

Overduijn, Leendert

(1901-1976), Dutch pastor who saved the lives of at least 461 Jews during World War II.

Reverend Overduijn led an organization of more than 40 people in the eastern Dutch town of Enschede, which helped find hiding places for Jews in various parts of the Netherlands. Most of the safe havens provided by Overduijn's organization were in the towns and villages in the northern Dutch province of Friesland, where the Nazi occupation was somewhat looser than in the more crowded industrial towns of the country's southern regions.

Most often, Overduijn's daughter and his other aides traveled around the Netherlands, looking for appropriate hiding places. Overduijn himself often visited the Jews in hiding, bringing them ration cards, cigarettes, and news from their relatives and friends. However, his movements were noticed and tracked by the authorities, and eventually he was brought in and interrogated. He was then put in jail for an extended period of time.

After the war, Overduijn refused to accept any awards or honors for his lifesaving work. In 1973, though, he was designated as Righteous Among The Nations by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.