

Asscher, Abraham

(1880–1950), Dutch Jewish public figure and spokesman for Dutch Jewry.

Asscher owned Amsterdam's most prestigious diamond company, was a member of the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce, and a leader of the Liberal party. He also chaired the Amsterdam Jewish Community Council and the Union of Ashkenazic Communities.

Asscher responded to the Nazis' anti-Jewish activities by forming the Committee for Special Jewish Affairs. When the Germans occupied the Netherlands, they used Asscher as their contact to the Jewish community. They asked him to form a Jewish Council, which he did, and even did him certain favors despite his consistent criticism of the Nazi regime (many of his relatives and friends were not deported to Poland). Asscher wanted to protest the extermination of Europe's Jews, but his close friend, David Cohen, convinced him to keep quiet.

Despite his cooperation, Asscher was sent to Bergen-Belsen in September 1943. He survived the war and returned to Holland, where he was arrested for collaboration. He was exonerated by the Dutch, but the Jewish community found him guilty and ostracized him. Asscher then broke off all ties with the Jewish community and was even buried in a non-Jewish cemetery.