

Dutch Nazi's and the Jewish Community

The first mass arrests of Jews began on February 1941.

Jewish areas were being raided and the inhabitants had organized groups to defend themselves and their property. Heavy fighting ensued. On the 22nd of February, 400 Jewish men and boys were grabbed - from the streets, their homes and cafes - beaten and taken away. No one knew where they had been taken. In June, another 230 Jews, mainly refugees, suddenly disappeared. To protest against this round-up, a general strike was immediately organized, primarily by the Communist party. In and around Amsterdam thousands joined in a two day strike, making it one of the most significant acts of West Europeans resistance during war. Nazi troops moved in to restore order. As well as pitched battles with the Nazis and actions such as the general strike, there were many other forms of resistance. Underground newspapers were produced and acts of sabotage carried out. Resistance of any kind was always fraught with terrible danger, often resulting in capture, torture, and execution. Anne Frank wrote in her diary: "Have you ever heard of

hostages? That's the latest thing in penalties for sabotage. Can you imagine anything so dreadful? Prominent citizens - innocent people - are thrown into prison to await their fate. If the saboteur can't be traced, the Gestapo simply put about five hostages against the wall. Announcements of their deaths appear in the paper frequently. These outrages are described as 'fatal accidents'. "Jewish young people were now being excluded from state schools and colleges. By April 1942, all Jews were compelled to wear the yellow star to identify them. From July 1942 unemployed Jewish men were being deported, so they thought, to work under supervision in Eastern Holland. In fact they were being taken to Nazi concentration camps. Soon whole families were being summoned and this was when Anne Frank's family decided to go into hiding. Anne wrote in her diary: "Our many Jewish friends are being taken away by the dozens. These people are treated by the Gestapo without a shred of decency, loaded into cattle trucks and sent to Westerbork, the big camp in Drente. It is impossible to escape; most of the people in the camp are branded as inmates by their shaven heads and many also by their Jewish appearance. We assume that most of them are murdered. The British radio speaks of them being gassed. If I can just think of how we live here, I usually come to the conclusion that it is paradise compared with how other Jews who are not hiding must be living."

