

Cohen, David

(1882--1967), Dutch Jewish public figure and Zionist leader. Cohen was a professor of ancient history who provided assistance to German Jewish refugees during World War I and served as secretary of the Committee for refugees. He was a member of the Jewish Council in The Hague and later in Amsterdam. In 1934 he joined the Standing Committee of the Union of *Ashkenazic* Communities.

When Hitler came to power, Cohen called for the establishment of the Committee of Special Jewish Affairs. He was then made executive chairman of its subcommittee on refugees. After the Germans occupied the Netherlands in May 1940, Cohen backed the establishment of the Jewish Coordinating Committee.

In February 1941 Cohen and his close friend, Abraham Asscher, formed the Jewish Council at the Germans' request. Throughout the rest of the war, former supreme court justice Lodewijk Ernst Visser and others criticized the council for cooperating with the Nazis.

Cohen was arrested and sent to Theresienstadt in September 1943. He survived the war and returned home, where the Dutch regime charged him with collaboration. He was exonerated, but found guilty by the Jewish community, which banned him from serving in any Jewish institutions. His sentence was later annulled, but he never returned to Jewish public life.