by local government organisations. These included the provision of education, health care and social welfare to Jews, who were increasingly suffering under the yoke of the occupation. As the war unfolded, new responsibilities were imposed on the JR, the AJB and the UGIF. German authorities employed the organisations to expedite the isolation of Jews from society and to facilitate their deportation from Western Europe. For example, in the Netherlands and Belgium, the organisations' functionaries assisted with the registration of Jews and they were engaged in the production of summonses to report for 'police-supervised

work in the East' (*polizeilicher Arbeitseinsatz*).[1] The JR, the AJB and the UGIF also provided necessities to Jews who were interned, and who were soon to be deported. During the course of the occupation, various German (and, in the case of France, Vichy) departments attempted to use the organisations to serve their own interests.

The actions of these Jewish organisations and the choices of their leaders,[2] in both academic and public spheres, have been dominated by moral condemnation. The predominant focus on these organisations as instruments in the hands of the German occupier in carrying out the so-called Final Solution to the Jewish Question has oversimplified our understanding of these bodies.[3] Owing to a significant lack of comparative studies on the JR, the AJB and the UGIF, there is little understanding of their precise nature and function in a wider (Western) European context. Their histories were far more complex, and local conditions were more decisive in shaping their form and function, than has hitherto been recognised.

The purpose of this book is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the controversial 'Jewish Councils' of the Netherlands, Belgium and France. It should be noted that the term 'Jewish Councils' (the literal translation of the term *Judenräte*) is not entirely accurate in the context of the Jewish representative bodies of Belgium (the AJB) and France (the UGIF). While the Dutch Jewish Council was officially referred to as a *Judenrat*, the AJB and the UGIF were *Vereinigungen* (Associations). This

[1] This was a euphemistic term that concealed the German authorities' true intentions: the mass destruction of the Jews.

[2] The term 'leaders' or 'leadership' will be used to address those who stood at the helm of the Jewish organisations in Western Europe. Dan Michman proposed the term 'headship' as an alternative in the context of the Jewish organisations. However, despite the objections raised by Michman to the use of the term 'leadership', the central board members of these organisations did fulfil a leadership function. The tasks they took on and the decisions they were forced to make can in my opinion best be understood through this term. See Dan Michman, 'Jewish Leadership in Extremis', in Dan Stone, *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave: Macmillan, 2004), 319–340; and '"Judenräte" und "Judenvereinigungen" unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft: Aufbau und Anwendung eines verwaltungsmäßigen Kozepts', *Zeitschrift für* Geschichtswissenschaft, Vol. 46, No. 4 (1998), 293–304.

[3] See, for example, Nanda van der Zee, *Om erger te voorkomen: de voorgeschiedenis en uitvoering van de vernietiging van het Nederlandse jodendom tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1997), 97–139; Hans Blom, 'The Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands: A Comparative Western European Perspective', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1989), 347–349; Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), Part 7, Vol. 1, 252; Part 5, Vol. 2, 1045.

study highlights the institutional (dis)similarities between these organisations, and, therefore, terminologically differentiates between the JR on the one hand and the AJB and the UGIF on the other. The JR will be referred to as a Jewish Council, and the AJB and the UGIF, are referred to as Associations. For general claims on the organisations, the terms 'Jewish Councils' (between quotation marks) or 'Jewish (representative) organisations' are used. Even though the organisations were not always considered as representative by a (substantial) part of the Jewish communities, this was essentially what both their leaders and the Germans aimed for.

As Dan Michman has pointed out, the common tendency to put the Netherlands, Belgium and France 'in one bag' has obscured the unique aspects in each of these countries, including the dissimilar compositions of their Jewish communities, and the fact that German policies were characterised by varying forces and aims.[4] A comparative approach allows for a better understanding of the Jewish organisations' distinctive characteristics and the unique national contexts in which they operated. It shows, for example, that the socio-historical premises on which these organisations were built were very different across Western Europe. This affected their acceptance by the Jewish communities, and in turn the choices the Jewish leaders made. By taking a wider comparative view, this study identifies the major differences and similarities between Jewish representative bodies across Western Europe, revealing what German intentions with these organisations were during the course of the occupation and how Jewish leaders used their positions to assist their communities. This in turn allows for an integrative understanding of the different ways in which the Holocaust unfolded in each of these countries.

The 'Jewish Councils' in Western Europe: An Overview

The Western European 'Jewish Councils' were different from their Eastern European counterparts in form and function. The main differences are the scope of their power and the nature of their function. Eastern European *Judenräte*, officially established in November 1939 by Governor General Hans Frank, had only local authority, while the JR, the AJB and the UGIF

[4] Dan Michman, 'Comparative Research on the Holocaust in Western Europe: Its Achievements, its Limits and a Plea for a More Integrative Approach', *Moreshet Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism*, Vol. 17 (2020), 290–291.

were (eventually) national bodies. The case of France is distinctive because of the Franco-German armistice of 22 June 1940, which culminated in the physical occupation of only the northern half and the western coastal areas of the country until November 1942. As a result, the UGIF was split into an UGIF-Nord, overseeing the Jews in the occupied (later northern) zone, and an UGIF-Sud, overseeing the Jews in the unoccupied (later southern) zone. The organisational and functional divergence between the UGIF-Nord and the UGIF-Sud, even after the German invasion of the southern zone in November 1942, necessitates an approach that considers the UGIF-Nord and the UGIF-Sud as two separate organisations. The two central UGIF boards, one for each zone, did not meet in common session until 15 February 1943, when plans for a reorganisation of the UGIF into a centralised body in Paris were discussed.[5]

Another difference between the Western and Eastern European bodies is that even though the *Judenräte* in Eastern Europe used different models of governance, many were held directly responsible for organising deportations.[6] Unlike the situation in Western Europe, failure to abide by German regulations could lead to severe punishment, including deportation and murder. The chairman of the first Jewish Council in Lwòw (Ukraine), Dr Joseph Parnas, for example, was arrested in October 1941 and apparently killed shortly thereafter for refusing to hand over several thousand Jews to German authorities for forced labour.[7] Despite these differences, Eastern European *Judenräte* unquestionably served as blueprints for the Western European Jewish organisations and there are parallels between some of their functions and leaders.

[5] Because it was established by the collaborationist Vichy government, the presidency of the UGIF and the office of the general-secretary were situated in the unoccupied (later southern) zone. For the meeting on 15 February, see Jacques Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940–1944*, transl. from the French (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; first ed. 1985 [French]), 140; Michel Laffitte, 'Between Memory and Lapse of Memory: The First UGIF Board of Directors', in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell (eds.), *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 674.

[6] Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996; first ed. 1972), 413–436; Andrea Löw and Agnieszka Zajaczkowska-Drozdz, 'Leadership in the Jewish Councils as a Social Process. The Example of Cracow', in Andrea Löw and Frank Bajohr (eds.), *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 196–203; Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to A Perished City*, transl. Emma Harris (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009), 145–147.

[7] Trunk, *Judenrat,* 437.

As its name suggests, the Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam (the Jewish Council for Amsterdam) was in fact directly modelled after the local *Judenrat* model that existed in Eastern Europe, and its authority was initially limited to the city of Amsterdam. As Michman has convincingly shown, wherever the Schutzstaffel (SS) and police were strongly represented, as was the case in the Netherlands, the local model was applied.[8] The two highest ranking Nazis in the Netherlands, Reich Commissioner (Reichskommissar) Arthur Seyss-Inquart and the Highest SS and Police Leader (Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer) Hanns Albin Rauter, both Austrian born, had previously observed the establishment of *Judenräte* with only local authority in Eastern Europe. They had also witnessed the transformation of the Jewish Community of Vienna (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, IKG) into a Council of Elders (*Ältestenrat*) directly overseen by SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, regrouping all existing Jewish organisations in 1938.[9] Most likely inspired by these examples, a similar organisation, with initially only local authority, was established in the Netherlands.[10]

The use of the term *Judenrat* was a literal copy of the wording used by Heydrich in his so-called *Schnellbrief* (urgent letter) of 21 September 1939. In this letter, sent to all *Einsatzgruppen* (special police units) commanders and department heads in the SiPo-SD, Heydrich detailed the form and function of the Jewish Councils in the occupied Polish territories.[11] Combined with the fact that the Dutch Council, contrary to the AJB and the UGIF, was not anchored in law, these factors all demonstrate how

[8] Dan Michman, 'Judenräte, Ghettos, Endlösung: Drei Komponenten einer antijüdischen Politik oder Separate Faktoren?', in Jacek Andrzej Mlynarczyk and Jochen Böhler (eds.), *Der Judenmord in den eingegliederten polnischen Gebieten 1939–1945* (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2010), 167–176; and 'On the Historical Interpretation of the Judenräte Issue between Intentionalism, Functionalism and the Integrationist Approach of the 1990s', in Moshe Zimmerman (ed.), *On Germans and Jews under de Nazi Regime: Essays by Three Generations of Historians* (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 2006), 395.

[9] From 1939 until December 1942, the IKG functioned as a Jewish Council, serving as an intermediary between the Germans and the Jews. After December 1942, the IKG was transformed into a Council of Elders. See Bernard Klein, 'The Judenrat', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1960), 27; Doron Rabinovici, *Instanzen der Ohnmacht. Wien 1938–1945. Der Weg zum Judenrat* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2000), passim. On the role of the IKG in the emigration and deportation of Jews, see Lisa Hauff, *Zur politischen Rolle von Judenräten, Benjamin Murmelstein in Wien, 1938–1942* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2014), 99–283.

[10] Dan Michman, 'De oprichting van de "Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam" vanuit een vergelijkend perspectief', in Madelon de Keizer and David Barnouw (eds.), *Derde Jaarboek van het Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1992), 87.

[11] For further reading on Heydrich's *Schnellbrief*, see Dan Michman, 'Why did Heydrich Write "the Schnellbrief"? A Remark on the Reason and on its Significance', *Yad Vashem Studies*, No. 32 (2004), 433–447; and 'Jewish Leadership in Extremis', 328.

its inception was based on that of the Eastern European *Judenräte*. Even the personal order of Hans Böhmcker, the representative (Beauftragte) of Reichskommissar Seyss-Inquart for the city of Amsterdam, to institute the JR resembled that of the Eastern European Councils, which were usually established on a private basis (a town commander, for example, would appoint a prominent Jew). By contrast, the AJB and the UGIF were established on the basis of official decrees and were anchored in their local legal systems.[12] This difference is significant, because as Michman has demonstrated, the 'Jewish Councils' with only local authority, not anchored in official law, provided controlling German authorities (the local German police apparatus) more direct control over these bodies.[13]

In Belgium and France, where the Military Administration had a strong presence and the SS was less prominently represented at first, *Judenvereinigungen*, inspired by the German Reichsvereinigung model that had nationwide authority, were established. In both countries, the Military Administration was initially reluctant to force a Jewish representative body on the Jewish societies, in part because it feared the responses of non-Jews to this measure, a theme we will explore later. Partly as a result of the Military Administration's reluctance, the AJB, the UGIF-Nord and the UGIF-Sud were established, under pressure from the SS authorities, only in November 1941. Documents suggest that the 'Jewish experts' of the SS in Belgium preferred the Eastern European *Judenrat* organisation to the *Judenvereinigung* type. However, their limited power meant that they had to compromise with the Military Administration who favoured a different model.[14] In France, the collaborationist Vichy regime commanded the establishment of the UGIF after prolonged negotiations with the Germans.

The fact that the AJB in Belgium and the UGIF in France were both organisations with a nationwide authority, while the JR was initially meant to have authority only over the Jewish community in Amsterdam, was the main functional difference between these bodies.[15] On 27 October

[12] Michman, 'De oprichting van de "Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam"', 88; Dan Michman, 'Research on the Holocaust in Belgium and in General: History and Context', in Dan Michman (ed.), *Belgium and the Holocaust: Jews, Belgians, Germans* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem Studies, 1998), 33–34. Also see Maxime Steinberg, 'The Trap of Legality: The Belgium Jewish Association', in Michael Marrus (ed.), *The Nazi Holocaust: The Victims of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Mecklermedia, 1989), 798.

[13] Michman, 'Jewish Leadership in Extremis', 328–329. In the Netherlands, the Council chairmen attempted to negotiate a juridical status for the JR, but this attempt failed. See: Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, *Jodenvervolging in Nederland, Frankrijk en België, 1940–1945: Overeenkomsten, Verschillen, Oorzaken* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011), 382.

[14] Michman, 'Research on the Holocaust in Belgium and in General', 35–36.

[15] Jozeph Michman, 'The Controversial Stand of the Joodse Raad in the Netherlands: Lodewijk E. Visser's Struggle', *Yad Vashem Studies,* Vol. X (1994), 18; Rudi van

1941, for reasons that will be examined later, the Amsterdam Jewish Council officially extended its influence to the entire country. Despite these differences in organisational structures, the outlook of Jewish leaders was similar. All Jewish leaders were primarily invested in providing social welfare to their communities through these bodies. As the war progressed, the pressure on these institutions increased, and, as we will see in Chapter 4, they were used to varying degrees of success (from the German perspective) to carry out German demands.

In other Western European countries or colonies and overseas territories of these countries, similar organisations were either not imposed, or the nature of the organisations was essentially different from that of the JR, the AJB and the UGIF. In Algeria (under the rule of Vichy France), for example, a Jewish representative organisation was established by decree on 14 February 1942: the Union Générale des Israélites d'Algérie (UGIA), modelled after the UGIF.[16] Like the UGIF, the UGIA was officially intended to replace all existing Jewish organisations and its board members were chosen from among the Jewish leadership.[17] After the Allied landings in North Africa in November 1942, the organisation was disbanded.

In Tunisia, occupied by the Germans from November 1942 until May 1943, when the British army captured Tunis and the Axis powers surrendered, SS-Obersturmführer Walther Rauff ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council in the country's capital, Tunis.[18] Jewish leaders who chaired this organisation continued to hold responsibility in much the same way as they had done before the Germans arrived.[19] As Friedl has

Doorslaer and Jean-Philippe Schreiber, 'Inleiding', in Rudi van Doorslaer and Jean-Philippe Schreiber (eds.), *De curatoren van het getto: De vereniging van de joden in België tijdens de nazi-bezetting* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2004), 9. Also see Michman, 'Judenräte, Ghettos, Endlösung', 167–176; 'On the Historical Interpretation of the Judenräte Issue', 395; and 'Research on the Holocaust in Belgium and in General', 35–36.

[16] Yves C. Aouate, 'La place de l'Algérie dans le projet antijuif de Vichy (octobre 1940–novembre 1942)', *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer,* Vol. 80, No. 301 (1993), 605; Valérie Assan, 'Israël William Oualid, juriste, économiste, professeur des universités', *Archives Juives*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2013), 140. It should be noted that Richard Ayoun has inaccurately claimed that the UGIA was instituted by decree on 31 March 1942. See Richard Ayoun, 'Les Juifs d'Algérie dans la Tourmente Antisémite du XXe siècle', *Revue Européenne des Études Hébraïques*, No. 1 (1996), 77.

[17] Ayoun, 'Les Juifs d'Algérie', 77–78. For further reading on the UGIA and its distinct position in relation to the UGIF, see Aouate, 'La place de l'Algérie', 605–607.

[18] For the biography of Walther Rauff, see Martin Cüppers, *Walther Rauff: In deutschen Diensten: Vom Naziverbrecher zum BND-Spion* (Darmstadt: WBG Academic, 2013).

[19] Sophie Friedl, 'Negotiating and Compromising Jewish Leaders' Scope of Action in Tunisia during Nazi Rule (November 1942–May 1943)', in Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw (eds.), *Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 228.

pointed out, the brevity of direct German rule in Tunis (six months) limited the destructive effect on the Jewish community.[20] As a result, the Jewish Council never faced the same pressure as its counterparts in German-occupied Europe. In Morocco, no traces can be found of a similar Jewish organisation.[21] Since the Jewish Councils in Algeria and Tunis were hardly functional and operated in a different (colonial) context than the Jewish organisations in the Netherlands, Belgium and France, there was insufficient common ground to include these case studies in the present study.

In the case of Luxembourg, the Jewish Consistory, chaired by Alfred Oppenheimer since October 1941, was renamed the Jewish Council of Elders in April 1942.[22] The fact that the country had a very small Jewish community made the existence of this organisation different from its counterparts in neighbouring countries. Over 3,000 Jews fled the country immediately after the beginning of the military campaign in the West in May 1940, or left before October 1941 for France or Belgium. Around 816 Jews remained, of whom 664 were deported in a total of seven transports – the first in October 1941 and the last in June 1943.[23] In Norway and Denmark, Jewish organisations modelled after the *Judenräte* were never established for various reasons, including the fact that relatively few Jews lived in these countries.[24]

Perspectives on Jewish Leaders' Cooperation

Discussions on whether Jewish leaders should cooperate with the Germans, in an attempt to (temporarily) delay, or influence, the decision-making process, or to serve as a buffer between the Jewish

[20] Friedl also highlighted other factors that limited the destructive effect of German policies in Tunisia, including the lack of resources to deport Tunisian Jews en masse, and the military charges faced by the Germans. Ibid., 227.

[21] For further reading on the Jews in North Africa specifically during Nazism, see Filippo Petrucci, *Gli ebrei in Algeria e in Tunisia, 1940–1943* (Florence: Giuntina, 2011); Christine Levisse-Touzé, *L'Afrique du Nord dans la guerre 1939–1945* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998); Michel Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa during the Second World War,* transl. from the French by Catherine Tihanyi Zentelis (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989); the contributions of various authors in *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah: Les Juifs d'Orient face au nazisme et à la Shoah, 1930–1945,* Vol. 205 (2016).

[22] Marc Schoentgen, 'Luxembourg', in Wolf Gruner and Jörg Osterloh (eds.), *The Greater German Reich and the Jews: Nazi Persecution Policies in the Annexed Territories 1935–1945* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), n.50; Ruth Zariz, 'The Jews of Luxembourg during the Second World War', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* Vol. 7, No. 1 (1993), 56–57.

[23] Schoentgen, 'Luxembourg', 307–311.

[24] For an overview of the persecution of Jews in Norway, see Bjarte Bruland, 'Norway's Role in the Holocaust: The Destruction of Norway's Jews', in Jonathan Friedman

communities and the German authorities, were prevalent within all the Jewish communities as soon as plans for the establishment of representative bodies were first mentioned. Some Jews openly refused to support such institutions early on, fearing they would become tools in the hands of the Germans. In the French unoccupied zone, for example, Jews initially refused to accept their nomination at the helm of the umbrella organisation, the UGIF-Sud, because they feared its activities would stretch beyond the provision of social welfare.[25] In the Netherlands, the former president of the Dutch Supreme Court, Lodewijk Ernst Visser, was critical of the JR leaders' strategy of obedience and submissiveness towards German authorities: 'As Dutch Jews, it is our plight to do everything in our power to obstruct him [the German occupier] in achieving his goal [.] That is not what you are currently doing!'[26] Some became more critical of the 'Jewish Councils' during the course of the war, when leaders were increasingly forced to abide by German regulations. As Isaiah Trunk indicated in the context of Poland: 'Opposition to the Jewish Councils emerged as soon as they came into being and became even stronger when, as a result of their activities, much of people's initial suspicion was confirmed.'[27]

After the war, disapproval of Jewish leaders' wartime choices was reinforced, when Jewish courts of honour and state courts across Europe formally assessed their cooperation with the German occupying authorities. These courts were established in various countries across Europe, including Germany, Poland, France and the Netherlands. Even though the honour courts were of limited punitive power, they are symbolic of the urge that was felt in post-war Jewish society to address supposed Jewish collaboration. State courts investigated the wartime behaviour of Jewish leaders in several countries, including France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Soviet Union.[28] In the immediate post-war period, many were unable to make a

(ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 2011), 232–247. For Denmark, see Mette Bastholm Hensen and Steven Jensen, *Denmark and the Holocaust* (Copenhagen: Institute for International Studies, Department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003).

[25] Letter of Gamzon, Mayer, Lambert, Millner, Jarblum, Oualid, Olmer and Lévy to Xavier Vallat, 24 December 1941, XXVIIIa-13, CDJC, Mémorial de la Shoah.

[26] Letter of Visser to Cohen, 18 November 1941, 248–179A (mr. Lodewijk Ernst Visser), Inv. No. 14, NIOD.

[27] Trunk, *Judenrat*, 528.

[28] Laura Jokusch and Gabriel N. Finder, *Jewish Honor Courts: Revenge, Retribution and Reconciliation in Europe and Israel after the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2015), 4. Also see Dan Michman, 'Kontroversen über die Judenräte in der Jüdischen Welt, 1945–2005. Das Ineinandergreifen von öffentlichem Gedächtnis und Geschichtsschreibung', in Freia Anders, Katrin Stoll and Kartsen

distinction between the actual perpetrators (the Germans and their non-Jewish accomplices) and the few Jewish victims who, for various reasons, had cooperated with the Germans. Across Europe, Jewish leaders were often called 'traitors to the Jewish nation'.[29]

Historians have contributed to this moral condemnation of Jewish Councils, and similar organisations, starting in the immediate post-war period with understandably personal and emotional responses.[30] In his 1954 publication *Harvest of Hate: The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe,* Léon Poliakov, for example, claimed that 'many outright scoundrels insinuated themselves into the councils'.[31] Criticisms of these bodies, and the choices of their leaders, continued in the 1960s, epitomised by Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*, in which he stated that not only perpetrators play a role in a destruction process: 'the process is shaped by the victims, too'.[32] Hilberg claimed that the traditional pattern of Jewish leadership over centuries of persecution and expulsion was characterised by compliance, acquiescence and negotiations with their oppressors in order to preserve the communities. This proved self-destructive during Nazi rule because the Jewish leadership had been unable to switch to resistance.[33] Two years later, Hannah Arendt assessed the role of Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people, and (in)famously claimed that if the Jewish people had really been unorganised and leaderless, 'there would have been chaos and plenty of misery, but the total number of victims would hardly have been

Wilke (eds.), *Der Judenrat von Białystok. Dokumente aus dem Archiv des Białystoker Ghettos 1941–1943* (Paderborn/Munich/Vienna/Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), 309–317.

[29] Jokusch and Finder, 'Revenge, Retribution, and Reconciliation', 11–12.

[30] Whereas in Belgium it almost took almost twenty years before scholars started paying attention to the history of the AJB, historiography on the JR, the UGIF and similar Jewish organisations was scrutinised from early on. See, for example, Heinz Wielek, *De oorlog die Hitler won* (Amsterdam: Amsterdamsche Boek- en Courantmij, 1947), 108; Léon Poliakov, *Harvest of Hate. The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1954), 88–89. In Eastern Europe, ghetto writers and chroniclers regarded Judenräte leaders, including Chaim Rumkowski in Lodz, Jacob Gens in Vilna, Moses Merin in Sosnowiec-Bedzin and Joseph Diamond in Radom, as collaborators, villains and enemies of the people. See Philip Friedman, *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust* (New York: Conference on Jewish Social Studies, 1980), 353.

[31] Poliakov, *Harvest of Hate,* 88–89. This statement is remarkable in light of his earlier claim that he mistrusted any moral judgement of the past; see *Le Monde Juif*, August–September 1949, Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris.

[32] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (London: W.H. Allen, 1961; a revised edition of this work was published in 1985), 662.

[33] Ibid., 666.