

Visser, Lodewijk Ernst

(1871-1942), Dutch judge active in Jewish affairs. Visser was appointed to the Dutch Supreme Court in 1915 and became Chief Justice in 1939. During the 1930s he helped aid Jewish refugees and protested the persecution of German Jewry. When the Germans occupied the Netherlands in May 1940, Jews were removed from government jobs; Visser was suspended from the Supreme Court.

In December 1940 Holland's Jewish organizations convened to establish the Jewish Coordinating Committee, in an attempt to provide a united leadership for the Jewish community and face the Germans' anti-Jewish policies. Visser was appointed chairman. He strongly criticized the establishment of the Nazi-appointed Jewish Council and its cooperation with the Nazis. The Germans annulled Visser's Coordinating Committee in October 1941, and recognized the Jewish Council as the only official representative of Dutch Jewry. Nonetheless, Visser continued to criticize the council's policies.

Visser believed that the Dutch government should take responsibility for Dutch Jews, as Dutch citizens with full rights. He even took specific appeals to government officials and asked them to oppose the Germans' anti-Jewish orders. However, he was warned to stop his activities at the threat of being sent to a concentration camp. Several days later, Visser died of a heart attack.