

Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD)

Herengracht 380, 1016 CJ Amsterdam

+31(0)205233800

info@niod.knaw.nl

Who betrayed Anne Frank?

by

David Barnouw and Gerrold van der Stroom

© NIOD, Amsterdam

Amsterdam, April 25, 2003

For more information:
Press Officer David Barnouw:

Who betrayed Anne Frank?

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Persecution of the Jews
 - Clandestinity
 - Persecution apparatus
3. Going into hiding and arrest in Prinsengracht 263
4. Supplies to the Wehrmacht
5. Three suspects
 - Wim van Maaren
 - Lena Hartog-van Bladeren
 - Tonny Ahlers
6. Guilty?
 - Wim van Maaren
 - Lena Hartog-van Bladeren

Tonny Ahlers

1. Contacts between Ahlers and Otto Frank
2. Blackmail during and after the war
3. Betrayal of Prinsengracht 263 by Ahlers?
7. Other betrayers?
8. Conclusion
9. Notes, sources, bibliography and abbreviations

1. Introduction

In 1986 the forerunner of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation, published *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank* (*The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*, Doubleday, 1988/2003). This critical edition of the diaries of Anne Frank, edited by Harry Paape († 2001), Gerrold van der Stroom and David Barnouw, included all of the diary entries by Anne Frank that were known at the time. The introduction contained a chapter on the background to the betrayal of the Frank family and the others who were in hiding with them. The conclusion was that it was impossible to identify the person who betrayed them.

In the meantime two books have appeared which each advance a new betrayal thesis: Melissa Müller, *Anne Frank. De biografie* (1998), and Carol Ann Lee, *Het verborgen leven van Otto Frank [The hidden life of Otto Frank]* (2002). The latter puts forward a blackmail hypothesis connected with the business activities of Anne's father, Otto Frank.

The NIOD therefore decided to instigate a follow-up inquiry to look into two issues: a) an inventory of the betrayal hypotheses that have been mentioned to date and an evaluation of their probability or improbability, and b) the opportunities for blackmail during and after the war, partly in view of the role of Otto Frank in the business activities of Opekta, Pectacon and Gies & Co during and after the war.

Although our investigation focused on the three main suspects, that does not mean that we have overlooked other possible suspects (see Chapter 7).

We have made use of the same (archival) material as the authors of the two studies referred to above.

It is regrettable that two foundations that are in control of relevant archival documents, the Anne Frank Foundation in Amsterdam and (the president of) the Anne Frank Fonds in Basel do not (yet) have inventories of their archives at their disposal. This means that we do not know which archival documents there are or were. It is thus possible that as yet unknown material may turn up at a later stage.

The critical edition of *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank* already devoted dozens of pages to the possibility of betrayal by Van Maaren and to the arrest of the Jews in hiding. Melissa Müller has

been the first author to look into another direction than Van Maaren. Her betrayal-theory is brief and we have treated her theory briefly too.

The largest part of the present study is devoted to a third betrayal thesis, and one that finds support in a large amount of source material: the thesis that Otto Frank and the others were betrayed by Tonny Ahlers. The possibility of blackmail has also been raised. It is therefore only natural that the main emphasis has come to rest on him.

An abridged version of this report will be incorporated in the next impression of *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank*. The footnote on page 381 of that work will also be amended. That footnote refers to a certain F.J. Piron as the buyer of Prinsengracht 263. However, his name was F.J. Pieron, and he sold the premises.

We are grateful to the authors mentioned above - Melissa Müller and Carol Ann Lee - with whom we have had regular contact, to the National Archive in The Hague, especially Sierk Plantinga and Nico van Horn, the Anne Frank Foundation in Amsterdam, especially Teresien da Silva and Yt Stoker, and the Anne Frank Fonds in Basel, especially its president Buddy Elias. In addition we owe a debt of gratitude to Anton Ahlers, Miep Gies, Paul Gies, Gerlof Langerijs, Jan Oegema, Eric Slot, Cor Suijk and J.W. Veraart. It is to be regretted that some of the relatives of one of the prime suspects refused to talk to us. In view of the fact that they have spoken to the media in the past, we consider that their refusal to talk to us has not seriously hindered the investigation.

2. Persecution of the Jews

Anti-semitic measures were gradually introduced under the German Occupation, but there were as yet no signs of a large-scale persecution.

Anne Frank summarized on July 20, 1942 the following ant-Jewish measures

Now that the Germans rule the roost here we are in real trouble, first there was rationing and everything had to be bought with coupons, then, during the two years they have been here, there have been all sorts of Jewish laws.

Jews must wear a yellow star; Jews must hand in their bicycles; Jews are banned from trams and are forbidden to use any car, even a private one. Jews are only allowed to do their shopping between three and five o'clock and then only in shops which bear the placard Jewish Shop; Jews may only use Jewish barbers; Jews must be indoors from eight o'clock in the evening until 6 o'clock in the morning; Jews are forbidden to visit theaters, cinemas and other places of entertainment; Jews may not go to swimming baths, nor to tennis courts, hockey fields or other sports grounds; Jews may not go rowing; Jews may not take part in public sports; Jews must not sit in their own or their friends' gardens after 8 o'clock in the evening; Jews may not visit Christians; Jews must go to Jewish schools, and many more restrictions of a similar kind, so we could not do this and we were forbidden to do that.

During two raids in the centre of Amsterdam on 22 and 23 February 1941, more than four hundred Jewish men, most of them young, were captured and deported to Mauthausen. They were followed by a number of scattered raids in Amsterdam, in the eastern region of the country close to the German border, and in Arnhem, Apeldoorn and Zwolle. The first systematic calls to report started in the summer of 1942. Margot Frank, who was sixteen at the time, was one of the first group of a thousand persons, mainly German Jews, including a number of young people,

who had received a registered call to report on Sunday 5 July 1942 from the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung. She was supposed to report there for work in Germany. This call forced Otto Frank to bring forward his well-prepared plan for going into hiding, and a day later the Frank family, Otto, his wife Edith and their daughters Margot and Anne found themselves in the 'secret annex' of Prinsengracht 263, the office and warehouse of Pectacon and Opekta. A few days later the Van Pels family, Hermann, Gusti and their son Peter, joined them, to be followed later still by the dentist Friedrich Pfeffer. They thus totalled eight Jews in hiding in the centre of Amsterdam.

Clandestinity

There are no precise figures available on the number of Jews who went into hiding. The most recent estimate is 14,500.¹ Nor can a picture be formed of 'the' Jew in hiding or what conditions were like, because the differences between individual cases are too large for that. One thing is certain: babies and small children who went into hiding had a high chance of survival, and it was rare for a whole family to go into hiding. It was very rare for a number of Jews - eight in this case - to go into hiding in the same place; most of those who did so moved from one hiding place to another in the course of time.

Persecution apparatus

German security and police matters, including the persecution of the Jews, were run from The Hague, but Amsterdam, like other major cities, had its own Aussenstelle (Outpost) of the Sicherheitspolizei and the Sicherheitsdienst. This Aussenstelle was first established in Herengracht 485-487, but it eventually ended up in the High School for Girls, Euterpestraat 91-109. The members of the Aussenstelle were generally known as the Sicherheitsdienst (SD), but they were also called the Grüne Polizei because of their green uniform.

Willy Lages was in charge of this Aussenstelle from March 1941 to the end of the Occupation. From October 1944 on he was also formal head of the Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung that was to be set up.

The persecution of the Jews was not a priority at first, but measures to isolate and discriminate against the Jews slowly but surely got under way. The Nazi organisations in the Netherlands included radical anti-Semites who engaged in anti-Semitic actions in the streets in an attempt to get the Germans to adopt a more active policy. However, the German apparatus set to work in a circumspect manner, especially after the February Strike in and around Amsterdam in 1941. A Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung was set up in Amsterdam a month after those strikes; this mock-agency was to enable Jews to emigrate legally. The United States was not yet involved in the war and the Zentralstelle seemed to be a good solution. To make the façade even more attractive, the Jewish Council that had been set up in February 1941 was to install a liaison office - the Expositur - with this Zentralstelle. Numerous Dutch civil servants who were not Nazis were involved in the preparation of all kinds of anti-Semitic measures. The same is true of the final implementation of the so-called Endlösung; hundreds of Dutch police, some Nazis and some not, were involved in the raids, security services and tracking down Jews who had gone into hiding. Of course, whether their persecutors were Nazis or not was hardly a concern of the victims.

More than 100,000 Jews were arrested in the Netherlands and deported between the first calls to report in July 1942 and the last large raid in Amsterdam on 29 September 1943. From October 1943 on policy was aimed at tracking down the remaining Jews in hiding and sending them to the extermination camps.

At this time the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung was housed in the Protestant High School in Adama van Scheltemaplein 1, but the premises were mainly used as an archive and canteen because the Zentralstelle did not really have any function after the end of 1943.² Much more important and still extremely active was the Aussenstelle of the SD, located opposite the Zentralstelle in the High School for Girls.

The Germans were as interested in what the Jews owned as in the Jews themselves, and a large part of the value of their possessions was already transferred to the account of the Lippmann-Rosenthal bank before their deportation. The Germans also appropriated the contents of the houses that were now unoccupied. This activity was organised by the Hausraterfassung, which consisted of four divisions (Colonnes). One of those Colonnes, the Colonne Henneicke, named after the leader of this group, did not confine its activities from October 1942 onwards to registering the contents of vacant Jewish houses, but it turned into a group of hunters who were well paid for hunting Jews. Its members, operating in pairs, were active inside and outside Amsterdam until the end of 1943. Besides their regular pay, from March 1943 on they received a bonus for each Jew caught. The sum of *f* 7.50 is often mentioned, but it could rise to a maximum of *f* 40.³ A notorious hunter of Jews, Abraham Kaper, also head of IVB4 (Judenreferat) described this bounty as follows: 'Initially it amounted to *f* 2.50 per person, but this was later raised to *f* 40. This money had to cover payment of informers and other expenses'.⁴ Whether the hunters of the Jews were German or Dutch, their hunt would not have been so successful without information or tip-offs about Jews in hiding. During one of his interrogations Kaper stated: 'This office worked sporadically with so-called traitors. Reports came in, both signed and anonymous letters about Jewish activities, which led to the setting up of an inquiry'.⁵ No reliable statistics are available. 'Actions were often carried out "on the basis of information received", but there is no way of telling how many cases this involved.'⁶ We do have many postwar statements by members of the SD and their Dutch collaborators, but there is no tangible evidence such as betrayal notes or daily, weekly or monthly reports with names. That is probably due to a large extent to the fact that the Zentralstelle was used as an archive. That archive must have been destroyed when twenty-four British Typhoons bombarded both school buildings on Sunday November 19, 1944, half destroying the Zentralstelle and causing such damage to the SD headquarters that the SD had to move to the Apollofirst hotel. Dozens of homes were destroyed during this bombardment. In all probability, the loss to human life was fifty civilians and only four members of the SD.⁷ A lot of archival material was also destroyed by the SD during September 1944.⁸

3. Going into hiding and arrest in Prinsengracht 263

We have already mentioned that it was the calls to go and work in Germany on 5 July 1942 - Margot Frank had also received one - that prompted Otto Frank to bring forward the plans for him and his family to go into hiding. On Monday 6 July they closed the front door of Merwedeplein 37-II behind them, never to return. Anne wrote:

Not until we were in the street did father and mother tell me piece by piece about the entire plan for going into hiding. For months we had been moving as many of our possessions and clothes out of the house as we could, and now we had reached the stage of wanting to go voluntarily into hiding on 16 July. This summons made us bring the plan ten days forward, so that we would have to be content with less well arranged apartments.⁹

This case of going into hiding was not a typical one. Otto Frank and his family were refugees from Germany and thus did not belong to the Jewish-Dutch community, but Frank had many business contacts with non-Jews who would be able to help him.¹⁰ That was true not only of Miep Gies, Frank's prop and stay, and her colleagues, but also of the Opekta representatives who visited the firm each week, and who had proposed to raise the money to buy the Franks' freedom after the Sicherheitsdienst had raided the house.

Friday 4 August put an end to their period in hiding.¹¹ A report had reached the SD Aussenstelle that there were Jews in hiding in Prinsengracht 263. According to his testimony in 1963 and 1964, SS-Oberscharführer (sergeant) Karl Joseph Silberbauer was notified of the fact by his superior Julius Dettmann. Even the number of Jews in hiding was specified. Dettmann was also alleged to have instructed Abraham Kaper, to send eight of his men with Silberbauer.

In fact, Silberbauer arrived from the Aussenstelle with at least three Dutch collaborators: Gezinus Gringhuis, Willem Grotendorst, and Maarten Kuiper. Accounts vary on what happened after their arrival. Wilhelm van Maaren and Lambert Hartog were working in the warehouse, Miep Gies, Bep Voskuijl, Johannes Kleiman and Victor Kugler were occupied in the front office. An important question is whether the SD knew the whereabouts of those in hiding - in the annex - or whether they just had the address Prinsengracht 263.

Otto Frank was the only person who could tell after the war what had taken place in the annex during the raid. After the war he stated, for instance, that when Silberbauer discovered that Frank had been a reserve lieutenant in the German army during the First World War, he was no longer in such a hurry. Of course he had time on his hands too because they had to wait for a larger car to take away the Jewish prisoners. This seems to indicate that the SD was not aware that there were eight people in hiding. Kleiman and Kugler were also arrested for assisting the Jews. Bep Voskuijl was able to leave without any difficulty, and Jan Gies, who followed his usual practice of arriving at the office around lunch time, was hastily sent away again by his wife. Silberbauer, who realised that Miep was from Vienna too, first called her a traitor to her country Austria, but he did not bother her any further. In 1964 he denied that Miep Gies had later tried to bribe him at the Aussenstelle.

4. Supplies to the Wehrmacht

During the first years of the German Occupation, the Dutch economy was flourishing thanks to German orders, an expanding public spending, and a stable level of production in the agricultural and service sectors. Even the loss of jobs due to the fall in exports to many countries, except Germany and the occupied territories, was compensated by 1941. There was even a regular drop in unemployment from June 1940 on.¹² This was largely the product of German orders to Dutch companies, which amounted to 14% of the gross domestic product by the end of 1940. These were both military and civil orders, but in a Totaler Krieg, the direction in which the war was rapidly heading, that was not really a significant distinction. A Dutch company that supplied the Germans with semi-manufactured goods hardly knew (and probably did not want to know) whether those semi-manufactures were going to be used in the arms industry or not. Of course, a Dutch producer who supplied toothpaste to a German company could not know whether that toothpaste was destined for German soldiers.

In the Netherlands and in the other occupied territories, Berlin tried to organise all German orders through the Zentralauftragstelle (Zast) in order to have a clear picture of the transactions and to prevent prices from rising. Priority was to be given to military orders, but they

were organised through the Rüstungsinspektion. The lists of companies that traded with the Germans via the Zast have been preserved.¹³ They show that in the period 1941-1942 no less than 1,500 Amsterdam firms were trading to a smaller or larger extent with the enemy.

As director of Opekta and Pectacon (the former dealt in pectin, the latter in the production of chemical products and foodstuffs), Otto Frank was directly affected by the anti-Jewish measures of the occupying forces from the autumn of 1940 on.¹⁴ Large and medium-sized 'Jewish' firms were Aryanized, sold or run by Dutch or German nazis. Small firms were taken over for liquidation. Various constructions were devised to avoid Aryanization or liquidation. One was to set up a 'non-Jewish' firm in good time, run by non-Jewish friends or acquaintances, that had taken over all the activities of 'Jewish' firms before the registration date. That was why La Synthèse was set up on 23 October 1940, which changed its name six months later to N.V. Handelsvereniging Gies & Co., a front organisation of friends (Kugler and Gies). The intention was that Pectacon would be incorporated temporarily to prevent the Germans from gaining control of it. However, the Germans saw through Otto Frank's plans and an administrator was appointed for the liquidation of Pectacon. That was K.O.M. Wolters, a solicitor and barrister in Amsterdam, an active member of the Dutch Nazi Party NSB, who acted for as much as nineteen Jewish firms as administrator and liquidator. However this solicitor preferred the East Front and he got a military training in the beginning of 1943. Events followed a different course in the case of Opekta, because the mother company Pomosin in Frankfurt protected it - not to protect Frank, of course, but to prevent a Dutch rival from taking over the business.

As long as the raw materials were still available (in 1942 the Pomosin Werke in Frankfurt supplied 120 barrels of pectin, and in the following year 30,700 bottles of pectin) both Pectacon and Opekta - under other names - continued operations. Around 1941 Frank was no longer owner or director of the firms, which supplied the Germans just as did many others. It is unclear how large those supplies were and who the clients were. Frank's firms do not appear in the Zast lists, which cover the period 1941-1944 and were drawn up by the Economic Investigation Service after the war.¹⁵

Nevertheless, it is known that the Wehrmacht was among the clients, for in the reminiscences that Miep Gies published in 1989 in collaboration with Alison Leslie Gold the following passage appears: 'Our representatives travelled all over the Netherlands and continued to bring back orders to the Prinsengracht. Some of those orders were placed by German army camps in the country'.¹⁶ Miep Gies also writes that one of the regular customers was a German chef who had to cook for German troops: 'He always paid cash and told Koophuis [Kleiman] that if we couldn't get any food we should contact him'. He was based in Kampen, but in January 1945 Miep Gies cycled all the way there to see him and returned to Amsterdam with food.¹⁷

In Van Maaren's testimony of 2 February 1948 he mentions 'the German soldier from Naarden, a member of the SS, who received supplies and whom Mrs Gies and Mrs Brokx went to see in Kampen to fetch food supplies'. He goes on: 'The company supplied a lot to the Wehrmacht throughout the Occupation through middlemen'.¹⁸

However, the Opekta profit and loss accounts for 1942, 1943 and 1944 do not contain any direct deliveries to the Wehrmacht. The Pectacon order book contains a record for 19 September 1940, when pepper and nutmeg (a total of 1,000 kg) were supplied to the Wehrmacht Verpflegungsamt in The Hague. This nursing unit's activities included the purchase of food for the Wehrmacht. On another occasion it is clear that the company to which delivery was made was purchasing for the Wehrmacht or acting as a middleman. This was the NV Sunda Compagnie in The Hague, to which various items were to be supplied on 5 June 1940, according to the Pectacon order book. The delivery was to be made in accordance with the conditions laid down by the

Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW). In her account, Carol Ann Lee states that Otto Frank had delivered through middlemen to the Armee Oberkommando, 'personally led by Hitler'.¹⁹ The name of Hitler has disappeared from the (American) Harper edition, but the Armee Oberkommando still plays its menacing role. It will not be possible to trace exactly how much in all was supplied to German firms or to the Wehrmacht.

5. Three suspects

For years Wim van Maaren, an employee of Opekta, was the only serious candidate suspected of betraying the eight in hiding in Prinsengracht 263. The names of two other suspects have been put forward in recent years: Lena Hartog-Van Bladeren (in 1998), and Tonny Ahlers (in 2002). Investigations of the betrayal were concentrated in the immediate postwar period, in 1963/1964, and in the first half of the 1980s²⁰ with respect to what actually happened during the German raid, and in particular the activities of the warehouse hand Van Maaren.

Wim van Maaren

Van Maaren was taken on in the spring of 1943. He was already viewed with distrust before the raid, because he was suspected of stealing from the warehouse and because he tried to find out who could have been in the warehouse at night. The fact that he was given the key to the premises by SS-Oberscharführer Silberbauer, who was in charge of the group that conducted the raid, thereby becoming de facto manager, is another ground for suspicion. He acted as manager until J. Kleiman, who had become director of Opekta and was arrested as an accomplice during the raid, returned. Kleiman had been detained in the camp in Amersfoort, but was released at the instigation of the Dutch Red Cross because he had become affected by a haemorrhage of the stomach. He was discharged on 18 September.

Soon after the Liberation, Kleiman wrote a letter to the Political Investigation Service (POD) to report Van Maaren's petty theft and other minor crimes and to notify them that he would have known that there were Jews in hiding there. 'When I asked him whether he knew that there were people in hiding in our premises, he replied that he only suspected it', wrote Kleiman. The letter ended with the question as to whether there were sufficient grounds to question Van Maaren and the temporary warehouse hand Lammert Hartog.

No action was taken on the basis of the information contained in this letter for two years, until Otto Frank paid a visit to the Political Investigation Department (the PRA, the successor to the POD as of 1 January 1946) in Amsterdam at the end of June or the beginning of July 1947. The first witnesses were heard at the beginning of 1948. Kleiman had the following to say about the policemen involved in the raid: 'They seemed to be completely aware of the situation, because they went straight to the hiding place'.²¹ Although Kleiman had not been there in person (he had remained downstairs), no further questions were asked on this point. Kleiman also stated that he had heard from Mr P.J. Genot (who worked for a different company with which Kleiman was connected) that Mrs Lena Hartog, who had worked as a cleaner at Pectacon for a short time, had told Anna Genot-Van Wijk that there were Jews in hiding in Prinsengracht 263. Mrs Genot-Van Wijk had replied that one should be careful about spreading such talk.

Mr and Mrs Genot-Van Wijk, who were questioned on 10 March 1948, confirmed what Kleiman had said. It further emerged that Genot himself had been to Prinsengracht 263 on several occasions, which was how he had got to know Van Maaren. They did not consider Hartog to be capable of treachery, and Genot found Van Maaren 'a very strange sort of person and I did not know what to make of him'. Ten days later, Lammert Hartog told the PRA (Collobaration

Investigation Unit) that Van Maaren had told him that there were Jews in hiding there two weeks before the raid. He also stated that the police who conducted the raid 'did not have to look for Jews in hiding, but acted as though they were fully informed about the situation'. Unfortunately, the detectives forgot to ask him how he knew that.

Victor Kugler, deputy manager of Pectacon, who had been arrested together with Kleiman during the raid, merely stated on 14 January 1948 that '[we] suspect a certain Van Maaren'. He was not questioned any further about the raid, even though he had been on the spot.

Miep Gies was actually the most important witness at the time; she had remained behind with Van Maaren when the arrested persons were taken away, and either she must have given the keys to Van Maaren or Silberbauer must have taken them from her and given them to him. Her questioning indicates that she suspected Van Maaren of having good relations with the SD, since he was supposed to have stopped Silberbauer from having her arrested as well.²²

Miep Gies was, without doubt, not happy about the fact that a simple warehouse hand had been made her superior through the intervention of the Germans. All the same, it seems logical, for why should Silberbauer have entrusted the firm to her care? He considered that Miep had become a traitor to her country (Austria), and believed that her husband had been an accomplice of the Jews.²³ So there is no need to interpret the fact that Silberbauer appointed the male - undoubtedly an important factor at the time - warehouse hand Van Maaren, who was fourteen years older than Miep, as manager as a sign of Van Maaren's guilt. When Kleiman resumed control at the end of October, Van Maaren did not put up any resistance; if he had been a friend of the SD, he could have incriminated Kleiman as an accomplice of the Jews to the SD in order to hang on to his attractive position. But he did not do so.

The PRA proceeded to examine the material that had been collected, and concluded: 'The betrayal is denied by the accused, and the evidence is very vague. The evidence is therefore not conclusive.' The case was dropped on 22 May 1948. Six months later Van Maaren was given a conditional discharge, on condition that he would be put under the surveillance of the Political Delinquents Surveillance Department for three years, and that he could not enter the civil or the military service for ten years. He was also stripped of his active and passive right to vote during that period. Van Maaren successfully appealed. On 13 August 1949 he was given a full acquittal, because the magistrate did not consider the betrayal proven and declared the charges nullified.

In October 1963 it was discovered that Silberbauer, the member of the SD who had been in charge of the Prinsengracht raid, was at that moment police-officer in Vienna. By now the diary of Anne Frank had achieved international fame and the question of the betrayal was raised once more. The State Investigation Department in Amsterdam opened a new inquiry.

This inquiry was conducted more thoroughly than the inquiry held in the late 1940s, and the investigators were more professional than their predecessors had been. By now Kleiman and Hartog were dead and Kugler had emigrated to Canada. The other witnesses were questioned again, as well as Silberbauer and J.J. de Kok, who had worked as an assistant of Van Maaren for a few months in 1943. De Kok admitted that Van Maaren had committed thefts and that he had himself been involved, but he had never noticed any sympathy with the nazis on the part of Van Maaren. Bep Voskuijl, the younger colleague of Miep Gies, was questioned, but only stated that she had always been afraid of Van Maaren.

Miep Gies was naturally an important witness again. Her final statement during questioning was not very different from what the others had said:

Only the unsympathetic behaviour of the afore-mentioned Van Maaren and the contact that I had after their release with Mr Kleiman and Mr Kugler were reason for me to cast

my suspicions to some degree in the direction of Van Maaren, without being able to provide you with sufficient facts and circumstances on the basis of which you could elaborate suspicions of him.

Willy Lages, who was still serving a life sentence in Breda prison (he was released in 1966 and died five years later), was questioned, but he had nothing of any importance to impart. Next his former subordinate Silberbauer was questioned. He stated that on the day in question he had received a phone call at the Aussenstelle from Dettmann, who told him that he had received a tip-off by telephone about eight Jews in Prinsengracht 263. Dettmann also instructed Kaper to take eight men with him to the Prinsengracht, he stated, but in the end Silberbauer and a number of his colleagues were dispatched. Silberbauer went on to state that when they arrived, they told the 'Firmenchef' (Kugler) that they knew that there were Jews in hiding, and that he immediately took them to the door behind the bookcase. Silberbauer denied that Miep Gies had visited him, but did not rule out the possibility that Van Maaren might have visited him on a couple of occasions. The last witness called was Van Maaren himself. This time he admitted to the thefts, but not to knowing that there were Jews in hiding there. According to him, there was 'an air of mystery' before the raid. It was Miep Gies, not Silberbauer, who had given him the keys, and Silberbauer had certainly not appointed him as Verwalter. This time there were more questions about Van Maaren's background, and inquiries were conducted in his neighbourhood. The picture that emerged was that he was regarded as 'financially unreliable', but certainly did not have a reputation for being pro-German or sympathising with the nazis. The investigators were unable to find sufficient proof of the allegation of a neighbour that Van Maaren was a buyer for the Wehrmacht.

Van Maaren was not bothered by the justice any further.

Lena Hartog-Van Bladeren

The first serious biography of Anne Frank was published in 1998. In her *Anne Frank. De biografie*, Melissa Müller puts forward another suspect: Lena Hartog-Van Bladeren, the wife of Lammert Hartog, who had been a warehouse hand for Opekta from the spring of 1944 until August of the same year. Kleiman's brother had a cleaning company, and she worked as a cleaner for that company as well as doing the cleaning at Prinsengracht 263. During questioning in the postwar period, Lena denied that she had ever worked at Prinsengracht 263, but Miep Gies stated that she certainly had, because she gave Bep Voskuijl the money to pay Lena for the cleaning. Lammert Hartog owed his job to Kleiman's brother.

'It is certain that Lammert Hartog told his wife Lena about the Jews in hiding', Müller writes.²⁴ According to Müller, Lena was seriously concerned about the safety of her husband and her son. She was worried about his safety because he worked where there were Jews in hiding, and she was worried about the safety of her son Klaas, who worked near Berlin through the Arbeitseinsatz before volunteering to join the Kriegsmarine. That is the reason, Müller argues, why it is plausible she made a phone call to the Germans on 4 August 1944 to tell them about the Jews in Prinsengracht 263. This is also in line with the 'persistent rumours' that it was a woman who had called. Müller's comments on the questioning conducted in 1948 are in harmony with what we wrote in the introduction to *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank*. She suspects that it was the poor quality of that questioning which enabled Lena to evade detection. Since Lena died on 10 June 1963, she could not be questioned a second time.

Tonny Ahlers

In 2002 the English researcher Carol Ann Lee, nowadays a resident of Amsterdam, put forward

the third and latest theory about the betrayal of the Jews in hiding in Prinsengracht 263. Four years earlier she had published a biography of Anne Frank, *Pluk rozen op aarde en vergeet mij niet. Anne Frank 1929-1945* [Pluck roses on the earth and do not forget me. Anne Frank 1929-1945], followed in 2002 by her *Het verborgen leven van Otto Frank* [The hidden life of Otto Frank]. This ominous title is accounted for by a part of her book, in which she argues that Otto Frank was in the clutches of his betrayer right down to his death. All the same, the title does not cover the full contents of the book, because *Het verborgen leven van Otto Frank* has the character of a double biography: it presents the biographies of both Otto Frank and his alleged betrayer Tonny Ahlers. This is certainly legitimate from Lee's point of view, because she argues that their lives were closely intertwined: 'they had a history together'.²⁵ What is Lee's version of the events?

In March 1941 a brief conversation took place in the Rokin in Amsterdam between Otto Frank and J.M. Jansen about the course of the war. Joseph Jansen had been a stand constructor for Frank's Opekta firm in the past and was married to a demonstrator from the same company. Frank expressed his doubts about the German chances of victory to Jansen.²⁶

Next month, on 18 April 1941, a certain A.C. (Tonny) Ahlers appeared in Frank's office. The two men did not know one another. Ahlers had a letter with him that Jansen had written to the head of the NSB with a request to pass it on to the SS. When Ahlers showed the letter to Frank, he recognised Jansen's handwriting. The letter described his conversation with Jansen of the previous month. Ahlers (a member of the NSB since the summer of 1940, and a member of the more radical Nazi Party (the NSNAP) since October of that year)²⁷ had apparently intercepted the letter, though it was unclear how he had done so. Frank gave Ahlers a sum of money then and once again on a later occasion, and subsequently stated that he never saw Ahlers again during the war.²⁸ Lee contradicts this last statement: 'According to Ahlers, that first meeting in Otto's private office was the start of regular visits'.²⁹ In the English and US editions of her *The hidden life*, this has been expanded to become 'according to Ahlers and other witnesses'.³⁰

Jansen's letter of betrayal has not been found. Ahlers left it with Frank, who showed it to Kugler and Miep, and later to his solicitor Dunselman. Dunselman took a few notes, filed the letter, and later destroyed it.³¹

The 'highly anti-Semitic'³² Ahlers was a regular visitor to the SD in Amsterdam during the war. The SD enabled him to move into a house that had previously been occupied by Jews in November 1943. It was near the office of the SD-Aussenstelle in the southern district of Amsterdam. His neighbours included all kinds of members of the SD (Döring, Rühl, Viebahn) and an Abwehr agent (Rouwental). For some time Ahlers worked for the man who had been put in charge of Frank's firm by the Germans, the solicitor K.O.M. Wolters. Ahlers had previously had his own small company dealing in sugar products and raw materials in 1941. He needed suppliers for this Wehrmacht Einkauf Büro PTN (Petoma). He found them, according to his widow, in the person of Otto Frank; first of all Ahlers received payment for keeping his mouth shut about Jansen's letter, and later he is supposed to have been supplied with raw materials for his business by Frank.³³ How long those deliveries lasted and how they were made 'is unclear'.³⁴ It was probably through his work in the office of Verwalter Wolters that Ahlers found out about the legal smoke-screen that Frank had been obliged to put up around the 'Aryanization' of his companies in 1940/1941.³⁵

In 1963/1964 Ahlers stated that he knew about deliveries by Otto Frank's companies to the Wehrmacht.³⁶ He added that he 'permitted' Frank to go into hiding.³⁷ Ahlers' knowledge of those deliveries to the Wehrmacht would make Frank vulnerable to blackmail after the war too,

and (according to his relatives) Ahlers made use of that until long after the war was over.

Ahlers was detained a month after the German capitulation. He was suspected, among other things, of having acted as an informer for the SD.³⁸ Soon after Otto Frank's return from Auschwitz, Lee claims, he came into contact with Ahlers once more: Frank wrote the name 'Ahlers' twice in his appointments diary in July 1945. Lee argues that he 'must' have visited Ahlers in the prison in Scheveningen at that time,³⁹ but tones this down to 'presumably so' in the English edition,⁴⁰ where she adds in parenthesis that the contact might also have been through Ahlers' wife.⁴¹ In the following month, on 21 August 1945, Frank sent an incriminating letter concerning their meeting in April 1941 to the Bureau for National Security (BNV). He did the same in November 1945 to an unknown addressee.⁴²

According to Lee, Ahlers had Otto Frank in his clutches: after all, Ahlers knew about the deliveries to the Wehrmacht, about the - enforced - dismissal of a Jewish employee from Opekta, about members of the NSB who had remained in service, about the wartime profit, and about the fact that Frank was a stateless 'German', which could lead to confiscation of his business because of his 'enemy nationality'.⁴³

This situation worsens even more when Lee goes on to state that Ahlers was not only blackmailing Frank, but that he was also indirectly the betrayer of Otto Frank. When the betrayal of Anne Frank in particular attracted media attention in 1963 because of the arrest of the Austrian member of the SD Silberbauer, Ahlers sent the judicial authorities in Vienna a letter in which he claimed, among other things: 'Otto Frank collaborated with the nazis during the war and certainly cannot be seen as an example of what his coreligionaries went through in Nazi Germany'.⁴⁴ Ahlers also sent a letter to Silberbauer himself.⁴⁵ Those letters indicate that Ahlers 'permitted'⁴⁶ Frank to go into hiding, and that - according to Lee - Ahlers knew that Frank used his annex as a hiding place.⁴⁷ Ahlers, she claims, had seen that there was an annex behind Prinsengracht 263 when he visited Frank in April 1941.⁴⁸ Moreover, in 1938 his mother lived on the first floor of Prinsengracht 253, a house with an annex too.⁴⁹ Ahlers lived there with her 'for several months'.⁵⁰

In the autumn of 1944 Ahlers was going through a bad patch: his firm went bankrupt,⁵¹ he could no longer make use of deliveries by Frank's firm, he was in financial trouble, and he could use the bounty that he would receive for bringing in a Jew. Although Ahlers moved to Nieuwer-Amstel (Amstelveen) in April 1944,⁵² he was afraid of Abwehr agent Herman Rouwendal, who rented a room in his house in Amsterdam. Ahlers went to the SD for protection and wanted to get in their good books.⁵³ Though she refuses to commit herself entirely, Lee 'believes'⁵⁴ that this combination of circumstances, fuelled by Ahlers' anti-Semitism, led him to tell his friend and example, Maarten Kuiper from the SD, about the situation in Prinsengracht 263. Kuiper phoned Dettmann.⁵⁵ According to Ahlers' brother Cas, it was Tonny Ahlers himself who phoned Dettmann,⁵⁶ who then called Kaper of IVB4. It was Kaper who sent Silberbauer and his men to the address they had been given. So even if the phone call to the SD did not come from Ahlers himself, the incriminating information did.

In December 1945 Otto Frank was still trying to find the person who had betrayed his family and the others who had gone into hiding with them.⁵⁷ In the same month he discovered that Ahlers had betrayed others and wanted 'nothing more to do with him'.⁵⁸ It seems doubtful whether Frank ever suspected Ahlers of betraying Prinsengracht 263.⁵⁹ Later he claimed to be no longer interested in the detection of the culprit. According to the letters that Ahlers sent in the 1960s, this was because Frank himself had a lot to hide.⁶⁰ Ahlers knew about that, and according to the sources used by Lee in 2002, Ahlers used his knowledge to extort money from Frank after he

moved to Switzerland in 1952.⁶¹ In the third version of her book, the US edition of 2003, Lee comes to the conclusion that this blackmail started in the mid-1960s, because in 1958 Frank still believed that Ahlers had saved his life in 1941 and because from 1963 on Ahlers sent his incriminatory letters to Vienna.⁶² This blackmail, she claims, continued until Otto Frank's death in 1980.⁶³

This last revelation is not to be found in the first version of Lee's book, which appeared in Dutch in March 2002. This is because various witnesses from the Ahlers family contacted Lee after the publication of that book. Naturally, she has incorporated their reminiscences in the later editions of her book: the English edition, released in the autumn of 2002, and the US edition that came out in early 2003.⁶⁴ We shall not refer to all three publications in the following sections except where it is relevant to do so. This is important because Lee has taken advantage of the publication of new editions to modify her original text and argument. It is only natural for her to do so. The fact that the first version of her book, which was published in Dutch, is a translation of her original English manuscript is irrelevant since the Dutch edition appeared several months before the English one. An Afterword in the English edition contains an account of Lee's investigations after the publication of the Dutch edition.⁶⁵ These have mainly been incorporated in the body of the text in the recent US edition.⁶⁶

6. Guilty?

The main problem in contemporary history is often not the lack of historical material, but its abundance, which is often too much to mention. That is not the case with the present inquiry; on the contrary, the sources are scanty and contradict one another. The scarcity of sources is partly due to the bombardment of 19 November 1944 of the Zentralstelle, which was used among other things as an archival depot, and to the fact that the SD most probably destroyed incriminating evidence in September 1944. Most of what is available today comes from postwar interrogations of members of the SD and other involved parties. The reliability of the testimonies of actors and the professionalism of the interrogators play an important part. The name of Anne Frank is not mentioned in the interrogations of members of the SD; this is only natural, one might suppose, since she had not achieved fame at that time, but by the time of the interrogations after the discovery of Silberbauer this was no longer the case. However, they naturally had a lot to hide and welcomed the opportunity to pass the responsibility on to a colleague. Little information is provided on specific matters because in most cases the accused continue to deny the charges. The general tenor of the cases emerges clearly enough, although the amount of bounty paid, for example, varies considerably, as we have seen. This can be an important factor, since it plays a role in the hypothesis of betrayal by Ahlers. It is regrettable that the interrogations of 1948 stopped where they did, because some stories are evidently second-hand.

If the different hypotheses are considered, the following analyses can be made.

Van Maaren

Though he was hardly popular among those in close proximity to him, Van Maaren was not pro-German or pro-Nazi, nor did he show any signs of anti-Semitism. It is only natural that his thefts should have aroused the suspicions and fears of those in hiding in the annex and their accomplices, but those directly involved, those accomplices, were unable to come forward with facts that point to betrayal. That was also the view taken by the Political Investigation Department. What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that he appealed against his conditional discharge and was fully acquitted. If he really had been the culprit and had (indirectly) had seven

deaths on his conscience, he would surely have been satisfied with the conditional discharge. When the case was reopened in 1963, very little new material emerged.

The State Investigation Department closed the Van Maaren dossier on 4 November 1964. It was sent to the Public Prosecutor with an accompanying letter which stated that 'the inquiry has not been able to lead to any tangible result'. Investigator A.J. van Helden went on to list five factors which lent support to Van Maaren's innocence: (1) Van Maaren refused on principle to support Winterhulp-Nederland, an organisation with nazi leanings that had the monopoly of charity; (2) Van Maaren did not know the people in hiding, so there could be no question of his bearing them a grudge; (3) Van Maaren was in financial trouble, but there is no evidence of the payment of a bounty for betrayal; (4) Van Maaren helped to ensure that parts of Anne's diary were in safe keeping, while he could easily have given it to the SD; (5) Van Maaren was not viewed sympathetically by neighbours who had been members of the Resistance, but he did not seem like the betrayer of Jews in hiding. And although he knew about Resistance activities in his neighbourhood, he had never informed the Germans.⁶⁷

However, not everyone was convinced of his innocence. For instance, in 1964 Kugler wrote about him to Miep Gies: 'It is bad enough to have the death of 7 people on his conscience and to be responsible for the troubles that the other three went through during a certain period'.⁶⁸

More than ten years later, Otto Frank wrote in a letter that Van Maaren could not be prosecuted 'as there is no evidence'.⁶⁹

Hartog-Van Bladeren

Melissa Müller bases her reconstruction on a number of premises. Two weeks before the raid Lammert Hartog knew that the Jews were in hiding there,⁷⁰ but the claim that 'it is certain that Lammert Hartog told his wife Lena about the Jews in hiding'⁷¹ cannot be substantiated.

If she was so worried about the fate of her husband, why did she phone the SD at the moment when he was working in the Frank warehouse? At any rate, during his questioning by the Political Investigation Department, Lammert was able to tell what happened during the raid, and he continued to work there for a further 'three or four days'.⁷² On the other hand, there is the statement by Kleiman, who told the same department that Hartog 'already had his coat on when the SD arrived. He left immediately and we have not seen him since'.⁷³

What can have been the connection between such an act of betrayal and the fate of her son? He had joined the Kriegsmarine as a volunteer on 22 August 1944 and she had probably not heard from him for some time. But on the date when she is accused of having called the SD, there was nothing the matter with her son. It was not until seven years after the war that official notice of his death was issued by the Standesamt 1 in Berlin, which gave his date of death as 'Anfang Mai 1945, Tag nicht bekannt'. However much latitude that date may allow, there can be no question of Lena's having foreseen in August 1944 the death of her son almost nine months later.

The ordinary procedure followed in the Euterpestraat does not indicate that a phone call from an unknown person - we assume that Lena Hartog was unknown there - would have led to direct action.

The 'persistent rumours' that it was a woman's voice that was heard on the line go back to a remark by Cor Suijk, former member of the board of the Anne Frank Foundation and a confidant of Otto Frank. He had heard it from Frank a long time ago. Frank's widow, Elfriede Frank Markovits, stated shortly before her death in October 1998 that it had been a woman's voice. She had it on the authority of her husband.⁷⁴ There is no indication of how Otto Frank came by that information. Cor Suijk contributed substantially to the book by Melissa Müller, and it is conceivable that Melissa Müller took the woman's voice as a premise in searching for an

appropriate suspect.

Ahlers

Carol Ann Lee's elaborate theory certainly compels respect for its cleverness. She combines a determined drive to find the truth with a great ability to make connections. What is at stake here, however, is the question of whether her theory is valid. Given the complexity and wealth of detail of her book, it is useful at this point to break her theory down into three components: (1) contacts between Ahlers and Otto Frank; (2) blackmail of Frank by Ahlers; and (3) betrayal of Prinsengracht 263 by Ahlers.

1. Contacts between Ahlers and Otto Frank

a Contacts in April 1941 - The visit by Ahlers to Otto Frank on 18 April 1941 is an established fact. Frank himself referred to it.⁷⁵ Lee rightly points out that Otto Frank gave 'different versions'⁷⁶ of it that diverge on minor points, such as the amount of money involved, but which corroborate one another on the main points.

b Contacts during the rest of the war - While Ahlers received money 'when they met for the first time' in exchange for keeping his mouth shut about Jansen's letter,⁷⁷ 'later on Frank supplied him with material for his business instead'.⁷⁸ According to Ahlers⁷⁹ 'and other witnesses'⁸⁰, that first meeting in Frank's private office was certainly not the last: it was claimed that it was followed by regular visits.⁸¹ In 1945 Frank stated that they were confined to that first (and probably a second) meeting in April 1941. Otto Frank wrote at the time: 'I have not seen him [Ahlers] since'.⁸² On the basis of the statements of Ahlers and those 'other witnesses', Lee concludes that Frank's statements on the matter are 'lies',⁸³ and later in her book she writes that it was an 'uncommon lie'.⁸⁴ In the discussion that we had with Lee on 27 September 2002, she admitted that this was a translation error: the English text states that Frank 'was prevaricating',⁸⁵ and the 'uncommon lie' has been toned down to 'not the only curiosity'.⁸⁶ Frank had at least been prevaricating. Had he? The course of events in the summer of 1945 makes it clear that Frank had had contact with someone at least then (i.e. in the summer of 1945) about Ahlers, though it is unclear whether that contact was actually with Ahlers himself. But what went on during the war? Did Ahlers pay 'regular visits' to Otto Frank?

'Ahlers and other witnesses'

As mentioned earlier, Lee backs up her argument by referring to 'Ahlers and other witnesses'.⁸⁷ Since neither the Dutch publisher Balans (Boek 2002) nor the English publisher Viking/Penguin (Book 2002) provided Lee's book with proper notes, in the first instance we had to resort to a computer print with source references (Ms.) that Lee has deposited with the Anne Frank Foundation in Amsterdam so that those interested can verify her sources. It is only since the spring of 2003 that we have a published set of footnotes at our disposal in the US edition published by HarperCollins (Harper 2003).

In her computer print, Lee refers to a letter of Ahlers of 20 December 1964 for Ahlers,⁸⁸ though no source is given in the US edition.⁸⁹ As Lee told us, the letter of Ahlers from 1966 was addressed to the Dutch weekly *Revue*.⁹⁰

Ahlers' letters of 1963, 1964 and 1966

From the citations that Lee has published,⁹¹ it was already clear that Ahlers' letter of 1966 is

largely a reprise of the letter that he sent to in Vienna in 1963 and of the letter that he sent to Silberbauer in the following year.⁹² There have been copies of these letters in the NIOD since the 1960s, and since they are a prime source for Lee, we cite the latter in extenso:

‘I [Ahlers] have had to visit Otto Frank on several occasions at his address Prinsengracht 263 (annex) since the date of 18 April 1941 to urge him to go into hiding. In those days every Jew went into hiding immediately after a warning. Not Otto Frank. He supplied his Pectine products to the German Wehrmacht, and has members of the NSB in his employ, especially his travelling rep and standdresser Jansen. This Dutch National Socialist (NSB) was member number 29992. His son was also employed by Frank/Opekta, and his activities included work in the warehouse... In Frank’s letter dated 21 August 1945, a date on which there was no question of a so-called ‘Annex’ [the Dutch title of the diary], Frank positively identified the Jansens in his employ as his betrayers. When this matter hit the international press a few months ago, Otto Frank impudently kept silent about this. I know exactly why. But nevertheless this man allowed himself to be called “honest” and “representative”. The question is only: of what?’⁹³

It looks as though the first sentence (‘had to visit Otto Frank on several occasions’) is the first clue that led Lee to believe that Ahlers and Frank also had contact with one another after April 1941. The content of Frank’s postwar letter referred to by Ahlers will be discussed below, as will the intriguing use of the plural in the words ‘the Jansens in his employ as his betrayers’; but for the time being we are primarily concerned with the period leading up to the German capitulation.

In his letter of 1966, Ahlers goes a step further in declaring that Otto Frank ‘at any rate should [have] announce[d] his knowledge about the most likely warehouse assistant/traitor Jansen junior’. He also stated that Frank

‘sold the Pectin products to the German Wehrmacht and others. As a preservative, Pectin was urgently needed in the German war industry, for which many Dutch companies were deployed too. [...] In my opinion Frank received his raw materials directly from Berlin.’

The fact that Opekta did not avoid supplying the Germans has been discussed above, and of course it is true that many Dutch companies did something similar (including Ahlers’ own business). Frank’s Opekta did not receive raw materials ‘directly from Berlin’, but from another German city, Frankfurt, from the mother company Pomosin Werke. In his letter Ahlers explained the fact that the Frank family ‘did not go into hiding until July 1942’ from the false sense of security that Frank had felt until then from the ‘NSB/Wehrmacht relation/supply etc. etc.’.

‘A business arrangement’ during the war

Lee claims that during the war Ahlers and Frank concluded ‘a business deal by which Frank supplied Ahlers’ firm’.⁹⁴ It ‘is not clear’ how these supplies were organised or how long they lasted. They are supposed to have taken place in exchange for Ahlers’ silence about Jansen’s letter. As the source for these allegations Lee cites his widow Martha⁹⁶ and Ahlers’ family.⁹⁷ The extant archival documents of Frank’s firms do not contain any clue that might confirm the existence of such deliveries.

The reliability of Ahlers as a source

Lee refers in this connection to ‘all the available documents’.⁹⁸ In fact they all appear to go back to a single source: Tonny Ahlers.

As far as reliability is concerned, it is not just appearances that are against Tonny Ahlers. He let his imagination run away with him. The Political Investigation Department (PRA) in Amsterdam wrote in 1948: ‘Whoever is questioned about the suspect [Ahlers] describes him as a

boaster whose imagination runs away with him and who likes to pretend that he is big and important'. Ahlers was said to display 'great imagination and a lot of idle talk'. The impression that Ahlers had made on an investigator of the Political Investigation Service (POD, the forerunner of the PRA) was 'that he is a big braggart, very stupid and capable of anything'.⁹⁹ The PRA concluded its report with the remark 'that the suspect [Ahlers] is very difficult to pin down on anything'.

'He has very long stories about all kinds of minor matters and is constantly showing off by mentioning the names of various authorities and bodies. When you try to go more deeply into the matter, it does not go anywhere and all you get is yet more stories.'¹⁰⁰ Fifteen years later, in connection with the letters that Ahlers had sent to Austria at the time of the Silberbauer affair, the Dutch State Investigation Department opened up an inquiry on him. He was probably visited 'a couple of times' in the winter of 1963/1964.¹⁰¹ The State Investigator Van Helden stated in his report: 'This Ahlers [...] is an imaginative person, who does not distinguish between truth and fantasy very clearly. His behaviour during the war bordered on criminal deception'. Lee took Ahlers' testimonies seriously in 2002 and 2003.¹⁰² In the 1980s the director of the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation, Harry Paape, did not in the light of investigator Van Helden's remarks.¹⁰³ That is why this Ahlers does not appear in the chapter on the betrayal ['Het verraad'] in *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank* (1986, 2001).

Ahlers' brother and son said very unpleasant things about Ahlers after the appearance of Lee's book,¹⁰⁴ but they do not call him a blatant fantasist. Lee herself is explicit about this: 'And although he [Ahlers] was indeed a storyteller, his tales always had some basis in truth'.¹⁰⁵ We would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss this with the main members of the Ahlers family to verify this, but unfortunately most of them refused.¹⁰⁶

The sources of Carol Ann Lee

As stated above, the testimonies before us essentially go back to one and the same source: Tonny Ahlers and his family. There are convincing indications that Ahlers himself was not reliable. This is a central argument against the validity of Lee's theory. Is her theory perhaps supported by Ahlers' relatives? We have been unable to interview the widow, brother or eldest son. Lee has interviewed the widow Martha and the brother Cas - although the second contact between Martha and Lee in particular does not appear to have run smoothly.¹⁰⁷ However that may be, we are dependent on what Lee has recorded them as saying. Ahlers' youngest son, Anton, was born soon after the German capitulation. Of course, he may subsequently have made use of all kinds of sources of information for what he knows about the behaviour of his father during the war, but during our interview with him it became evident that he had eavesdropped or been told what he knew by his father.¹⁰⁸ There is no indication in the written sources (such as the business administration) that Otto Frank actually did business with Ahlers during the war. In our view, this has in no way been proven, or even made plausible. The same applies to the alleged contacts between the two men after April 1941. In this respect, we are bound to conclude that Lee has relied on source material that is too one-sided.

c Contacts in the summer/autumn of 1945 - Otto Frank's first letter - What is beyond doubt, on the other hand, are the steps that Otto Frank took to Ahlers in 1945. On 24 July 1945 Frank asked the prison authorities in The Hague for the correct address to which to send information about Ahlers. Frank had discovered 'incidentally' that Ahlers was 'currently interned'. The prison authorities scribbled Ahlers' cell number, 769, on the envelope and apparently returned the letter, since it is now in the possession of Anne's cousin Buddy Elias in Basel, where Lee found

it.¹⁰⁹ We also examined this piece of evidence there and found out more: on the back of the envelope is written: 'Correspondence not permitted'. Lee does not mention this detail. At the bottom of Frank's own letter the prison director wrote that he should contact the BNV. Frank did so a month later.

Otto Frank's second letter

On 21 August 1945 Otto Frank wrote a letter to the Bureau for National Security (BNV), a predecessor of the National Security Service (BVD, today the General Intelligence and Security Service, AIVD), and one of its first postwar priorities was to track down collaborators and traitors to their country.¹¹⁰ So Frank approached the right authorities.

He wrote to the Bureau that he 'happened' to have heard 'that Mr A.C. Ahlers, v.d. Hoochlaan 24 in Amstelveen' was detained 'in the prison, v. Alkemadeaan 850, The Hague, cell 769'. He then devoted a page and a half to the incident with Jansen in the Rokin in 1941 and the visit by Ahlers a month later. Nowhere does Frank 'positively' identify Jansen as his betrayer, as Ahlers was to claim in his letters to Vienna in 1963/1964. (Or the incident of 1941 should be viewed as betrayal; but it did not have any harmful effects. The telephone call of betrayal was made in 1944.) Frank concluded his letter:

'I felt obliged to inform you of the above, in view of the fact that I believe that Mr Ahlers saved my life at that time, for if this letter had reached the hands of the SS, I would have been arrested and killed long ago.

As already stated, I know nothing else about this young man.'¹¹¹ Apparently Frank had discovered in the meantime exactly where Ahlers was living in the Van de Hoochlaan in Amstelveen. Lee writes 'and yet [Otto Frank] recalled Ahlers's full name and address from "one" meeting in 1941'.¹¹² Lee ignores the fact that Ahlers was still living in Amsterdam in 1941; he did not move to Amstelveen until April 1944, a fact that can only have reached Frank's ears later.

That very same day Frank sent the Political Investigation Service in Amsterdam a copy of the letter that he sent to Scheveningen about Alders. In the note that accompanied it Frank urged them to put Jansen 'behind bars'. Jansen was arrested. Partly in connection with the 1941 incident, he was sentenced in 1941 to four and a half years' imprisonment.¹¹³

Otto Frank's third letter

On 27 November 1945 Frank wrote yet another letter - the third - this time to an unknown addressee, in which he once again described the intervention of 'Alers' (sic). This time Frank added:

'When Mr Alhers came out of prison a few months ago, he visited me and told me how everything had turned out. From his further comments I was bound to conclude that he has worked with the Resistance.'¹¹⁴

That final comment indicates that Frank has allowed himself to be talked into something by Ahlers. It is also noteworthy that nowhere in his letters does Frank consider the possibility that Jansen and Ahlers may have teamed up. Apart from that, there seems to be very little of any note.

Otto Frank's diaries

A revealing find by Carol Ann Lee concerns notes in Otto Frank's diaries. They are now in the possession of the Anne Frank Foundation in Amsterdam. The NIOD was able to examine them in the 1980s, when they were in the possession of the Frank family.¹¹⁵ It is thanks to Lee's

detective powers that these diaries have come to play a role in the investigation of the betrayal of Prinsengracht 263. What is there in those diaries, and why is it so relevant?

'Ahlers', Frank noted on 20 and 23 July, 27 and 30 August, and 28 November 1945. The dates in August might refer to the visit from Ahlers that Frank was to describe in November 1945 as having taken place 'a few months ago'. At any rate, Lee considers the possibility that Ahlers and Frank met on those days in August 'the most logical explanation',¹¹⁶ although she does not mention Frank's letter of November in this connection. (Lee is more forthright in the Dutch edition: Frank and Ahlers met 'one another again'.¹¹⁷) What about the two days in July and the day in November?

The July days play a crucial role in Lee's book. A few days before, on 18 July, Otto Frank had been informed that both his daughters were dead. He already knew that his wife Edith was dead, but until the 18th of July he still hoped that Margot and Anne were alive. Six days later he sent his letter to the prison in The Hague: he had heard 'incidentally' that Ahlers was in prison. In the intervening days the name of Ahlers is recorded twice in his diary. In the English version of her book, Lee considers that Frank visited Ahlers in prison on those days, or at least 'presumably so'.¹¹⁸ But that presumption is not a strong one. In the Dutch translation of her book (which was published first), there was no note of caution in her words: Frank 'must' have visited Ahlers in prison.¹¹⁹ But according to the note on the envelope of Frank's first letter, even correspondence was 'not permitted'. So would Frank have been able to visit Ahlers? By the time of the US edition of 2003, there is no longer any mention of visits to the prison. In that edition, Lee asks herself: 'Did they [Frank and Ahlers] meet? It is not impossible, but what seems more likely is that Ahlers's wife, Martha, contacted Otto on her husband's behalf'.¹²⁰ We consider that Lee has hit the nail on the head with this, her third version, even though a visit by Ahlers (on conditional day release) to Frank cannot be ruled out entirely. What was the regime like in Scheveningen in the immediate postwar period?

The possibility of a visit to the prison in Scheveningen
From 6 June 1945 Ahlers was imprisoned (on the orders of the Bureau for National Security) in the Cell Barracks in Scheveningen. He had probably been imprisoned before, because his file contains a note of totally unknown provenance stating that Ahlers was 'discharged and sent home because of serious family circumstances' on 29 May 1945. This may refer to the birth of his second son, Anton, on 28 May 1945. Ahlers was supposed to return on 14 June.¹²¹ Apparently he did return - at some moment - for he was released from Scheveningen at the end of November 1945.¹²² According to Lee,¹²³ Ahlers was released in September 1945. She derives this information from Ahlers' Social Security dossier.¹²⁴ We were unable to find this specific item of information there. What the dossier does state is that Ahlers was 'immediately' incarcerated in the prison in Scheveningen after Liberation, 'but that after a few months he was released on the testimony of several persons, including Jews, whom he had helped'.¹²⁵ The Political Investigation Department in Amsterdam was unclear about this as well: in 1948 it noted that it was 'impossible to ascertain' by whom Ahlers had been discharged, but that it had taken place 'after a few months'.¹²⁶ We have not been able to find any additional information in the scanty sources, so that the contradiction noted above remains unsolved.

In the meantime he enjoyed 'freedom of movement', as he put it, in Scheveningen: he had to be inside by ten o'clock each evening.¹²⁷ This is not entirely impossible: special criminal procedure against collaborators was still in what is called the 'wild stage' at the time.¹²⁸ If Ahlers' 'freedom of movement' is taken seriously, he had every opportunity to visit Frank during those months. That is in line with Otto Frank's comment in November 1945 about a visit of that

kind 'a few months ago'. If that is not the case, the contact may well have proceeded via Ahlers' wife Martha. In the US edition of 2003, Lee herself eventually comes to the conclusion: 'Whether the references [in the diaries] were to meetings with Ahlers's wife or with Ahlers himself will probably never be known'.¹²⁹ In our opinion, these are not mutually exclusive possibilities. The last date, that in November 1945, is less problematic because Ahlers was a free man by then.

Lee rightly points out that Frank stated that *he* went to visit Ahlers after the war.¹³⁰ Frank said that to the German writer Ernst Schnabel in the late 1950s.¹³¹ That was twelve years after the event, so that a mistake is conceivable, but Ahlers himself also 'insisted that Otto had searched for him'.¹³² Of course, we do not know which of the two men took the initiative.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Frank could have gone to visit him in the Cell Barracks on Friday 20 and Monday 23 July 1945.¹³³ During the first months after Liberation, the complex was controlled by Canadian Field Security. In practice the Dutch Military Police and the Forces of the Interior (BS) were in charge. That did not work very well; in fact, it was 'a barbarian regime'.¹³⁴ Sunday was 'show day', when the relatives and acquaintances of the members of the Forces of the Interior in Scheveningen came to 'view' the prisoners.¹³⁵ On 15 July the command was formally transferred to the Military Authorities (MG). The actual transfer took place on 22 July.¹³⁶ The days on which Lee believes Otto Frank to have visited this prison - 20 and 23 July - thus coincided with this transitional period. During the period of control by the Military Authorities, prisoners were entitled to a visit once a month. According to the regulations, two visits in a month, let alone one visit soon after the other within one month, were not allowed.¹³⁷ That makes it unlikely that Frank - who was no relative of Ahlers - would have been able to pay four visits to the prison in Scheveningen in the space of two months. It was not until 1 March 1946 that it was even proposed to allow two visits a month.¹³⁸ Our investigation in the archives of the 'Penal Institutions in The Hague'¹³⁹ did not reveal any significant information.¹⁴⁰

All in all, we consider it extremely unlikely that Frank himself travelled to Scheveningen to visit Ahlers in prison there, even though Lee states that Martha Ahlers claimed that 'Otto visited her husband in prison and gave him a small amount of money to help him out'.¹⁴¹ Lee quotes Ahlers' son as her source for this information,¹⁴² but he told us that he had never said it.¹⁴³ During that interview Ahlers junior stated that his father was said to have escaped from prison in the boot of Otto Frank's car. Our informant was told this by his mother Martha, but attaches no credence to the report. Ahlers did escape, but that was in 1946 (see below), and Frank was in no way connected with it.

The fact that the name 'Ahlers' crops up in Frank's diary might also refer to conversations or appointments with Ahlers' wife, or may have been intended as a reminder for action. There is no compelling reason to suppose that Otto Frank visited Ahlers in prison. We cannot rule out the possibility that Ahlers may have visited Frank, but it is more natural to suppose that Frank and Martha Ahlers may have spoken to one another. In that case the initiative will have come from the Ahlers: after all, they were the ones in need of help. Martha Ahlers told her son Anton that she found Otto Frank on her doorstep in the Hoofdweg one day¹⁴⁴ 'with sticky sweets'.¹⁴⁵ This visit must have been after Frank had written a first letter on behalf of Ahlers,¹⁴⁶ i.e. after 24 July 1945. In fact, it must have been after 11 September, the date when the Ahlers family moved to the Hoofdweg in Amsterdam. Lee rightly comments on this episode that it remains 'a mystery' how Otto managed to locate Ahlers' wife.¹⁴⁷ At any rate, the name 'Ahlers' that Frank noted twice in his diary in July 1945 cannot refer to a meeting in the Hoofdweg; the note made in November 1945 can.

With whom was he in contact?

The only certain fact is that, immediately after writing the name 'Ahlers' in his diary in July 1945, Otto Frank sent a letter concerning Ahlers to The Hague. He sent his first letter in August, and soon afterwards wrote down the name 'Ahlers' in his diary - in the reverse order, therefore. In November too, the letter preceded the diary annotation. Of course, it is natural to assume a connection between the letters and the dates in the diary. No doubt Frank talked about Ahlers with someone in the summer of 1945, otherwise he would not have been able to state Ahlers' address in Amstelveen so precisely in that letter. Ahlers moved to Amstelveen on 20 April 1944. Since we believe that Frank and Ahlers had no contact with one another during the war after April 1941 (see above), we assume that Frank only received that address after the war. According to Lee's third version, it is plausible to assume that such precise information came from Ahlers or from his wife.¹⁴⁸ We consider the latter to be more likely than the former in view of Ahlers' detention.

With whom did Frank discuss Ahlers in the summer of 1945? With Ahlers himself? Ahlers' detention in Scheveningen came to an end in late November 1945. Frank wrote his - third - letter on 27 November 1945. Frank wrote in that letter that he received a visit from Ahlers 'after Mr Ahlers (sic) had been out of prison for a few months'. Frank does not state exactly when he received the visit from Ahlers. His words seem to indicate a meeting 'a few months' before 27 November. The name 'Ahlers' is recorded in Frank's diary for the 27th and 30th of August. They are possible dates. At that time Ahlers was in prison in Scheveningen. If we are prepared to assume that Ahlers enjoyed 'freedom of movement', it would have been possible. If we do not accept that he enjoyed 'freedom of movement', then it is natural to assume that Martha Ahlers was the intermediary.

Escapes in 1946

According to Lee,¹⁴⁹ Ahlers was discharged in September 1945. The Bureau for National Security (BNV) dossier gives as the date 'the end of November 1945'.¹⁵⁰ The content of that dossier is relevant here.

According to Ahlers, he was visited by two investigators from the BNV, J.J. Davids and a certain Kerkhoven, soon after his release. They are supposed to have asked him to assist the BNV in their inquiry into hostile resistance movements on behalf of - escapes by - political delinquents (for example, the so-called Werewolf organisation¹⁵¹). At first Ahlers turned this request down. A week later he was held in the Da Costakade in Amsterdam by a different service, the Political Investigation Service (POD).¹⁵² A Social Security report of 19 January 1946 states that Ahlers has been in detention there for three weeks. The case was not 'completely clear', 'so that the POD has now intervened and detained him again'.¹⁵³ He escaped four days later, was rearrested, and ended up in Camp Levantkade in Amsterdam in February 1946. Apparently he obtained evidence about a Nazi movement there, which he passed on to Davids from the BNV. The BNV - according to Ahlers - released him in order to investigate these organisations inside the detention camps together with Davids. That must have been in the summer of 1946, for on August 9 the Social Security reported that Ahlers has been given 18 days' freedom 'by leave of the BNV and Camp Levantkade for special assignments'. According to Ahlers' wife Martha, he obtained this leave 'to provide tipoffs on "werewolf organisations" in Amsterdam and elsewhere'.¹⁵⁴ Apparently the cooperation did not run smoothly, for Ahlers was sent back to the Levantkade because 'Davids claimed that he [Ahlers] had just been making things up'.¹⁵⁵ He managed to escape the following day.¹⁵⁶ In September 1946 he was arrested again and was transferred from Camp Laren - from where he had already escaped once - back to the Cell Barracks in Scheveningen. He escaped from there at the end of 1946, assisted by Davids, 'a former

investigator for the BNV'. Ahlers thus escaped on four separate occasions in the year 1946. This number may seem surprising, but escapes from internment camps and prisons were not uncommon: in December 1946 the Dutch daily *De Waarheid* recorded an average of one hundred to one hundred and fifty escapes a month 'during the last few months',¹⁵⁷ and two months later the Dutch daily *Het Parool* stated that prisoners were escaping 'by the hundreds'.¹⁵⁸ In 1949 some seven hundred prisoners were recorded as being on the run in the whole country.¹⁵⁹

Of course, we have asked the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD, the successor to the BNV) whether it has any information about Tonny Ahlers. As the NIOD is not related to Ahlers, our request was turned down on the terms of the Law on Intelligence and Security Services of 2002.¹⁶⁰

No matter how remarkable Ahlers' escapes may seem and how interesting the role of Davids from the BNV was in this respect,¹⁶¹ this is not very relevant to our investigation because these events took place in 1946; by then Otto Frank had already written his last letter to exonerate Ahlers, dated 27 November 1945.¹⁶² One day later, 28 November, the name 'Ahlers' reappears in Frank's diary. It is probable that Ahlers visited Frank on that date to collect the letter: the letter has no address and has the general opening 'L.S.' (lectori salutem, to whom it may concern). Ahlers could turn it to his advantage if need be.

Otto Frank's withdrawal of support for Ahlers
Frank later withdrew his support for Ahlers. In 1958 Frank told Ernst Schnabel about the events of the spring of 1941 involving Ahlers, though without mentioning him by name. That this name has now been revealed is thanks to Lee's investigations. Frank stated: 'Da ging ich zu der Kommission und sagte: Der Mann hat mir einmal das Leben gerettet! Aber sie zeigten mir seine Akten, und ich sah, dass ich der einzige gewesen war, den er gerettet hatte. Alle anderen hatte er verraten...'.¹⁶³ Schnabel's book is Lee's source for this piece of information.¹⁶⁴ We know when Otto Frank went to the Kommission from his diary: on 6 December 1945 he noted 'POD (Political Investigation Service), and on 11 December 1945 'Nat. Veiligheid' (probably the Bureau for National Security). That is thus two weeks at most after his letter on behalf of Ahlers. On 11 December 1945 Frank wrote to his mother that he had been to see 'the political investigation'. 'Yesterday', i.e. 10 December, he had gone to the police station to identify the people who had made the arrest on the basis of photographs.¹⁶⁵ It seems not unreasonable to suppose that one of these dates in December 1945 was the day on which Frank was told the truth about Ahlers by the Kommission - the POD or the BNV. We do not know whether there is any connection with the rearrest of Ahlers on 17 December 1945,¹⁶⁶ this time by the POD. We have not found a written record of the withdrawal of Frank's support in any of the dossiers.

In 1946 Ahlers was still suspected of serious crimes: 'Confidant of the SD, Betrayal of persons to SD'.¹⁶⁷ Apparently these allegations could not be proven, for in 1949 the verdict of the Public Prosecutor for the special court in Amsterdam was only a 'conditional dropping of the charges' against Ahlers. His possessions were confiscated 'by the State'. Furthermore, he was stripped of the right to enter the civil service or to serve in the armed forces etc. for ten years (the period laid down by law). These latter restrictions were imposed on thousands of 'less serious' cases in the second half of the 1940s, including, as we have seen, Van Maaren. Van Maaren appealed successfully against the verdict, but Ahlers did not.

d Contacts after 1945 - Lee added an 'Afterword: The Enigma of Tonny Ahlers' to the English edition of her book. In March 2002 she and Sander van Walsum, a journalist from the Dutch daily *De Volkskrant*, had been to see Ahlers' brother Cas, who was 82 years old at the

time. Cas stated that, after Frank's emigration to Switzerland in 1952, Tonny had 'gone back again' to blackmail.¹⁶⁸ That 'again' must be read in the light of the events of the spring of 1941, when there was also a question of blackmail. Otto Frank seems never to have seen it that way. Ahlers cleverly presenting himself in that year as impoverished and in need of help, whereupon Frank gave him some money. Seen in this light, it might be more accurate to say that Ahlers benefited from the situation in which Frank found himself than that he blackmailed him with it.

The Ahlers family

Cas said that he recalled a letter from Otto Frank with the words: 'The goods have been delivered again'.¹⁶⁹ (In the meantime Ahlers' step-sister Greet has confirmed this.¹⁷⁰) Lee characterises this as a 'bitter reference to the past'.¹⁷¹ This probably relates to that so-called 'business arrangement' that Frank and Ahlers are supposed to have concluded during the war. As Lee told us,¹⁷² the prime source for this 'business arrangement' is Tonny's wife, Martha; the names of his brother Cas and son Anton have been added in the US edition.¹⁷³ Martha and her brother-in-law Cas refuse to speak to the NIOD, so that verification is impossible. Anton Ahlers says that he heard about this 'business arrangement' from his parents.¹⁷⁴

Anton Ahlers, who was born in 1945, recalls that when he was 'about seven or eight years old - i.e. in 1952/1953 - he heard his father mention the name 'Otto Frank' in a telephone conversation, after which his father spoke the words: 'I got them in and I got them out again'.¹⁷⁵ Anton Ahlers also remembers clearly that his father was 'tapping furiously on his old typewriter' during the Silberbauer affair in 1963.¹⁷⁶ He told us that on that occasion his father had said that he intended 'to set things straight' and 'to change history'. Anton still lived with his parents at this time.¹⁷⁷ After the Silberbauer case was closed in 1964, Otto Frank is said to have visited Ahlers in Amsterdam. Lee obtained this curious piece of information from Martha Ahlers,¹⁷⁸ and has not made use of it in the editions of her book.

Extortion

Anton Ahlers' reply to the question of whether he knew anything about payments that Otto Frank had to make to his father was that his father had an unaccountably high income: the equivalent of a 'director's salary' came in every month. Anton's wife confirmed this.¹⁷⁹ Those days were over after the death of Frank in 1980.¹⁸⁰ As stated above, Ahlers senior is alleged - by Lee in 2003¹⁸¹ - to have started this new blackmail of Frank in the mid-1960s. In that case, it would have been going on in the 1960s and 1970s.

In itself it is somewhat surprising that Ahlers did not commence such practices in the 1950s. After all, it was a period of relative poverty, and the diary of Anne Frank had achieved bestseller status, especially after the stage adaptation of 1955 and the film version of 1959. Ahlers' step-sister mentioned a period 'after the war and in the late 1970s'.¹⁸² Investigating the financial position of someone involved in blackmail is a difficult task, firstly because money transactions connected with blackmail do not usually pass through the usual bank channels, and secondly because such accounts are rarely accessible for historical researchers. Was Ahlers spending unusually large sums of money at the time?

The houses where Tonny Ahlers lived, at all events, do not reflect any such opulence. The 'basic administration personal data' of the Amsterdam civic registry indicate that Ahlers senior did live 'in style', namely in the Old South district of Amsterdam, on two occasions, but they both fall outside the period under review: Ahlers lived for nine months in the Okeghemstraat in the late 1950s, and he occupied a two storey apartment in the Valeriusstraat in the up-market Concertgebouw area in 1986/1987, but this was after the death of Otto Frank in 1980; moreover,

according to Anton Ahlers, his father had moved in with a lady friend, and was thus not the main occupier.¹⁸³

Other signs of relative wealth within what his son Anton called the ‘higher than average pattern of spending’ of his father Tonny, are his ownership of a second-hand Renault Quatre in 1958, and trips to France at a time when this was by no means normal in the Netherlands. Tonny also bought a large television set that he gave to his mother, and so on.¹⁸⁴ The stories told by the family gave Lee the impression that Tonny Ahlers was a ‘gadget-man’.¹⁸⁵ Of course, his taste in electric gadgets cost him money, but this, plus owning an old Renault 4 and the trips to France, was not the exclusive privilege of those who earned a director’s salary, though it remains unclear exactly how Ahlers did manage to pay for it all.

We do know something of one attempt by Ahlers to earn some money. In June 1962 Ahlers asked the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation for payment in return for the reproduction of his photographs of the destruction of the Amsterdam Cabaret Alcazar during anti Jewish actions in 1941.¹⁸⁶ The director of the institute, Louis de Jong, had used these photographs for his television series *De bezetting* [*The Occupation*].¹⁸⁷ De Jong looked into the matter, had inquiries made in the Central Archive for Special Criminal Procedure, and wrote back to Ahlers:

It is my impression that you could only have taken those photographs at that moment and on that spot because you enjoyed far-reaching facilities granted by the German occupying forces. Under those circumstances I see no reason to facilitate your receiving any fee.’¹⁸⁸ Ahlers did not receive a cent.

His son Anton suggested to us the possibility that the majority of the (extra) income came from payment for the sewing that Martha Ahlers did.¹⁸⁹ Little is known for certain about the level or nature of Ahlers’ own earnings. Ahlers senior himself said that he received a generous state allowance because of his polio.¹⁹⁰ His Social Security dossier does not contain any reference to any such allowance after the war.

Lee writes that in 1980 Tonny Ahlers closed his bank account and that he and his wife were forced to move from their ‘six-room apartment in Amsterdam-Osdorp’ to ‘a tiny rent-assisted flat’. She adds to the date 1980 the comment ‘the year Otto Frank died’.¹⁹¹ That is true in itself, but Lee is here insinuating a connection between Ahlers’ economic situation at the time and the death of Otto Frank. We do not believe that it is necessary to assume such a connection: the move from the Van Suchtelen van de Haarestraat in Osdorp, hardly a chic place to live, to the modest Willem Kloosstraat in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer took place in 1984,¹⁹² four years after the death of Otto Frank. It might be suggested that by this time the money that Ahlers had extorted from Frank had apparently run out. Still, Ahlers moved to the Van Suchtelen van de Haarestraat in Osdorp in mid-1960, that is, before the alleged blackmail that is supposed to have started some five years later. So that house has nothing to do with those unproven practices.

The sources: Ahlers and his family

As we have seen, Lee’s source for the regular contact between Otto Frank and Ahlers during the war is ‘Ahlers and other witnesses’, those ‘other witnesses’ all being members of the immediate circle of Ahlers’ relatives. The same applies to her reference to ‘all the available documents’,¹⁹³ on which the quite sensational story of the blackmailing of Anne Frank’s father for years is based. These also turn out to go back to one and the same source: the Ahlers family, namely the letters of Tonny Ahlers himself from the 1960s and the interviews in the 21st century with his wife Martha, brother Cas, son Anton and step-sister Greet. The relatives have been unable to provide any ‘documents’ or other hard evidence, and Tonny Ahlers himself was blessed with a

strong imagination. In all fairness, this does not seem to us to be a sufficient foundation for a theory as wide-ranging as the one that Lee has developed.

Frank wrote his first letter about Ahlers to The Hague soon after the news of the death of his children had reached him. Of course, everyone responds to the death of loved ones in his or her own way, but Lee rightly wonders why Otto Frank 'was so concerned about Ahlers at such a dramatic moment in his life'. According to Lee's 'feelings',¹⁹⁴ it was to 'ensure that Ahlers kept his silence':¹⁹⁵ silence about Frank's alleged questionable behaviour during the war. According to Lee, Ahlers could 'put together an unpleasant little story' about the wartime operations of Opekta.¹⁹⁶ But perhaps Otto Frank realised at that moment that he was the only survivor and that Ahlers, as he believed, had saved him from an early deportation in 1941. To what extent Lee's theory holds water will be discussed in the following section.

2. Blackmail during and after the war

It is a known fact that an unusual situation such as an occupation, together with the growing shortage that accompanies it, leads to a rise in crime. That was the case in the Netherlands as well. Although the statistical material is fragmentary, it is still possible to determine that rise.¹⁹⁷ Most victims of 'common' crime could go to the police just as they had done before the war, and that applied to Jews as well in the initial period. The Amsterdam historian J. Vis discovered in the collection of daily reports of the Amsterdam police that Anne Frank herself had reported the theft of her bicycle around Easter 1942, when she was twelve years old.¹⁹⁸ But Jews were also the victims of crime which they could not report to the police. Of course, this was particularly true of broken promises of a place to hide or even to leave the country (an example is F. Weinreb, who got persecuted Jews to believe that he would enable them to leave by train to unoccupied territory). This was the kind of swindle that could not be reported, because the victims were themselves acting in contravention of the German regulations. Blackmail is a crime that is often not reported in peacetime either, because the blackmailed person is being blackmailed for something that is (partly) true and must not be divulged. That was the situation of Otto Frank on 18 April 1941, when he received a visit from a stranger, Ahlers, who introduced himself as a member of the NSB and showed Otto Frank the letter from a former employee, Joseph Jansen. That letter was addressed to the head of the NSB and stated that Frank had expressed himself to Jansen in a 'manner that was insulting to the German Wehrmacht'. It was a covert form of blackmail, after which he returned again, according to Frank, 'on which occasion I gave him another 5 or 10 guilders without being asked for them'.

Lee states that Ahlers tried to blackmail Otto Frank again, now after the war. Frank found himself in a difficult financial situation after his return to the Netherlands. On 17 September 1944 the Dutch government in exile in London had declared that the regulations on the removal of the Jews from the world of industry and commerce 'are considered as having never been in force',¹⁹⁹ but that did not mean that Frank's problems were over. After all, his businesses fell under the Decree on Hostile Property,²⁰⁰ because he had German nationality. A German resolution, the Reichsbürgergesetz of 15 September 1935, had rendered him stateless, but this nazi legislation was not recognised by the Dutch government after the Liberation; so Otto Frank was still regarded as a German. He would have to prove that he had not behaved in an anti-Dutch manner, and ideally that he had acted against the Germans, in order not to be regarded any longer as a 'hostile subject as laid down in the Decree on Hostile Property'. Only then would he be able to recover his businesses. By November 1948, when the government issued definitive guidelines

for the removal of Germans and Austrians from the category of ‘enemy’, the Netherlands Administrative Institute (NBI) had handled around 8,000 dossiers of this kind.

The NBI was the body that administered enemy property, as well as that of members of the NSB, for example. There were already almost 160,000 in total of them by 1 May 1946. Otto Frank’s pro-Dutch sentiments could be attested by his friends and acquaintances, and his anti-German stance could be deduced from his decision to migrate to the Netherlands in 1933. But what would the NBI make of his wartime trade with the Germans, and especially with the Wehrmacht? Would Frank have known that the NBI was not much concerned about small businesses as long as they were not actively seeking German orders? The *Nieuw Israëlitisch Weekblad* (a Jewish weekly) for the period 1945-1947 does not contain a word on the subject; was this a sign that the *NIW* was exclusively intended for Dutch Jews? The *Mededeelingenblad voor de Joden in het bevrijde Nederlandsche gebied Le-Ezrath Ha-am (Het volk ter hulpe)*, which had been set up in the liberated South of the country, contained only two short articles on the matter, and their tone was one of reassurance.²⁰¹

We will not be able to answer the question about how much Otto Frank knew about the workings of the NBI. Was Frank open to blackmail because of his supplies to the Germans? Carol Ann Lee claims that Ahlers could have used them to blackmail Frank,²⁰² but is this true? If all of the transactions were kept out of the book-keeping (Miep Gies mentions cash payment in one case), Ahlers would not have been able to provide evidence, and there would have been no pretext for blackmail. If these Wehrmacht transactions were conducted via Ahlers’ own small business (for which there is not a shred of evidence), that would have placed Ahlers himself in a difficult position. And if all the German transactions, including those involving the Wehrmacht, were entered in the books, the NBI would have discovered them anyway. An opportunity for blackmail seems to have been a possibility in theory, but an extremely improbable one in practice.

In February 1947 Otto Frank was informed that he was no longer considered a ‘hostile subject’.²⁰³ He still owed money in Switzerland, which the NBI wanted to confiscate because it was thought to be a debt to Pomosin-Frankfurt (the mother company), and thus a hostile firm. The case was resolved in Frank’s favour at the end of 1950 and he was able to pay off his debt.²⁰⁴

3. Betrayal of Prinsengracht 263 by Ahlers?

Tonny Ahlers never spoke a word to anyone about his alleged blackmail of Otto Frank. On the other hand, he did boast - at least within the family circle - about his involvement during the arrest of the eight in hiding in Prinsengracht 263. Did Ahlers know that Otto Frank and the others were hidden there?

Ahlers’ letters of the 1960s revisited

In the latest version of her book, the US edition, Lee tackles this question in several places with mention of her source. In the ‘private postwar letters to Silberbauer, Ahlers writes that he had known the truth about the secret annex from the time that the Franks went into hiding there’;²⁰⁵ he ‘began to urge Otto Frank to go into hiding’;²⁰⁶ and he ‘permitted’ Otto and his family ‘to go into hiding for a time’.²⁰⁷ The latter need not be taken to mean that Ahlers knew the (exact) address, but a little further on Lee writes that ‘those same letters reveal that Ahlers knew where Otto and his family were hiding’.²⁰⁸ These ‘letters’ refer to the letters that Ahlers sent to Vienna in 1963 and 1964.²⁰⁹ In his last letter on the matter, written in December 1966, Ahlers stated that

he had kept an eye on Frank 'until the family disappeared'.²¹⁰ In all of these cases, the only source of information is the three letters that Ahlers himself sent in the 1960s. At that time hundreds of thousands of people in the Netherlands and millions all over the world knew where and under what conditions Anne Frank and her seven companions had gone into hiding: the diary of Anne Frank had become world-famous in the second half of the 1950s. So it cannot be deduced from the words in his letters that Ahlers had access to inside information.

The same applies to Ahlers' comment in his 1966 letter that he 'knew about (Otto Frank's) little game with Gies'.²¹¹ That 'little game' is described in Anne's Diary (July 5, 1942), albeit it that Opekta is there called 'Travies' and that Gies & Co is concealed behind the name of 'Kolen & Co.'.²¹² Anyone who walked along the Prinsengracht could have seen the sign 'Gies & Co.' outside number 263, and Ahlers knew the neighbourhood. Somebody like Ahlers would certainly have been capable of putting two and two together.

In our view, the possibility certainly cannot be ruled out that this is a case of mystification. Ahlers may have wanted to assign himself a bigger role in the history of the Frank family than was actually the case. This is when Anne Frank begins to acquire the status of a megastar, and Ahlers may well have wanted to have his share of the glory. His efforts were in vain, but it looks as though he has managed to pull the wool over Carol Ann Lee's eyes, even if only posthumously.

Ahlers' knowledge of the annex

Lee claims that Ahlers may have found out about the annex behind Prinsengracht 263 during his visit to Otto Frank in 1941, when 'the stairs to the upper floors of the annex would have been clearly visible'.²¹³ Our on-the spot inquiry in 2002 did not confirm this. Miep Gies is also of the opinion that - in the same year 1941 - the rest of the house was not visible from the corridor or from Frank's office.²¹⁴ Lee also discovered that Ahlers' mother had lived five doors away in a similar house on the Prinsengracht before the war.²¹⁵ On that basis, Lee claims,²¹⁶ Ahlers could have surmised the existence of annexes in that part of the canal. Such houses are by no means rare beside the canals of Amsterdam, and everyone who lived in Amsterdam at that time will have been familiar with the phenomenon. But that does not mean that they would have guessed that Jews were in hiding there.

After the war, the State Investigation Department did not find any evidence to support the hypothesis that Ahlers entertained any such suspicions. In connection with the Austrian letters, that department in Amsterdam set up an inquiry into 'correspondent Antoon Christiaan Ahlers'. The investigator Van Helden reported:

For a proper understanding [of the case] it should be borne in mind that the business address of Mr Frank was Prinsengracht 263 in Amsterdam, but that he lived elsewhere, in South Amsterdam. Later, when the Frank family had to go into hiding, they did so in the annex of those business premises, a circumstance from which I have not been able to conclude that Ahlers was aware of that address, at least of that hiding place.²¹⁷

Remarkably enough, Lee draws the opposite conclusion from the same report: 'the fact remains that Ahlers did know the Franks were in hiding at the Prinsengracht - as even the Dutch detectives in charge of the 1963-64 investigation were forced to concede'.²¹⁸ The civil service jargon of the detective seems to have confused the English researcher Lee on more than one occasion, for earlier she writes: 'The [Dutch] detectives compiled a short report on Ahlers but made several mistakes in it. They ended their declaration with an air of vague puzzlement: "It is not clear how Ahlers was familiar with the hiding place"'.²¹⁹ This is not a proper translation of the source cited above, the Report of the State Investigation Department of 5 February 1964.²²⁰

Lee is mistaken on this point.

The family on the betrayal

Finally, let us consider the Ahlers family on the betrayal. Tonny's brother Cas told Lee: 'Tonny told me he did it'. Years later Tonny was supposed to have been still proud of the fact. He had done it for money, it was claimed, and had appropriated the goods from the annex.²²¹ Cas showed Lee and Volkskrant journalist Van Walsum a 'candlestick' that Tonny was accused have having stolen from the annex. In addition, it was alleged that Tonny had had a menorah (a seven-branched candlestick) from the hiding place of the Franks in his hands.²²² The offer by Miep Gies to inspect that candlestick to see whether it really was from the Franks' possessions was turned down.²²³ Incidentally, Lee herself has some reservations about the reliability of the memory of Cas.²²⁴ It was only when the war was over that Cas found out about the 'relationship - not a friendship' between Ahlers and Otto Frank.²²⁵

As mentioned earlier, the youngest son Anton told Lee that as a child of seven or eight he had eavesdropped on a telephone conversation in which his father uttered the words 'I got them in and I got them out again'.²²⁶ Anton confirmed this to us.²²⁷ He is convinced that his father is the traitor: 'I know it. I've always known it'.²²⁸ He is convinced on this point because of his knowledge of his father's character.²²⁹ Tonny's step-sister Greet also believes that the betrayal of the Franks 'fitted in with the character she knew' of Tonny.²³⁰

Tonny's widow, Martha Ahlers, denies that her husband was connected with any act of betrayal.²³¹

Both his brother Cas and his son Anton have Tonny's admission from Tonny himself, Cas directly and Anton indirectly. Apart from the appeal that Anton, supported by Greet, makes to the character of Tonny, all of this 'evidence' goes back to Tonny himself. Tonny's stories about Otto Frank were not taken seriously at all by the rest of the family in the 1960s. 'That made him crazy, to think he was talking about all this and no one took him seriously, or even listened to him', his son Anton is reported to have said in Lee's English version.²³² Of course, this is an important fact, for why should the family not have taken Tonny's stories seriously in the 1960s while doing so forty years later? We are tempted to assign little importance to these stories today too, for their basis in fact is too narrow.

Second-hand

Of course, the researcher Lee is also aware that the evidence for her thesis of betrayal by Ahlers is 'largely circumstantial', and that 'his relatives have only been able to provide us with oral testimony. These people are witnesses, nonetheless - Ahlers's son in particular - but whether Tonny Ahlers was telling the truth is another matter'.²³³ Exactly. Lee rightly wrote in her English book that the testimony of Cas was based on 'hearsay'.²³⁴ In our view, the same is true of the testimonies of all of Lee's 'witnesses', for not a single one of them is an eye-witness. Everything that they know is at second hand, and only from Tonny Ahlers himself. The whole case rests with the reliability of this single figure.

Lee asks herself: 'If Ahlers was not the Franks' betrayer, then why would he lie and say he was?'²³⁵ His proverbial tendency to boast - as Lee pointed out earlier²³⁶ - may have been the basis for this. (In fact, that would get him off the charge of betrayal. By the way, Ahlers' openness did not extend very far, for he kept it in the family.) 'And if he was not the betrayer, then why did he hate Otto so much years after the two of them had contact - as is clear from his letters?'²³⁷ Of course, all kinds of motives could be adduced for that - jealousy,²³⁸ anti-Semitism -, but we believe that Ahlers will have been particularly irritated by the fact that Otto

Frank did not carry on covering up for him: after all, Frank abandoned him to his fate in the winter of 1945/1946. Lee does not mention this possible cause for Ahlers' hatred of Otto Frank in the 1960s. We consider it to be a plausible hypothesis. That Ahlers' hatred flared up precisely in that decade is probably due to the revelations of the Silberbauer case at the same time.

Martha Ahlers

There can be no doubt that Ahlers himself was unreliable. Is the same true of his wife Martha? The question is not interesting in itself, but it assumes considerable importance in connection with the betrayal of Prinsengracht 263. On the last pages of her (US) edition Lee recounts the vicissitudes of Tonny and Martha Ahlers in 1945:239 Anton junior was born in that year, and two weeks later his father Tonny was arrested. Lacking a means of livelihood, the boy's mother Martha was forced to move from their attractive house in Amstelveen-Elsrijk to the Hoofdweg in Amsterdam, where she had no option but to appeal to Social Security. Lee cites a number of unflattering comments on Martha by Social Security. She quotes them in an English translation. Retranslated from the original bureaucratic jargon, they run: 'Since her husband used to move a lot in SD circles, the woman is very cunning, suspicious and wily' (January 1946), and 'This case is not clean. The woman must have been politically as unreliable as her husband. At the time she was suspected of having performed treacherous services for the SD, but it is impossible to prove anything'.²⁴⁰ '[N]o charges could be brought...'.²⁴¹ Those dots end Lees' book. She seems at least to be suggesting that Martha might have been involved in some way with the betrayal of the eight Jews in hiding. At the time of publication of her book she did not have any evidence for that, but she mentions in a footnote 'a dossier containing details of the investigation into Martha's past. And when that is found, we may know far more about the person who dialed the Gestapo headquarters in Amsterdam on that brilliant August morning in 1944. The author is currently trying to track it down'.²⁴² Lee told us that this had eventually proved to be in vain.²⁴³ The Ahlers dossier in the Amsterdam Social Security Department mentions another dossier with a different number. Lee has also tried to trace that dossier. Since this has not been successful either, her trail has reached a dead end.

It is understandable that Lee has not visited Ahlers' widow since their earlier quarrel out.²⁴⁴ We have not done so either, because she is not prepared to talk to the NIOD.

7. Other betrayers?

The night watchman

Lee's book mentions other persons who could perhaps have been involved in the betrayal, such as M. Slegers. This private night watchman cycled every evening along the canals with two dogs and in April 1944 discovered that Prinsengracht 263 (not the annex) had been burgled. Accompanied by a policeman whom he had called in to assist him, he combed the premises up to the bookcase that gave entry to the annex.²⁴⁵ Lee's very remarkable investigative flair led her to discover the name 'Slegers' in the NIOD in a notebook kept by Gezinus Gringhuis, one of the policemen who raided the annex on 4 August 1944. In the Dutch and English versions of her book, Lee suggests that this Gringhuis may have been the policeman who had inspected the premises together with Slegers four months earlier.²⁴⁶ In the latest version, the US edition of her book, she drops this suggestion.²⁴⁷ She is right to do so, because according to the 'Day Reports of the Warmoesstraat Police Station' this had been 'S[ergeant] Den Boef'.²⁴⁸

The Department of Justice (CABR) does not have a dossier on Slegers.

Jewish Council and Zentralstelle

We must also consider the enigmatic comment by the same Gringhuis in December 1945. Gringhuis claims to have heard from Otto Frank that he had received an anonymous letter in which a member of the Jewish Council was accused of having betrayed them. Frank did not know the person in question, but Gringhuis did. Moreover, it is claimed that there was talk about Frank's secret address at the Zentralstelle. According to Lee, in this case Ahlers may have been the trait d'union between the Jewish Council and the Zentralstelle.²⁴⁹ In itself that is not inconceivable, but the Zentralstelle ceased to operate at the end of 1943,²⁵⁰ and the Jewish Council was abolished on 29 September of the same year.²⁵¹ It is not very likely that some member of both organisations would have waited eight months (in the case of the Jewish Council) or eleven months (in the case of the Zentralstelle) before proceeding to betray the victims known to him (or her).

Detective Van Helden, who has already been mentioned several times, also checked the contents of that anonymous letter in 1964.²⁵² He discovered that Otto Frank had given that letter to a member of the board of the Anne Frank Foundation in Amsterdam, and Van Helden was unable to get his hands on the letter again, though he did manage to ascertain its contents: 'Your [Frank's] hiding place in Amsterdam was communicated at that time to the [Zentralstelle für] Jüdische Auswanderung in Amsterdam, Euterpestraat, by A. van den Bergh [...]'. Further inquiry brought to light that the A. van den Bergh in question was a public notary who had died in the meantime and had been a member of the Jewish Council. Although Van Helden 'could not adduce evidence to prove it', it 'should be assumed' that this notary had never passed on names to the Zentralstelle. In fact, 'on the basis of information obtained', Van Helden had 'discovered that there were no grounds for doubting the integrity of this man [the notary]'. So the case concerning the anonymous letter that Frank had received has been thoroughly investigated. The name of a notary cropped up in that inquiry, but not the name of Ahlers.

Jan van Eyckstraat 22-I

In November 1943 Ahlers, his wife and first child moved to a comfortable apartment in the Jan van Eyckstraat in Amsterdam. This street was wedged between the Zentralstelle and the Expositur of the Jewish Council.²⁵³ Before they moved in, it had been inhabited by Jews. Ahlers obtained the apartment through the mediation of the SD.²⁵⁴ This was not uncommon, for immediately after the war it was already 'known that the houses of the Jewish families were evacuated by this body [probably Einsatzstab Rosenberg] and that it also made available the furnishing and other fittings of the B.d.S. [Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD].²⁵⁵ It was thus by no means strange that, when the Ahlers family moved to Amstelveen on 20 April 1944, another member of the SD eventually moved into the apartment in the Van Eyckstraat on 3 August 1944.²⁵⁶ He was Maarten Kuiper, a notorious Jew hunter and an acquaintance of Ahlers. This fact, plus the ominous date of 3 August, the day before the Frank family was arrested, has led the media to establish a link between the two circumstances, though Lee does not explicitly make the connection in her books.²⁵⁷ We believe this to be incorrect - as if Ahlers is supposed to have passed the information on to Kuiper while the removal boxes were on the stairs, as it were. After all, Ahlers had already left three months earlier. The two men had known one another for a longer period, probably already from the beginning of 1944.²⁵⁸

Ans van Dijk and Branca Simons

Lee mentions that in 1963/1964 the Dutch Investigation Department came across a case of betrayal on the Prinsengracht 'in the immediate surroundings' of the annex. This betrayal of two

Jews in hiding by the V-women Ans van Dijk and Branca Simons had taken place two days before the raid of the annex.²⁵⁹ Koos Groen made use of the dossiers of the Special Criminal Court, postwar newspapers and other sources for his study *Als slachtoffers daders worden. De zaak van de joodse verraadster Ans van Dijk* [When victims become perpetrators. The case of the Jewish betrayer Ans van Dijk]. Groen does not establish any link between the betrayal of Prinsengracht 263 and the activities of Van Dijk and/or Simons. Ans van Dijk was shot by firing squad after the war; the capital sentence pronounced against her colleague Branca Simons was remitted to a life sentence.

Jansen's son

Finally, Ahlers has pointed the finger at Jansen's son as the betrayer.²⁶⁰ Ahlers mentioned him to the Dutch magazine *Revue* in 1966,²⁶¹ and had already done the same to Silberbauer in 1964. Jansen's son had worked in the warehouse of Otto's firm.²⁶² His father informed on both sons to the Germans.²⁶³ In his letter to Silberbauer of 1964 that has already cropped up several times, Ahlers refers to Frank's letter of 21 August 1945, in which Frank's laconic words on this son are: 'One of Mr Jansen's sons was also working in the warehouse'. Frank continues: 'Mr Jansen himself often helped in the construction of exhibition stands and so on. So as you see, the family was well known and behaved well in terms of the business'. That the behaviour of Jansen senior was anything but good outside strict business concerns is evident from the rest of Frank's letter, in which he describes how Ahlers intercepted Jansen's dangerous letter. But he says no more about the son. That Frank 'positively indicated his employees the Jansens as his betrayers' - note the plural -, as Ahlers put it in 1964, is incorrect. What Ahlers had in mind in 1966 when he wrote about Otto Frank's 'knowledge of the most likely warehouse hand/betrayer Jansen junior' is a complete mystery.

Bundesarchiv Koblenz, National Archives

In March 1964 the State Investigation Department was once again trying to trace 'the identity of the betrayer(s) of the Frank family'. Detective Van Helden had been on a business trip to Munich and Vienna and had reported to his superior, the Chief of Police Taconis, that there were archival documents in Koblenz on the bounties paid in the occupied Netherlands for the arrest of Jewish subjects. On the basis of this report, this Chief of Police immediately sent a letter to the Public Prosecutor:

'Our service has recently discovered that various documents obtained from America, including those concerning the various German Occupation bodies during World War II, were recently deposited in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz (Germany). Volume 173-J-10-16/43 (new 2581 and new 2583) contains, on pages 42 to 49, certain information concerning the bounties paid in the Netherlands at the time for the arrest of Jews.'²⁶⁴

Several names of former police were also to be found there.²⁶⁵ The Chief of Police suggested asking for copies from the Bundesarchiv. It is not known whether the Public Prosecutor actually did so.

In the meantime we have done so. In 2002 the German Bundesarchiv informed us that it had received copies from America at the time, but that the references indicated did not take them any further. The Archiv referred us to the National Archives in Washington. The further inquiry that was conducted there at our request did not yield any results either.²⁶⁶

Lee is right to complain that the trail leading to the archives in the Bundesarchiv was not followed in the 1960s.²⁶⁷ Now that it has been followed, it proves, even with a detour via the United States, to be fruitless.

Carelessness

The residents in the annex were very aware that no one should see or hear them there, as Anne wrote on 11 July 1942:

In other respects too we are very afraid that the neighbours might be able to hear or see us. We immediately stitched the curtains on the first day. Actually they are not really curtains, just individual cheerless pieces of material, completely different from one another in shape, that father and I have very clumsily sewn together. These showpieces are attached behind the windows with drawing pins with the intention of never being removed before the end of our period in hiding.²⁶⁸

That applies to the rear, which looks out on the garden. Anne mentions on 28 November 1942 that she can see into the illuminated rooms of the back neighbours at night with a pair of binoculars. 'In the daytime our curtains must not be opened a single centimetre, but there is no harm in that once it is dark'.²⁶⁹

But the people in hiding also appear on the front side, for example on Saturday afternoon, for the weekly wash. The curtains are closed there and they take their turns to wash, 'while whoever does not have a turn peeps out of the window through a chink in the curtain and is surprised by the amusing people'.²⁷⁰ The urge to look outside is understandable: on 3 November 1943 Anne writes that one of those in hiding sometimes has an urge and has to look outside for a moment. After being told off, the reply is: 'Nobody sees it anyway'.²⁷¹ There is trouble again in the spring of 1944. Anne writes on 11 April of that year: 'Peter's window must not be opened, because the employee of Keg has seen the window open'. (The tea and coffee merchant C. Keg's Groothandel N.V. was established in Prinsengracht 265). That seems to have happened more often, for on 15 April 1944 Anne wrote in her diary that 'our windows' were open '... and Keg saw it. What will they think at Keg's?' A couple of months later Anne wrote that she herself had gone downstairs one evening 'and taken a look outside from the window of the private office and kitchen'.²⁷²

Careless? No doubt, however understandable it may seem. But this carelessness - and there are more examples of careless behaviour in the diary - may have been an important factor in the betrayal.

8. Conclusion

The conclusion of our inquiry is that we do not consider any of the three suspects to be a likely candidate for the role of betrayer. Investigations of Willem van Maaren have been conducted twice, albeit not very thoroughly in 1947-1948, but when the case was reopened in 1963-1964 not a single shred of evidence of betrayal was added, and the case was rightly dropped. We find no positive evidence that Lena Hartog-Van Bladeren knew that there were Jews in hiding in the annex of Prinsengracht 263. Moreover, we are not convinced by the suggestion that she was worried about the fate of her husband, who worked in the warehouse there. In that case, why did he not stay at home on that fatal day, for in being in the warehouse he was himself in danger of being arrested too? The link with the fate of her son is curious. He was at sea as a volunteer with the Kriegsmarine, and his mother will naturally have been concerned about him, but his death did not come until May 1945 and was not officially announced until seven years after the war had ended.

What about Tonny Ahlers as betrayer and blackmailer? He certainly did work for the SD, but he was not convicted after the war for betrayal or anything else, although he was stripped of a number of rights (such as the active and passive right to vote), as had also happened to Van Maaren in the first instance. Everything points to the fact that he did not always live on the right side of the law, but that he stood out above all for his bragging. And it is this very man, as well as his own family, who is the main source of information for Carol Ann Lee's thesis. The fact that some of his relatives have stated that Tonny was a bad sort and certainly betrayed the Frank family is not very significant without further evidence. At any rate, whatever it may tell us about relations within the family, it is hardly reliable when it comes to reconstructing what actually happened.

Carol Ann Lee, we believe, should have dealt more critically with her sources. Her supposition that Otto Frank's firm supplied not just the Wehrmacht but the Oberkommando itself may be the result of careless reading, but to conclude from the appearance of Ahlers' name several times in Otto Frank's diary that Otto Frank visited his betrayer and blackmailer in prison is pure speculation. Lee herself has already partially corrected these errors in the later editions of her book. We do not consider it proven that Ahlers knew that Otto Frank and seven others were in hiding in Prinsengracht 263. When Ahlers visited Frank in 1941, he would not have been able to see any entrance to the annex, which incidentally was not hidden at the time. Carol Lee Ann could have found this out for herself by paying a visit to Prinsengracht 263.

The passing on of the letter of denunciation to Otto Frank in April 1941 can be regarded as blackmail, although Otto Frank saw it in a different light. There is no evidence for any further form of blackmail, neither for the period immediately after the war nor for the period from 1964 to 1980. And if Ahlers blackmailed Otto Frank until his death, why did he not continue to blackmail Frank's widow?

Carol Ann Lee sees Tonny Ahlers as a cunning criminal without a conscience and with many German connections, and believes almost everything he said. She also has no reservations about believing a crown witness who claims to be able to remember every word of a telephone conversation on which he was eavesdropping almost fifty years ago at the age of seven. In our view, Tonny Ahlers was a petty criminal who engaged in a variety of shady deals both before, during and after the war, and who tried to get into the SD's good books. But we see him above all as a boaster who pretended to be much more important than he really was. He was somebody with whom one should be on one's guard, but above all somebody whose word was not to be taken on trust.

Our investigation has not led us to the culprit. Is this the final verdict of the NIOD on the betrayal of Prinsengracht 263? No. In theory, it would be possible to carry out an investigation on a larger scale than ours, but we do not believe that that would necessarily lead to a better result. Anybody who went into hiding on his own in a small village, where everyone, including the village member of the NSB, knew about it, but where nobody thought of going to inform the Germans, had a high chance of survival. Going into hiding with seven others in the inner city of Amsterdam, a situation where you even have to be afraid of the warehouse hand in your old business and do not know what your neighbours are thinking and doing, reduces your chance of surviving. The annex could, and still can, be seen by at least a hundred (and that is a very low estimate) residents of the Keizersgracht, the Leliegracht and the Westermarkt. Is there any point in going through the Amsterdam Archive on all the individuals who lived there at the time and digging up their war past? We do not think so. Firstly, not everybody was officially listed in the civic registry; secondly, not everyone's criminal records are open for inspection in the National

Archive; thirdly, the betrayer need not necessarily have been on the wrong side politically (in spite of the evil nature of the deed); and fourthly, the betrayal could have been the work of a visitor to one of those residents or a casual passer-by.

It is therefore possible that chance has played a much greater role than has been assumed to date, and that there is less of a need to assume a deliberate attempt to deliver the Frank family and the four others into the hands of the Germans. And perhaps the fatal telephone call to the Aussenstelle was not the work of a known or anonymous betrayer, but came from some other German or Dutch police officer who had received a tip-off.

The 8,000 or 9,000 Jews in hiding who fell into the hands of their persecutors were eventually betrayed to the enemy. It is reasonable to suppose that only a small percentage of the betrayers have been tried; a Jew hunter like Kaper, who was executed after the war, could not do his work without the assistance of other traitors. Unfortunately, we are bound to abide by what we concluded in 1986: 'It will be impossible to reconstruct the actual events'.²⁷³ Of course that is regrettable, because we would naturally have liked to unmask the culprit(s) in order to complete this part of the Anne Frank story. That is not what has happened. The possibility cannot be ruled out that new betrayal hypotheses will be advanced in the future. We shall have to wait and see whether these hypotheses will be based on source material.

10. Sources, bibliography and abbreviations

Sources

National Archive, The Hague

personel files (CABR; NBI; BNV; PolZuiv; AmbtZuiv; MvJ)

Ahlers, A.C.
Döring, K.H.A.
Frank, O.H.
Gringhuis, G.
Grootendorst, W.
Jansen, J.M.
Kaper, A,
Kaptijn, A.C.D.
Kuiper, M.
Maaren, W.G. van
Poppel, J.F.M.M.J.C. van
Rouwendal, H.
Rühl, E.
Silberbauer, K.J.
Speck Obreen, H.P.J.D.
Viebahn, F.C.

Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, Amsterdam

Doc. I files; persons
Frank, Anne
Gringhuis, G.
Jansen, J.M.
Kaper, A,

Kaptijn, A.C.D.
Kuiper, M.
Lages, W.P.F.
Maaren, W.G. van
Poppel, J.F.M.M.J.C. van
Rouwendal, H.
Rühl, E.
Silberbauer, K.J.
Viebahn, F.C.

Municipal Archief Amsterdam

Social Service Amsterdam, Centraal Bureau voor Maatschappelijk Hulpbetoon
Dayreports Municipal Police

Anne Frank Stichting, Amsterdam

Various correspondence
Orderboek Opekta
Otto Frank diaries
Interview Otto Frank by Arthur Unger, New York 1977

Private collection Buddy Elias, Bazel

Various correspondence

Gies, P. en G. Langerijs

Various preliminary studies

Bibliography

- Aalders, G. en C. Hilbrink, *De affaire Sanders; spionage en intriges in herrijzend Nederland*, Den Haag 1996
- Belinfante, A.D., *In plaats van bijltjesdag: de geschiedenis van de bijzondere rechtspleging na de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Assen 1978.
- De Dagboeken van Anne Frank*, Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam 2001, ingeleid door David Barnouw, Harry Paape en Gerrold van der Stroom (5e verbeterde en uitgebreide druk).
- The Diary of Anne Frank. The Critical Edition*, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation David Barnouw, Harry Paape en Gerrold van der Stroom, New York 1998 (Third *)
- Engelen, D., *Geschiedenis van de Binnenlandse Veiligheids Dienst*, Den Haag 1995.
- Flim, B.J., 'Joodse onderduikers en de drievoudige tragiek van de onderduikorganisaties', in: Henk Flap en Marnix Croes (red.), *Wat toeval leek te zijn, maar niet was. De organisatie van de jodenvervolging in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 2001.
- Gies, Miep en Alison Leslie Gold, *Herinneringen aan Anne Frank*, Amsterdam 1989
- Gies, Miep with Leslie Gold, *Anne Frank Remembered. The Story of the Women Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family*, New York 1987.
- Groen, K., *Als slachtoffers daders worden. De zaak van de joodse verraadster Ans van Dijk*, Baarn 1994.

Herzberg, A. *Kroniek der jodenvervolging*, Amsterdam 1950.

Jong, L. de, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Den Haag 1969-1998.

Klemann, Hein A.M., *Nederland 1938-1948. Economie en samenleving in jaren van oorlog en bezetting*, Amsterdam 2002.

Kolfschooten, Frank van, *De koningin van Plan Zuid. Geschiedenissen uit de Beethovenstraat*, Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 1997.

Kluiters, F.A.C., *De Nederlandse inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten*, Den Haag 1993.

Lee, Carol Ann, *Pluk rozen op aarde en vergeet mij niet. Anne Frank 1929-1945*, Amsterdam 1998.

Lee, Carol Ann, *Roses from the earth: The Biography of Anne Frank*, Harmondworth 1998.

Lee, Carol Ann, *Het verborgen leven van Otto Frank. De biografie*, Amsterdam 2002 (*Boek*).

Lee, Carol Ann, *The Hidden life of Otto Frank*, London 2002 (*Book*).

Lee, Carol Ann, *The Hidden life of Otto Frank*, New York 2003 (*Harper*).

Liempt, Ad van, *Kopgeld. Nederlandse premiejagers op zoek naar joden 1943*, Amsterdam 2002.

Meershoek, Guus, *Dienaren van het gezag. De Amsterdamse politie tijdens de bezetting*, Amsterdam, 1999.

Moore, Bob, *Slachtoffers en overlevenden. De nazi-vervolging van de joden in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 1998.

Moore, Bob, *Victims and survivors: the Nazi persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940-1945*, London 1997.

Müller, Melissa, *Anne Frank: De biografie*, Amsterdam 1998.

Müller, Melissa, *Anne Frank: The Biography*, New York 1998.

Müller, Melissa, *Das Mädchen Anne Frank. Die Biographie*, München 1998.

Presser, J., *Ondergang: de vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom, 1940-1945*, Den Haag, 1965.

Presser, J. *The destruction of the Dutch Jews*, New York 1969.

Schnabel, E., *Anne Frank. Spur eines Kindes*, Frankfurt a/M. 1958.

Terwiel, J.M., *Bajes in de duinen, 1880-2000*. Scheveningen 1998.

Trienekens, G., *Tussen ons volk en de honger: de voedselvoorziening, 1940-1945*, Utrecht, 1985.

Afkortingen

BNV Bureau Nationale Veiligheid
 BVD Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst
 CABR Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspraak
 NBI Nederlands Beheers Instituut
 NIOD Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie
 NIW Nederlands Israëlitisch Weekblad
 NSB Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging
 OKW Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
 POD Politieke Opsporingsdienst
 PRA Politieke Recherche Afdeling
 RIOD Rijks Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie
 SD Sicherheitsdienst
 Sipo Sicherheitspolizei
 SS Schutz-Staffeln

Zast Zentralauftragstelle

Sources

Chapter 2

- ¹. Flim, 146.
- ². Kolfshoeten, 81.
- ³. Van Liempt, 95.
- ⁴. NIOD, Doc. 1, Abraham Kaper, document 2, p. 4.
- ⁵. Hearing October 28, 1946. NA, CABR, file G. Gringhuis.
- ⁶. Moore, 255.
- ⁷. Kolfshoeten, 82-85
8. Introduction to the inventory of the archive of the HSSPF, in the holdings of the NIOD.

Chapter 3

- ⁹. *De Dagboeken*, 257, July 9, 1942
- ¹⁰. Moore, 188-189.
11. In the first instance we follow the introduction to *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank*, 25-32.

Chapter 4

- ¹². Klemann, 66.
- ¹³. NIOD, *Zentralauftragstelle*.
- ¹⁴. We follow the introduction to *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank*, 11-18.
- ¹⁵. NIOD, *Zentralauftragstelle*.
- ¹⁶. Gies, 77, 208.
- ¹⁷. Gies, 208-9
18. Statement on Gies & Co. NIOD, Doc. 1, W.G. van Maaren.
- ¹⁹. Boek, 88.

Chapter 5

20. See the introduction to *De Dagboeken*, 33-56.
21. PRA hearing, January 12, 1948.
22. PRA hearing, January 12, 1948. NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.
23. PRA hearing, January 14, 1948. NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.
24. Müller, 207.
- ²⁵. *Book*, 3.
- ²⁶. *Boek*, 83; *Book*, 59-60; *Harper*, 73-75.
- ²⁷. *Boek*, 76.
- ²⁸. *Boek*, 84-86, 182; *Book*, 60-62, 153; *Harper*, 76, 188.
29. *Boek*, 86.
30. *Book*, 62; *Harper*, 76.
- ³¹. *Harper*, 81-82.
- ³². *Harper*, 76.
33. *Boek*, 87, 184; *Book*, 63, 64; Manuscript Chapter Epilogue 46 with note 1333).

- ³⁴. *Boek*, 107; *Book*, 83; *Harper*, 80, 104.
- ³⁵. *Boek*, 95; *Book*, 71; Ms. Chapter Epilogue 46.
- ³⁶. *Boek*, 87, 311; *Book*, 63, 266.
- ³⁷. *Boek*, 107.
- ³⁸. *Harper*, XVI, 126, 206.
- ³⁹. *Boek*, 182
- ⁴⁰. *Book*, 152.
- ⁴¹. *Book*, 152.
- ⁴². *Boek*, 184; *Book*, 154
- ⁴³. *Book*, 184-185; *Book*, 155.
- ⁴⁴. Letter December 27, 1963, *Boek*, 311; *Book*, 266; Ms. note 1368.
- ⁴⁵. Letter January 15, 1964, zie: *Boek*, 311-312; *Book*, 266.
- ⁴⁶. *Boek*, 107; *Book*, 83.
- ⁴⁷. *Boek*, 123; *Book*, 97.
- ⁴⁸. *Boek*, 87; *Book*, 63, 298; *Harper*, 5, 77, 317.
- ⁴⁹. *Book*, 298.
- ⁵⁰. *Harper*, 5-6 and 58.
- ⁵¹. *Boek*, 123; *Book*, 97; *Harper*, 125, 129.
- ⁵². *Harper*, 124.
- ⁵³. *Boek*, 122-123; *Book*, 97-98; *Harper*, 129.
- ⁵⁴. *Boek*, 127; *Book*, 100.
- ⁵⁵. *Boek*, 127; *Book*, 100.
- ⁵⁶. *Boek*, 293; *Harper*, 129.
- ⁵⁷. *Boek*, 215; *Book*, 181.
- ⁵⁸. *Boek* 203; *Book* 172; *Harper* 207.
- ⁵⁹. *Boek* 184; *Book* 155; *Harper* 190, 207.
- ⁶⁰. *Boek* 311, 312; *Book* 266, 267.
- ⁶¹. *Book* 293-294.
- ⁶². *Harper*, 285-6.
- ⁶³. Not yet in *Boek*, but see *Book* 293-294, 297; *Harper* 284.
- ⁶⁴. HarperCollins, February 2003. This US edition is thus the most up to date. Lee has incorporated her most recent findings in it. It is conventional academic practice to make use of the latest edition. Nevertheless, we consider that we were bound to go further than that, because in 2002 the Dutch media gave full coverage to Lee's theory. Of course, this attention was focused on her Dutch-language book. That is why we could not ignore that (first) publication and were bound to point out any differences between that book and the later versions. We are aware that this is not common practice.
- ⁶⁵. *Book*, 292-299.
- ⁶⁶. See also *Harper* XVIII.

Chapter 6

- ⁶⁷. Covering letter Van Helden to Public Prosecutor, November 3, 1964, NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.
- ⁶⁸. Letter V. Kugler to Miep Gies, February 11, 1964. Anne Frank Stichting.
- ⁶⁹. O. Frank to P.A. Gijssbertsen, February 18, 1975. Anne Frank Stichting.
- ⁷⁰. PRA hearing, March 10, 1948. NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.

- ⁷¹ Müller, 207.
- ⁷² PRA hearing, March 20, 1948. NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.
- ⁷³ PRA hearing, January 12, 1948. NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.
- ⁷⁴ *Harper*, 323-324.
- ⁷⁵ Letter Otto Frank, November 27, 1945. NA, CABR, file J.M. Jansen and file A.C. Ahlers; Letter Otto Frank to BNV, August 21, 1945. NA, BNV, file A.C. Ahlers; NIOD, Doc. I, J.M. Jansen; Schnabel, 58; Unger, 3, 106; and BNV 2368, Letter Frank to BNV dd August 21, 1945; NIOD, Doc. I, J.M. Jansen; Ernst Schnabel: *Anne Harper*, 76, 188.
- ⁷⁶ *Boek*, 84; 'several descriptions' *Book*, 60; 'several versions' *Harper*, 74.
- ⁷⁷ *Boek*, 87; *Book*, 63; *Harper*, 77
- ⁷⁸ *Boek*, 87.
- ⁷⁹ *Boek*, 86.
- ⁸⁰ *Book*, 62; *Harper*, 76.
- ⁸¹ *Boek*, 86; *Book*, 62; *Harper*, 77.
- ⁸² Letter Frank to BNV, August 21, 1945.
- ⁸³ *Boek*, 86.
- ⁸⁴ *Boek*, 182.
- ⁸⁵ *Book*, 62.
- ⁸⁶ *Book* 153; these words have been dropped in *Harper* 76.
- ⁸⁷ *Book*, 62; *Harper*, 76.
- ⁸⁸ Ms. Note 1323.
- ⁸⁹ *Harper*, 76-77.
- ⁹⁰ In the first instance she made a mistake in deciphering the unclear date: it should be 1966 (see for instance *Harper* note 3 on p. 343 and note 55 on p. 374). Anton Ahlers and the Van Maaren family have copies (e-mail Lee to vdS 26 March 2003), and Lee has a photocopy. There is a copy printed in *De Mare*, a publication of the Van Ma(a)ren Association. The Van Maaren family kindly sent us the relevant issue of their 'family bulletin' (vol. 2, no. 1). Ahlers' letter of 1966 was addressed to the editor of *De Geillustreerde Pers* in Amsterdam, for the attention of T[heo] de Goede, a journalist with the Dutch weekly *Revue* (see also *Boek*, 312; *Book*, 266).
- ⁹¹ *Boek*, 312; *Book*, 266-267; *Harper*, 282
- ⁹² Compare Ms. Note 1330, in which she refers to the same letter of December 20, 1964 [= 1966] with the comment 'Ahlers makes the same claim in other letters'.
- ⁹³ Letter Ahlers to Silberbauer, January 15, 1964. NIOD, Doc I, K.J. Silberbauer, document 7.
- ⁹⁴ *Boek*, 184; *Book*, 154.
- ⁹⁵ *Boek* 107; *Book*, 83.
- ⁹⁶ Conversation Lee with DB/vdS September 27, 2002.
- ⁹⁷ *Harper*, 80; Ms. note 1333.
- ⁹⁸ *Book*, 62; 'all available letters and documents' *Boek*, 86; *Harper*, 77.
- ⁹⁹ PV (Report) POD, February 11, 1946. NA, CABR file A.C. Ahlers
- ¹⁰⁰ NA, CABR file A.C. Ahlers
- ¹⁰¹ Accompanying letter January 30, 1946 from Chief of Police IJ. Taconis to State Investigator [A.J.] van Helden. NIOD, Doc. I, K.J. Silberbauer, item 7; confirmed by Anton Ahlers [jr], interview with DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
- ¹⁰² *Harper*, 283.
- ¹⁰³ See also *Harper* 283 with note 57 on p. 374.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Book*, 292 e.v.; *Volkskrant*, March 23, 2002.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Book*, 298.

106. Letters July 9, 2002 and December 16, 2002, telephoneconversation 3 March 2003, letter April 2, 2003.
107. *Harper*, 320.
108. Conversation DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
109. *Boek*, 182; *Book*, 152-153; Ms. chapter Epilogue 49 with note 1348.
110. *Sanders*: 93; D. Engelen: *Geschiedenis van de Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*. 's-Gravenhage: Sdu, 1995, chapter IV; De Jong VII 506-509.
111. NA, BNV, file A.C. Ahlers.
112. *Harper*, 188, see also 75-76.
113. NA, CABR, file J.M. Jansen.
114. NA, CABR, file A.C. Ahlers,
115. See for instance the introduction to *De Dagboeken*, p. 83 with note 58.
116. *Book*, 153.
117. *Boek*, 183.
118. *Book*, 152.
119. *Boek*, 182.
120. *Harper*, 187.
121. NA, CABR.
122. PV, September 21, 1946. NA, BNV, file A.C. Ahlers.
123. *Harper*, 191.
124. *Harper* note 17 op p. 363.
125. Sociale Dienst (Social Service) Amsterdam, Centraal Bureau voor Maatschappelijk Hulpbetoon, filenumber 85096.
126. Staat van Inlichtingen (Documentation), p. 1. NA, CABR, file A.C. Ahlers.
127. Staat van inlichtingen, p. 8.
128. Blom e.a., band 1, p. 193-194.
129. *Harper*, 189
130. *Book*, 152; according to us not in *Boek* – compare it on p. 182 - neither in *Harper* – compare it on p. 185-186.
- 131 Schnabel, 58.
132. *Harper*, 206.
133. According to Lee, the first date in August was a Monday and the second a Friday (...). This is incorrect: August 30, 1945 was a Thursday. So no conclusions can be drawn from the days of the week.
134. Belinfante, 187.
135. De Jong XII 513.
136. De Jong XII 514; Belinfante 200; Terwiel 68.
137. It concerns in particular the Regulation on Detention and Residential Camps of April 4, 1945 that the head of MG issued to the relevant commanders (De Jong XII 515; Belinfante 162, 175).
138. Terwiel 72-73.
139. NA Rijksarchief Zuid-Holland (RA-ZH).
140. NA, (RA-ZH) toegangnr. 3.05.04, inv.nrs. 381, 382, 397, 413, 417, 480 and 483.
141. *Harper*, 190.
142. *Harper*, note 11 op p. 363.
143. Conversation with DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
144. *Harper*, 187.

145. Conversation Ahlers jr. with DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
146. *Harper*, 187-188.
147. *Harper*, 187.
148. *Harper*, 188.
149. *Harper*, 191.
150. NA, BNV, file A.C. Ahlers.
151. See: Engelen, 122-123.
152. About this POD: De Jong XII 500, 538, and Hilbrink 1995, 205; about an earlier detainingpolicy: De Jong Xa, chapter 12.
153. File Sociale Dienst, Amsterdam.
154. File Sociale Dienst Amsterdam.
155. Also in *Harper*, 207.
156. Testimony Martha Ahlers. File Sociale Dienst.
157. December 11, 1946.
158. February 22, 1947.
159. *Algemeen Handelsblad* March 28, 1949; all clippings at NIOD, KB-II 323.
160. Letter Department of Interior to NIOD, October 31, 2002.
161. This Jacob Jochem Davids is the same person as Tjerk Davids, who was involved with the escape of the betrayer and underworld figure Dries Riphagen (Aalders/Hilbrink, 162-164). With thanks to dr. G. Aalders.
162. NA, BNV file A.C. Ahlers.
163. Schnabel *Spur*, 58; compare also Unger 1977, 3 and 106.
164. *Boek*, 203; *Book*, 172; *Harper*, 207.
165. *Boek*, 215; *Book*, 181; *Harper*, 218.
166. *Harper*, 192, 205.
167. NA, CABR, file A.C. Ahlers
168. *Book*, 293-294; *Harper*, 284.
169. *Book*, 294.
170. *Harper*, 317.
171. *Book*, 294.
172. Conversation DB/vdS, September 27, 2002.
173. *Harper*, 190 with note 12 on p. 363; also p. 80.
174. Conversation DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
175. *Book*, 295; *Harper*, 129. The source given in note 30 (*Harper* 357) cannot be right. This testimony by Ahlers' son Anton is said to be in a NIOD file, which is not the case.
176. *Book*, 296; *Harper*, 283.
177. Conversation DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
178. Ms. note 1382.
179. *Book*, 297; *Harper*, 284.
180. *Book*, 297; *Harper*, 284.
181. *Harper*, 286.
182. *Harper*, 317.
183. Conversation DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
184. Conversation Ahlers jr. with DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
185. Conversation Lee with DB/vdS, September 27, 2002.
186. Letter Ahlers to RIOD, June 7, 1962.
187. Part 1 (1961) Amsterdam: Querido, 166. Also in *Presser I* (1977), 80.

188. Letter L. de Jong to Ahlers, June, 26 1962. NIOD, Correspondance-archive 1962, VII TV-broadcasting.
189. Conversation Ahlers jr. with DB/vdS, February 21, 2003; compare *Book*, 295.
190. *Harper*, 284.
191. *Book*, 297; *Harper*, 284-285.
192. 'Basisadministratie persoonsgegevens' bevolkingsregister Amsterdam.
193. *Harper*, 77.
194. Conversation with DB/vdS September 27, 2002.
195. *Boek*, 185.
196. *Boek*, 185; *Book*, 155; *Harper*, 191.
197. De Jong VII, 261-263.
198. *Trouw*, May 28, 1999.
199. Besluit, houdende vaststelling van het Besluit Bezettingsmaatregelen, September 17, 1944, E 93.
200. E 133.
201. *Le-Ezrath*, nr. 7, April 1945 and nr. 16/17, July 1945.
202. *Boek*, 282.
203. NA, NBI, file Opekta.
204. See also *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank*, p. 65-67.
205. *Harper*, 83; *Book*, 67.
206. *Harper*, 317.
207. *Harper*, 104.
208. *Harper*, 125; *Book*, 97.
209. *Harper*, respectively n. 46 on p. 353; n. 6 on p. 378 and n. 23 on p. 355.
210. *Harper*, 317, with n. 5 on p. 378.
211. *Harper*, 88.
212. See: *De Dagboeken*, p. 250 and the introduction, p. 11 etc.
213. *Book*, 63, 298.
214. Conversation with DB/vdS, March 7, 2003.
215. *Harper* 5-6 and 58; 'basisadministratie persoonsgegevens' Register Amsterdam from September 1937 until October 1938.
216. *Book*, 298.
217. Rapport February 5, 1964. NIOD, Doc. I, K.J. Silberbauer, document 8.
218. *Harper*, 318, with note 7 on p. 378.
219. *Harper*, 287.
220. Zie *Harper*, with note 67 on p. 374.
221. *Harper* XVII, 129.
222. *Book*, 292, 294; *Harper*, 129.
223. Conversation Miep Gies with DB/vdS, March 7, 2003; conversation Cor Suijk with vdS, March 10, 2003.
224. *Harper*, 316.
225. *Book*, 293.
226. *Book*, 295; *Harper*, 129.
227. Conversation DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
228. *Harper*, 316 and compare XV.
229. Conversation DB/vdS, February 21, 2003.
230. *Harper*, 317.

- 231. *Harper*, 320.
- 232. *Book*, 296; *Harper*, 283.
- 233. *Harper*, 315.
- 234. *Book*, 294.
- 235. *Harper*, 318.
- 236. *Harper*, 315.
- 237. *Harper*, 318.
- 238. *Harper*, 283.
- 239. *Harper*, 321 etc.
- 240. File Sociale Dienst
- 241. *Harper*, 325.
- 242. *Harper*, note 31 on p. 379.
- 243. Conversation vdS, February 28, 2003.
- 244. *Harper*, 320.

Chapter 7

- 245. *De Dagboeken*, 641-642.
- 246. *Boek*, 118; *Book*, 94.
- 247. *Harper*, 119.
- 248. Municipal Archive Amsterdam olim 1792, sub 9-4-1944, 23.25 uur.
- 249. *Boek*, 215-216; *Book*, 182; *Harper*, 219, with note 26 and 27 on p. 367.
- 250. *Kolfschooten*, 81.
- 251. *Presser I*, 385-387; *De Jong VII*, 310 etc.
- 252. PV, November, 9 1964. NIOD, Doc. I, W.G. van Maaren.
- 253. *Harper*, 106-107
- 254. Staat van Inlichtingen (Documentation), December 14, 1948, NA, CABR, file Ahlers.
- 255. NIOD, Doc. II, Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, a, document 2, p. 9.
- 256. *Boek*, 123; *Book*, 98.
- 257. *De Volkskrant*, March 16/17, 2002.
- 258. *Book*, 85; *Harper*, 107.
- 259. *Boek*, 122; *Book*, 96; *Harper*, 123.
- 260. *Boek*, 311; *Harper*, 374.
- 261. *Zie Harper* n. 55 on p. 374.
- 262. *Harper* 48, 73.
- 263. *Harper*, 222.
- 264. Taconis to Public Prosecutor, March 19, 1964. NIOD, Doc. I, Silberbauer, document 9.
- 265. Rapport Van Helden to [Taconis], March 16, 1964. NIOD, Doc. I, Silberbauer, document 9.
- 266 The German archive recommended a search to be conducted in the United States under 'EAP (Einheitsaktenplan der Wehrmacht OKW) [Oberkommando der Wehrmacht] 173-J'. The corresponding series in Washington, however, only runs to 'EAP-173-h-4'. It is hardly surprising that the references 'new 2581 and new 2583' could not be traced. The Chief Archivist did find a microfilm with an 'envelope, probably of BdS [Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD] Netherlands finance office provenance, consisting of expenses and disbursements to informants by personnel of various headquarters sections and of Aussenstelle Amsterdam engaged in gathering information, Mar. - May 1942 and May-July 1943. EAP 173-c-10-14/84' (Henry Mayer to NIOD, October 15, 2002). It is no doubt an important source for the history of the

persecution of the Jews (in Amsterdam), but its chronology deprives it of any relevance for an investigation into the betrayal of Prinsengracht 263.

267. *Harper*, 286-287.

268. *De Dagboeken*, 262.

269. *De Dagboeken*, 362.

270. *De Dagboeken*, 301; September 29, 1942.

271. *De Dagboeken*, 456.

272. *De Dagboeken*, 719; June 13, 1944.

Chapter 8

273. Introduction to *De Dagboeken*, 54.