

From the Diary of Moshe Flinker on Anti-Jewish Legislation in The Netherlands

Dutch born Moshe Flinker (1926-1944) was from a wealthy, orthodox family. His parents fled with Moshe and his six siblings to Brussels, there they survived most of the war. In his diary, Moshe expresses the pain he feels for the spiritual plight of his brethren.

Moshe and his family were sent to Auschwitz, where he and his parents perished.

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For some time now I have wanted to note down every evening what I have been doing during the day. But, for various reasons, I have only got round to it tonight.

First, let me explain why I am doing this – and I must start by describing why I came here to Brussels.

I was born in The Hague, the Dutch Queen's city, where I passed my early years peacefully. I went to elementary school and then to a commercial school, where I studied for only two years. In 1940, when the Germans entered Holland, I had another two years to go until graduation. They issued a decree forbidding Jewish students to attend schools staffed by gentile ("Aryan") teachers, and so I was prevented from finishing my course. The exclusion of Jews from public schools is just one of a long list of restrictions: they had been forced to hand over their radios, they were not allowed into the movies, etc.

In the big cities, where many Jews lived, special schools for Jews were opened, with only Jewish teachers. One such school was opened in The Hague. Our school was a high school with three departments: classical languages, modern subjects, and commerce. I, of course, continued my commercial studies. During the year I attended, the number of restrictions on us rose greatly. Several months before the end of the school year we had to

turn in our bicycles to the police. From that time on, I rode to school by street-car, but a day or two before the vacations started Jews were forbidden to ride on street-cars. I then had to walk to school, which took about an hour and a half. However, I continued going to school during those last days because I wanted to get my report card and find out whether I had been promoted to the next class. At that time I still thought that I would be able to return to school after the vacations; but I was wrong. Even so, I must mention that I did get my promotion.

Now I wish to note the restrictions inflicted upon us during the vacations. I forgot to mention that during that year we had been forced to sew a “Badge of Shame” on the left side of our outer clothing. This “Badge” was a Star of David, on which the word “Jew” was written in Dutch.

Halfway through that year the Germans began gathering Jews into the big cities, particularly Amsterdam. Jews were not permitted to move anywhere except to Amsterdam. When there were enough Jews there, the Germans began sending them to destinations which are still unknown to me today. This is the way they sent them: many Jewish families would receive letters ordering them to get ready for a three-days’ journey. They were to get food for the trip and also take whatever clothes and utensils would be necessary for the journey. Then at midnight they had to go to the railroad station. From there they were sent to Westerbork, a detention camp near the Dutch-German border.

Source: *Young Moshe’s Diary*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1971, pp.19-20